REVIEWS

Barbara L. Craig, Editor

Research and the Manuscript Tradition

By Frank Burke. Lanham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. and Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 1997. x, 310 pp. Bibliography. Index. Available from the Society of American Archivists, $47.50 members, $52.50 nonmembers. ISBN 0-8108-3348-4∞

Three vignettes of archival research: The veteran professor who, despite years of doing research, has nonetheless never heard of NUCMC. The biographer who insists on his right to use restricted files, even though they have been sealed at the request of the collection's donor. The graduate student who, barely a month after reading newspaper accounts of a library's newly acquired literary collection, e-mails the repository, asking where on the Internet she can locate the finding aid or, better yet, the complete digitized collection itself.

For archivists and manuscript curators, such scenarios illustrate the teaching role thrust upon them all too often by researchers' lack of familiarity with basic tools and by their lack of awareness of standard archival policies, practices, and procedures. Fortunately for researchers and archivists alike, the publication of this splendid book should go far toward providing graduate students and other budding researchers with fundamental skills and knowledge that will enable them to exploit research materials wisely and effectively.

Written primarily for graduate students, who will become major users of archival and manuscript repositories, and for archival students as well, this volume is essentially a primer in the use of primary documentary sources. As such, and because it fills a huge gap in graduate education, it should be required reading in every doctoral and archives program in the nation. The author, former executive director of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, former acting Archivist of the United States, and most recently an archives and library science professor at the University of Maryland, draws upon his broad and deep knowledge to produce an essential guide that will lead neophytes, no matter on which side of the reference desk they stand, through the often arcane and eccentric world of archival and manuscript repositories. In lucid, graceful prose laced with plenty of humor and rich with a store of illuminating and fascinating anecdotes from the field,

Burke presents practical, essential information about research methodology—information that should be, but is not, taught in graduate schools and that also is not covered in any other books or reference sources. He offers a beautifully constructed, multi-layered analysis of the distinctions between organizational records and personal papers collections, setting forth what researchers should expect to find, or not to find, when consulting such materials. Burke describes the necessary tools, including NUCMC, RLIN, OCLC, NIDS, *ArchivesUSA,* and EAD, that all researchers should know about. He fully discusses such concepts as acquisitions policies, donor relations, the steps in archival and manuscript processing, copyright, the Freedom of Information Act, and privacy and other ethical issues. Throughout, and especially in the final chapter on the effects of technology upon the future creation of manuscripts and therefore upon the importance of those manuscripts for research, the volume offers rewarding theoretical analysis, as well as the practical advice of a primer.

Several minor quibbles and one small correction should be noted. Although appraisal is very nicely defined, in both its archival and its personal papers/tax deduction senses, this definition is consigned to a note at the end of chapter 5. It could well have been treated in the main text, where Burke explains other archival concepts and principles. In a small error, his discussion of security includes mention of a notorious book thief, misidentified as David, rather than Stephen, Blumberg. The index is not exhaustive or comprehensive but focuses on just the main points and topics of the book, omitting briefer topics and incidental proper names. For example, neither Blumberg nor appraisal appears in the index at all. A fuller index would serve readers well.

Finally, the author presents a thoughtful, well-reasoned discussion of ethics in which he refers to the ethical codes of both the Society of American Archivists and the Association of College and Research Libraries, but it would be useful to reproduce the complete codes in an appendix since they treat so many matters important for researchers to understand. The single appendix that is included presents the full text of the nine exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act—slightly puzzling, since nearly the entire text of the exemptions already appears in chapter 11.

These are but minor complaints, however, in view of the superb resource the author has produced. In his distinguished career, Burke has contributed extensively to the education of archivists as well as to the advancement of the profession, and with this book he continues the tradition admirably. Both researchers and archivists owe much to Burke, and this book significantly extends that obligation.

SARA S. HODSON
The Huntington Library

Architectural Photoreproductions: A Manual For Identification and Care

By Eléonore Kissel and Erin Vigneau. New Castle, Del. and Bronx, N.Y.: Oak Knoll Press and the New York Botanical Gardens, 1999. ix, 121 pp. Index. Bibliography. Color Illustrations. Paperback, $65.00. ISBN 1-884718-620. ♾

All of us who work with architectural, engineering, or other design records on a day-to-day basis have had trouble identifying the myriad processes developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for copying drawings for distribution to contractors and clients. This information is important in holdings management for proper cataloging, occasionally for dating, and to make sure these records, many of which have special preservation needs, survive into the future by applying appropriate maintenance and housing techniques. Now at last, a monograph has been written to help: *Architectural Photoreproductions: A Manual for Identification and Care* published by Oak Knoll Press and the New York Botanical Gardens.

The authors, Eléonore Kissel and Erin Vigneau, are both experienced professional conservators. Ms. Kissel holds a bachelor's degree in arts and science from Concordia University in Montreal, a master's degree in conservation from the Sorbonne University, and has pursued post graduate studies in preventive conservation at the Sorbonne. She worked at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum and on architectural drawing and prints at the LuEsther T. Mertz Library at the New York Botanical Gardens. Erin Vigneau has a bachelor of fine arts degree in photography from Massachusetts College of Art and a master of fine arts degree from The University of Arts in Philadelphia. She worked at the Lord & Burnham archives at the LuEsther T. Mertz Library at the New York Botanical Gardens before becoming the Assistant General Collections Conservator at the Princeton University Library, and her years of experience in the fields of commercial photography and printing contributed to the research regarding visual identification.

The aim of this 128-page, reasonably priced manual is to allow nonspecialists, without access to chemical analysis, to identify reproduction methods based on visual examination. It covers commonly used architectural reproduction processes from 1860 to 1960, including electrostatic, diazotype, pellet prints, ferrogallic prints, hectographs, gel-lithograph, aniline prints, Vandyke prints, silver halide prints, stencil reproduction, photostats, wash-off prints, thermally produced prints, and blueprints.

The foreword by Lois Olcott Price puts the creation and need for architectural photoreproductions into a historical context. Price's foreword is followed by a flowchart developed by Kissel and Vigneau to help the user identify individual print types using visual clues. The user is asked specific questions about the prints leading them to the next question in the flow chart. Once a process is tentatively identified, the flow chart directs the user to specific sections where each

process is described. Comments are made on its typical supports, and synonyms for the process are provided. Its history and uses are detailed, and the process of manufacture is described. Comments are made on typical degradation, and storage recommendations are given. Each individual media section is followed by excellent quality full color photographic samples of the process. The drawings are photographed with a measuring rule, and many examples are provided to show the tremendous diversity and variety of media color hues and backgrounds which makes it often difficult to identify one process from another. Where it is important for identification, (such as for a negative photostat), the verso is also shown. Close-ups at 15× magnification of small portions of each media type let the user compare the media in detail and show how the media interacts with the paper fibers. Sometimes two confusingly similar processes are compared in the same photograph, such as for diazotype and positive blueprints, and this is very helpful for the identification process.

The appendices are rich in supplementary information. A chart provides an easy-to-understand summation of the processes, including print types, dates of introduction and decline, whether it is a photoreproduction or a photo mechanical process, whether it is a positive or negative image, the support types, and what the image is made from (metal salts, dyes, toner, etc.). Additional appendices give information on other less common reproduction methods found in archives, notes on the storage of architectural drawings and prints, notes on exhibition and handling of architectural drawings and prints, current reproduction methods (as of 1996), and photoreproductive processes used for copying opaque or translucent drawings, including the most and least recommended methods. The appendices include quite useful and important advice, such as warnings against light exposure and the maxim, "Storage should follow a simple rule of thumb: *when in doubt, isolate.*" A select bibliography is provided along with an all important index.

Despite the good quality photographs, some of the images in the book still make it difficult to tell the difference between, for example, a photostat and an original ink drawing or the difference between positive blueprints and pellet prints (although it would be just as difficult to distinguish between the latter even with the originals in front of you). The book's title includes the word "Care" but the main emphasis is on identification. "Care" here means housing, not conservation methodology. The conservator who needs advice on steps to take to repair or extensively conserve any of these media will not find the information here, but understanding the reproduction processes themselves will help them decide an appropriate course of treatment.

There has been a dearth of publications for identifying these often confusing and difficult documents, especially for the neophyte. Up until now we have had Alan Lathrop's 1980 article in the *American Archivist* on "Provenance and Preservation of Architectural Records," some in-house documents developed out of shear necessity by different repositories for identification, the

Michigan Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records' (Mich COPAR) *Media/Support and Preservation Chart,* and the newly published *Before Photocopying: The Art and History of Mechanical Copying 1780–1938,* with a chapter on duplication methods. But none of these provide the extensive visual assistance offered by *Architectural Photoreproductions: A Manual for Identification and Care.*

Eléonore Kissel and Erin Vigneau have brought together a huge body of critical information for the archivist and conservator in their monograph. The innovative methodology they developed is easy to understand, and their book is a major contribution to archival and preservation literature.

TAWNY RYAN NELB
Nelb Archival Consulting, Inc.
Midland, Michigan

Beyond the Textbook: Teaching History Using Documents and Primary Sources

By David Kobrin. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1996. xiii, 96 pp. Illustrations ISBN 0 435 088807. ♾

Celebrations in Our History: Teachers Resource Book

Dickson, Australia: Australian Archives, 1996. 35 pp. Illustrations. ISBN 0 642 24802 8.

Archives in Education

Edited by Ian Coulson and Anne Crawford. London: PRO Publications, 1995. iii, 71 pp. Illustrations. ISBN 1 873162 24 3.

More and more archivists and archival programs are developing and implementing instructional workshops and courses designed to increase students' awareness of archives and improve their use and understanding of archival materials. For the most part, however, these programs stress familiarizing students with reading room procedures, archival finding aids, and collections. As if confronted by an invisible barrier, archivists seem unwilling to take a further step and provide instruction and guidance in historical research methods and critical thinking in the analysis of primary sources. In the three works under review, we see how professional educators are developing and publishing books that provide practical examples, while archivists continue to publish resource books that admirably introduce teachers and students to archives but offer little, if any, pedagogical advice on how to create critical thinkers and independent learners.

In the area of instruction, archivists are selling themselves short and undervaluing the contribution their expertise with primary sources can make to education. Primary sources form the basis of historical method and can be a powerful force in a student's intellectual and cognitive development. Through the study of primary sources, students learn that history is written from the records of someone's observation of an event or activity. They become empowered through the use of their own analytical skills, and they learn that the study of history is an ongoing and changing process.

The ideas of student empowerment and independence form the core of David Kobrin's book, *Beyond the Textbook: Teaching History Using Documents and Primary Sources.* Kobrin is a clinical professor of education at Brown University. For many years, he taught history and social studies to secondary students, and undergraduate and graduate students while on the faculty at the State University of New York at Albany.

Kobrin's work offers archivists an excellent philosophical and pedagogical response to the challenge of teaching history with primary sources in the K-12 classroom. This book is very useful to archivists who want to integrate their outreach programs into the public school system but do not have training in pedagogy. The work is highly readable, and the guidelines, suggestions, and procedures offered are well grounded in Kobrin's own practical experience. The book is divided into six progressive chapters, each dealing with a different but related component of the instruction process. Each chapter is subdivided into a set of sections with three parts: the first is a narrative discussion of Kobrin's experience in the classroom; the second reviews the transfer of experience to practical application; and the third demonstrates a model of instruction using primary sources.

Kobrin is convinced that the current method of teaching history in the classroom is a failure. He seeks to develop students who are reflective and utilize critical thinking skills in their analysis of information; in his estimation these students are independent learners capable of researching and writing their own history from primary sources. Kobrin stresses student self-motivation and involvement, and structures his projects around these two concepts. In this model, it is the student "who must be involved actively, raising questions, defining answers," and "creating understandings," because "there are limits to what a teacher can say to motivate and involve the class."

Professional historians have never questioned the existence of a "historical fact," but can students approach primary sources with a healthy skepticism in the research process? Kobrin thinks so, and he works to make critical thinking skills the centerpiece of his teaching of history with primary sources. Before students even begin an exercise, he has them confront their own feelings, beliefs, and values. Taking a Socratic approach, Kobrin starts with personal questions rather than the usual background information. "This allowed us," Kobrin concludes, "to stress two important points: that all historians write from

a values perspective and that students' values strongly influence how they understand, evaluate, and use or ignore the history that they study in school." For example, the unit entitled, "The United States Fights Wars," starts with a series of "involvement exercises." These are exercises that at first seem to have no relevance to the topic, but Kobrin and his teachers use them to stimulate students into conducting some simple cognitive exercises that help them determine for themselves what things they value most in life.

Another important contribution of Kobrin's work is the idea that students can and must work cooperatively if they are to succeed as student historians. Kobrin found that complex analytical tasks required in the analysis of primary sources are simply too difficult for primary and secondary school students to learn on their own. However, he believes that students are naturally capable and willing to work collaboratively as long as they believe it is in their own self-interest to do so. Students only need a teacher's guidance, organization, and support. Teachers should "set the table" by creating "the classroom conditions that prompted students to cooperate with one another 'naturally' on history projects." This argument is refreshing to those of us who have learned or experienced the difficulty of organizing instruction around group exercises.

Beyond the Textbook is an excellent resource for archivists who are proactive in using their archives as a vehicle for teaching history. We are not professional educators, but we can teach and think critically. To help archivists, Kobrin offers an innovative and student-centered approach to the use of primary sources that we will find challenging. Moreover, the book's readability, avoidance of obtuse and annoying terminology, and downright personability makes the work feel like the guiding hand of a trusted mentor. Kobrin empowers students and teachers to learn and write history on their own to become, essentially, independent learners.

Celebrations in our History, published by the Australian Archives, is a well laid out and visually stimulating resource book. Organized around the mandate of the Australian "National History Challenge," the work provides pithy and concise directions, definitions, and summaries. However, the book is clearly designed as a resource book, rather than a pedagogical discussion of teaching with primary sources. Although the book succeeds in introducing students and teachers to the existence and purpose of the Australian Archives, it falls short as an instructional manual on how primary sources can be effectively used to stimulate historical inquiry, discussion, and analysis.

The book is broken down into two components. The first offers a short, declarative statement as to why teaching with original documents is important, followed by information on how to use the Australian Archives. This first section also includes a student worksheet that helps to guide students in the interpretation and analysis of the documents. This worksheet is closely structured to outline the two basic components of historical investigation: internal and external criticism.

The student worksheet is good, but there is no clear explanation of its function and how it can be tied to the instructional examples presented in the book. Basically, the worksheet appears at the beginning and then is subsequently ignored. This is a waste, since the worksheet is structured to engage the student in critical thought. Another weakness is that the worksheet assumes instructors are prepared to provide guidance in understanding historical research methods or critical thinking. More effort should be made in providing context and relevance to the worksheet as a tool in the critical analysis of primary sources.

The book's second component includes seven document exercises on topics focused on the central theme of "Celebrations in Our History." Each activity includes two documents, one textual and one photographic. The media relate to each other, are rich with information, and visually stimulating—key factors that hold students' attention and maintain interest in the documents. However, the exercises suffer from a lack of examples; the book could easily be expanded to offer more representative material, possibly from a range of diverse perspectives that might challenge the veracity, credibility, or authenticity of the documents. The documents are also not very provocative and almost seem to purposely avoid controversial subjects, making it difficult for students to engage in effective internal and external criticism of the sources.

Finally, the questions asked of each document fail to consistently require the students to infer knowledge. Although the book claims to be applicable to "students of a wide range of abilities," the questions seem very rudimentary and certainly below the analytical level of a high school student. The authors seem reluctant to do more than offer benign examples. They often come close to engaging students in serious analysis and then seem to shy away. In the activity on immigration, for example, the authors ask why all the immigrants being naturalized were all male (a very good question). In response, disappointingly, they conclude, "It is perhaps a reflection of the times that all those to be naturalized were male" (one can almost hear the sigh). This contextual background is hardly a very satisfactory answer to an extremely complex historical problem concerning gender equality.

Overall, *Celebrations* provides a taste of the potential of historical records as teaching aids or resources. However, the book is more a guidepost to the Australian Archives, and in many ways seems little more than a publicity brochure. Despite the authors' best intentions, the publication is found wanting as an instructional tool because it does not offer teachers an in- depth guide and understanding to the main components of historical research and critical analysis of historical documents.

The British Public Record Office, long an advocate on the use of archives in the classroom, has published a resource book entitled, *Archives in Education.* Ian Coulson, history inspector and advisor for Kent County Council, and Anne Crawford, assistant keeper Greater London Public Record Office, are co-editors. According to Coulson and Crawford, the book's "common themes are the use

and potential of archive materials in education. Policy, practice and the philosophy of the relationship of archives and education are discussed in practical terms . . . . This balance of knowing, understanding and doing is featured throughout this collection of articles." The British do seem less reluctant in providing researchers with guidance and instruction in those skills, but once again, *Archives in Education* fails to really approach the core issues and concepts related to historical research and critical analysis.

Archives in Education is an edited compilation of fifteen short articles on various aspects of historical research in archives. They cover a variety of topics ranging from "Getting Started" to dealing with complex media formats and controversial topics. *Archives in Education* is based on the United Kingdom's "National Curriculum" initiative, which stresses the use of primary source material from the nation's local and national public record office collections in the instruction of history.

Given the book's stated purpose, few of the articles directly discuss the instructional use of primary sources. Each article reviews how various types of primary sources can yield different information, yet some of the articles are too superficial and short. The examples used are tantalizingly vague, both in detail and in the "how," leaving the reader unsatisfied and wishing for more. For example, the section that describes the use of information technology in primary source analysis (an important and controversial topic) is barely two pages in length! Although the article refers to programs and other readings, the author fails to make clear how teachers, facing limited resources, are to implement his suggested instructional techniques.

Only the article on fieldwork provides an in-depth discussion and analysis of the historical method and critical thinking skills. Here students study a castle familiar to them by first studying contemporary architectural design. Archivists assisted teachers in the use of architectural drawings of structures familiar to the students to understand the context of building construction and design. With this preliminary work, students were able to make deductive inferences from information previously a mystery to them, thereby making links "between pupil's everyday world and the more remote worlds of the past."

Understandably, archivists cannot and should not compete with professional educators in developing pedagogical skills related to historical research and critical thinking. However, archivists can and must begin drawing upon the experiences and examples of authors such as David Kobrin and others to implement instructional outreach programs that assist teachers in developing independent learners or "student historians." The time has come for our profession to cross the invisible line that prevents us from publishing resource books that do little more than inform users on the how and where of archives.

MARCUS C. ROBYNS
Northern Michigan University

"Pioneering New Frontiers": An International Exploration of Current Initiatives in Business Archives

Edited by Lesley M. Richmond. London: Business Archives Council, 1997. 241 pp. ISBN 0-9517158-8-7.

As the Canadian scholar John Ralston Saul has argued, we live in the era of the corporation.[1] Like it or not, modern corporations, be they transnational businesses or multinational non-governmental organizations, are the principal economic and social forces of our times. Thus it is fitting that the role of business archives should be the subject of serious debate. *"Pioneering New Frontiers"* is the edited proceedings of the [British] Business Archives Council's 1997 annual conference held in Glasgow. The conference itself was notable not merely because it was a joint endeavor with the British Association of Business Historians and the American Business History Conference, but also because of its size. More than three hundred delegates attended. The twenty-one papers presented here are grouped under eight headings ranging from business on the Internet to the archives of small business. All of the contributions are worthy of careful reading. Because of space constraints, however, this review will only comment directly on those papers that appeal to the reviewer's prejudices.

The first four papers deal with archives and technology. That websites can be a powerful tool for archives is now old hat. However when Ann F. Westerlin's "Growing a Website: An Unusual Beginning" and Chris French's "Presenting the GEC Archives on the GEC Website" were presented at the 1997 conference, archivist were (as many still are) wary of the Internet. Both papers explain that while archivists should use their professional caution in setting up a corporate archives website, not embracing the technology will greatly handicap if not kill a corporate archives program. Providing some answers to what type of finding aids should be placed on a website is the focus of Anne Van Camp's "Enhancing Access to Primary Research Resources Globally: The Use of Encoded Archival Description (EAD) Finding-Aids" and Lesley Richmond's "'Metadata—What Every Historian Wants': Glasgow University Archives & Business Records EAD Project." These two essays should be required reading for technophobes and technophiles alike.

The next three papers discuss the Records of American Business (RAB) Project. Taken together, the essays by James E. Fogarty, Michael Nash, and Allison Turton serve as a commentary on the RAB Project itself.[2] Nash's

[1] John Ralston Saul, *The Unconscious Civilization* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1995), 1–39.

[2] For the Project's published proceedings see James O'Toole, ed., *The Records of American Business* (Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 1997).

"Business History and Archival Practice; Shifts in Sources and Paradigms" uses the RAB Project's citation study as a departure point from which to relate the development of American business historiography to acquisition practices of collecting repositories. Not surprisingly perhaps, the citation study found that as historians moved away from the study of single firms to more encompassing themes the use of "firm level records" declined. However, while the citation study examined an impressive number of footnotes, it only examined "business history monographs," thus excluding academic history that used business sources and any other type of research, academic or non-academic. In "Responding to the Records of American Business" Turton makes the valid point that corporate business archivists are keepers of documentation of national significance as well as being custodians of private business records. This noble sentiment is backed up with the argument that the best defense for a corporate archives is use both by internal and external clients.

"Business in America" is the theme of essays by Elizabeth W. Adkins, Paul C. Lasewicz, and Debbie Waller. Adkins's "The Development of Business Archives in the United States: An Overview and Personal Perspective" (also printed in a special issue of the *American Archivist* on archives and business records [60 (Winter 1997): 8–33]—Ed.) provides a useful but brief history of American business archives. Waller who is the director of archival services for The History Factory describes how her firm manages clients' archives in "The Outsourcing Revolution: Bringing Archives in Line with a Global Business Phenomenon." The archives of Sears, Roebuck and Co. are used as a case study. Lasewicz's "Riding Out the Apocalypse: The Obsolescence of Traditional Archivary in the Face of Modern Corporate Dynamics" argues that for corporate archives to survive, archivists must reach beyond their traditional roles and embrace the brave new world.

The next section "Business Archives in Europe" includes three papers that outline several non-Anglo-American solutions to managing private business archives. The success of cooperative German business archives as outlined in Horst A. Wessel's "German Business Archives: Inventories, Research, Development" seems to mock the ad hoc nature of both North American corporate archives and the collecting policies of public repositories in Canada and the United States. Elena Alexandrovna Tiurina's "Russian Government Policy for the Acquisition of Non-State Russian Archives and the Activity of the State Archive of Economy" presents a sobering reminder that successful archival programs are only possible in societies with functioning governments and economies.

The responsible practice of deaccessioning is the subject of the papers in the section "Deaccessioning: A Solution to Long Term Storage." Nothing outrages historians as much as the thought of deaccessioning an archival series after it has become part of an archives. In many cases there has been, in fact, a violation of the archival record. The dilemma of use versus storage costs is

perhaps best addressed by Hugh Murphy, Lewis Johnman, and Alex Ritchie in their essay "De-accessioning and British Shipbuilding Records."

The growth of multinational and now transnational corporations presents special problems for business archivists and researchers. The two-and-a-half papers presented in "Multinationals: Archives Sans Frontiers" only begin to touch on the problems generated by the globalization of business. The "half" paper is Geoffrey Jones's "Multinational Archives: The User's View." This two-page piece by one of Britain's most distinguished business historians reads like a rather serious after-dinner speech. It is a pity that the author did not develop his ideas more fully. Susan C. Box's "A Study in Contrasts: Corporate Culture and Its Influence in Developing Archives Programs in Two Multinationals" provides a useful introduction into the effect of corporate culture on archives in the private sector. Indeed the impact of the corporate culture of any institution, whether it be in the business world or government, is the single most important factor in the shaping of an archives.

The two final papers discuss the appraisal of the records of small business. Mark A. Greene's "From Village Smithy to Superior Vacuum Technology: Modern Small Business Records and the Collecting Repository," and Michael Moss "What have SMEs to do with the Business Archivist" discuss the problems of public repositories acquiring the records of small- and medium-sized businesses. Greene provides a well-argued case for rigorously applying the "Minnesota Method" to the acquisition of records of small business. In his words the "soliciting and preserving [of] traditional sets of business records, particularly of small businesses, must be done selectively rather than compulsively." (p. 213) Despite the significance of small business in local and regional economies, the continuing bottom line pressures faced by public repositories should make archivists very circumspect in actively soliciting the records of small business.

Taken as a whole, *"Pioneering New Frontiers"* is a useful addition to the literature on business archives. In spite of the current boom in millennium-inspired "history," business archives still lead a precarious existent in the world of global business. When this position is coupled with the suspicious attitude of North American public repositories toward the acquisition of business records, the future of our corporate past remains bleak. As transnational corporations assume more of the powers formerly held by sovereign states, the fate of their archives should become a matter of greater concern.

M. STEPHEN SALMON
National Archives of Canada

The Culture of Secrecy: Britain, 1832–1998

By David Vincent. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. xix, 364 pp. Bibliography. Index. ISBN 0-19-820307-1. ♾

A Culture of Secrecy: The Government Versus the People's Right to Know.

Edited by Athan G. Theoharis. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998. viii, 245 pp. Bibliography. Index. ISBN 0-7006-0880-X. ♾

Although neither of these books is primarily about the implications for archives of the cultures of secrecy in nineteenth- and twentieth-century British society and government, and in the government of the United States in the late twentieth century, the books throw much light on why records and archives are like they are in these countries. These books will also be relevant to readers everywhere, as the authors' insights prompt thinking about the relationships between secrecy, records creation, archival retention, and the legal and political status of archives. The books also spur consideration of the consequences of these relationships for knowledge creation and societal and political development.

David Vincent's book is more wide-ranging than Athan Theoharis's in its approach to these themes, although Vincent actually deals less than Theoharis with archival administration and the status of archives. Vincent maintains that the expansion of the capitalist economy and democratic state in Britain over the last two centuries created an ever-increasing need for the freer flow of vast amounts of documentation. Information was required by an informed electorate and a more interventionist government. It became the fuel of business, technical, and medical development, and social reform. Efforts to improve the education system and the development of means of mass communication facilitated the circulation of greater volumes of information. The result by the end of the twentieth century is Britain's enormous "domestic archive" in both public and private custody.

Vincent notes that the records in this archive are not simply the products of bureaucratic activity and necessity, or what archivists often call business or administrative transactions. They are also the result and evidence of social transactions because they have been shaped profoundly by "the culture of secrecy." Despite much rhetoric about the importance of the free flow of information in this evolving information society, information circulated in step with the interests and values of those who possessed or needed it. It was sometimes of advantage to various groups and institutions to share some of it. But how much would be shared, with whom, and when, became vital questions. Socioeconomic status and political power in Britain's emerging information society have not only been determined in large part by the ability to create and acquire knowledge, but also by the ability to keep secrets—whether cabinet secrets, national security secrets, professional secrets, trade secrets, or neighborhood,

family, and sexual secrets. Like people everywhere, many in Britain have thought that society functions best when certain categories of political, economic, and social information have been kept secret. This "culture of secrecy" shapes what can be known at any given time, what can be documented, and what can be saved and consulted in archives. In the end, these shifting flows and blockages of information helped shape British self-understanding and society.

Decisions about what actions and communications are recorded, how widely they are shared, and which records are archival records, are a product of the transactions of social relationships. These social interactions have been conducted by the British state, businesses, and certain professions (which have been able to attain control over creation, acquisition, and access to certain types of information), and through negotiations among groups (such as clergy and parishioners, charitable organizations and their clientele, and journalists and politicians) over what will be revealed and recorded, by whom, when, and in exchange for what. Pursuit of power and advantage have been at work in these transactions on all sides of the various social relationships.

If full, accessible knowledge of what goes on in institutions and families could do harm, how would one know whether one was being harmed or helped by the keeping of secrets? Vincent says that social trust had to be established around the matter of secrecy. To justify the seemingly disreputable act of keeping secrets about others, often without their knowledge, those who wished to acquire and hold secrets felt the need to portray themselves as worthy of this high trust. In return for the social and political authority which possession of secret information provided to groups such as public servants and other professions rising to social power, these groups promised to serve society's best interests, not their own. In the case of the public service, the new nineteenth-century bureaucracy of merit adopted the ideal of the honorable, self-effacing civil servant.

Vincent sees the management of British government records through the creation of the Public Record Office in 1838 as an example of the deceptiveness of such "honourable secrecy." Although the creation of a central state archival service, with a new building erected in the 1850s to house records, was an advance, the PRO was given neither the resources nor the authority to assert much control over the management of the records. As Vincent points out, the departments retained authority over destruction of records, the transfer of records to the PRO, and access to those records. Power over British government information rested (and largely remains) in the hands of the government, which has yet to adopt modern legislation on access to information.

Hilary Jenkinson's ideal professional archivist (whom he once said "is perhaps the most selfless devotee of Truth the modern world produces") is an excellent example of the honorable, self-effacing British public servant. Archivists (as members of an aspiring public service profession during the period Vincent covers) could thus be trusted with custody of government records and secrets because they selflessly sought no personal advantage from their use, only pro-

tection of the records' "Truth." Jenkinson, in turn, apparently trusted his colleagues in government departments to make and select records for archives in an equally honorable way, for the "Truth" would also be protected by the archivist's selfless avoidance of intervening in (and biasing) that process.

In light of Vincent's book, Jenkinson's views might well be seen as means of enabling the PRO and the emerging archival profession to compete in the intense institutional and professional competition for control of the new currency of power and status—information. This may have been the key to winning a role for archivists as honorable, impartial guardians of state records, but it seems to have come at a great price—limited influence over management of government records (to ease government fear of powerful, independent archives?) and encouragement of the misleading idea that the result of this arrangement with government would be "Truth" (to ease possible public doubts about the social purposes of government-run archives?) Although Vincent does not mention Jenkinson, this book helps archival readers to begin to understand the wider British cultural milieu and values (including the complexities of social trust) that Jenkinson reflected in his many influential writings on archives.

Vincent examines the crumbling of the trust relationships which had been built up to govern the management of information in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He catalogs the abuses of social trust in Britain which led to increasing public skepticism in the late twentieth century about the nature and uses of information controlled by institutions of all kinds. Theoharis's book discusses American responses to similar issues in the United States, which themselves also reflect the more skeptical environment. Vincent treats the history of secrecy in Britain since the mid-nineteenth century as a societal phenomenon. Theoharis and the contributors to his book deal with it solely as a recent political and bureaucratic phenomenon. Their essays begin with the outbreak of the Cold War, and focus entirely on American federal government agencies responsible for law enforcement, intelligence gathering, and foreign affairs, as well as the presidency. The authors' (mainly academics, lawyers, lobbyists, and former journalists) outline efforts (including their own personal initiatives) to undermine the tight control these agencies have asserted over access to their records. There are three chapters on the FBI (by Theoharis, Jon Wiener, and Alexander Charns and Paul M. Green), and one each on the CIA (James X. Dempsey), the National Security Agency (Matthew M. Aid), State Department (Page Putnam Miller), Nixon Tapes (Joan Hoff), PROFS case (Scott Armstrong), and the work of the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Review Board (by board member Anna Kasten Nelson).

Perhaps much of the information in the book will be familiar to archivists, but, even so, it is very usefully summarized in one volume. The book's theme is that despite freedom of information and other legislation designed to control the records of the United States government, public access to records of these agencies has largely been frustrated by one means or another, including lack of

adequate archival control. There have been some access successes, but mainly with older records (from the State Department and agencies involved in the investigation of the Kennedy assassination) which have been deemed historical and thus less sensitive. Still, even in these cases, access was not obtained without a struggle.

The National Archives and Records Administration and the Society of American Archivists come in for criticism in Theoharis's book. NARA is portrayed as too deferential to administrative and political power in interpreting and applying its mandate. SAA is criticized by Armstrong for not joining the initial attempt to gain a court injunction against NARA's willingness to allow White House electronic records from the PROFS system to be destroyed. No spokesperson from SAA, NARA or other U.S. federal agencies is among the book's contributors. Armstrong, however, acknowledges that NARA is hampered in performing its duties because it is "by far the most underfunded of federal agencies" (p. 181) and because National Archivist John Carlin allegedly "has difficulty in getting anyone from the White House to return his calls." (p. 158) The SAA is praised by Armstrong for opposing Carlin's appointment as National Archivist and is recognized by Nelson for its useful contribution to the creation of the Kennedy Assassination Records Review Board, which had one member who is an archivist—William Joyce.

Both books prompt profound questions about the role of archives. The authors point to some of the thorniest issues facing archives. To what extent can archives actually be autonomous agents? Can professional associations of archivists speak more effectively on archival issues than archives? If so, do they? What authority should archives have? For what should archives be held accountable? How should archives be held accountable? What role do professional associations have in holding them to account? What laws, institutional forms and reporting relationships, accountability measures, and resource levels best protect the archival record? If independence and neutrality are impossible, how is the best possible archival record obtained? Although these books do not attempt to answer these questions, they indicate to me that obtaining the best possible archival record depends on improving our understanding of the culture and politics of secrecy in our societies. This understanding can help archivists navigate the obstacles and opportunities they face in their efforts at sound archival management. And this understanding will better enable archivists to guide others to make better meaning (and use) of the record. For archivists create the best archival record in part by guiding users through the ways in which records may have been shaped by a culture of secrecy, or by any other factors (including an archives' own influence on them) which also account for the records' existence and bear on their meaning.

TOM NESMITH
University of Manitoba