BOOK REVIEWS

Amy Cooper Cary, Reviews Editor

Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions—Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels
Edited by Terry Cook. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011. 434 pages. Soft cover. $39.95, members, $56.00, nonmembers. ISBN 1-931666-36-9.

Festschrift—German for "festival writing"—is the name given to a collection of essays honoring a respected colleague, generally, though not always, published during that person's lifetime. While Festschrifts abound in academia, they are less common in the archives profession. German archivist Hans Booms, Canadian archivists Hugh Taylor and Kent Haworth, and British archival educator Michael Cook are among the very few who have been so honored by the archival community.[1]

It is surely a mark of professional maturity when a profession not only honors its own, but has its own to honor. Acknowledging the value of individual contributions in the development of theory and practice and recognizing those contributions as foundations on which to build suggests a profession that not only has come of age, but that is developing a trajectory grounded in its own core concepts. While the honoree's ideas traditionally inspire the essays in a Festschrift, it also pays homage to these ideas by extending them, re-imagining them, and taking them into the future. Such was the charge that editor Terry Cook gave to the seventeen essayists in *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions—Essays in Honor of Helen Samuels.* True to the academic spirit of a Festschrift, Cook explains, "The book is not a disparate group of unrelated essays on the authors' favorite topics gathered together to honor an esteemed colleague. Rather the essays were especially commissioned to address a unified theme: how, in documenting modern societies and the institutions, the archivist's control of the past may be transformed in ways more appropriate for our twenty-first century world" (p. 4). On the one hand, Cook acknowledges the ground-breaking appraisal thinking of Helen Samuels, from her iconic essay,

[1] Barbara L. Craig, ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992); Friedrich P. Kahlenberg, ed., *Aus der Arbeit der Archive. Beiträge zum Archivwesen, zur Quellenkunde und zur Geschichte. Festschrift für Hans Booms* (Boppard am Rhein : H. Boldt, 1989); Reuben Ware, Marion Beyea, Cheryl Avery, eds., *The Power and Passion of Archives: A Festschrift in Honour of Kent Haworth* (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 2005); Margaret Proctor and Caroline Williams, eds., *Essays in Honour of Michael Cook* (Liverpool: University Press, 2003).

"Who Controls the Past?" (1986), introducing documentation strategy, to her book, *Varsity Letters, Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (1992), detailing a practical approach to documenting institutions through functional analysis. On the other hand, Cook uses this foundational theory as a base for exploring and imagining new appraisal vistas.

And his authors do not disappoint. As an educator who teaches appraisal, I approached this book with anticipation and hope. Creative updates to the appraisal theories established in the late twentieth century have been noticeably lacking in the archival literature of our new century, even though the practice of appraisal in digital environments is increasingly urgent. Hoping for new directions, I was gratified to discover them in this exciting and innovative collection, not laid out in traditional textbook fashion, but more subtly through case studies and reflections on modern institutions and their records.

Although the authors of these essays had a specific mandate, they each interpret that mandate in very different ways, through their own voices, and generally through the lenses of their own particular, and not necessarily overlapping, concerns and contexts. While not a "disparate group of unrelated essays," aside from the touchstone of Samuels and her work, the unifying theme of this collection is very broad. This broadness however, makes this book fascinating and essential reading for archivists looking for creative and experimental ways of thinking about the problems of contemporary records.

Helen Samuels, writing primarily in the last two decades of the twentieth century, opened up new paths toward considering the relationships between archivists, records, and society. The essayists in this volume, all pre-eminent North American archival thinkers and practitioners whom Samuels has influenced, similarly re-imagine that mission for today. Despite the highly distinct lenses, common themes emerge and interestingly often contradict one another, so that, for example, the proactive participatory archives described by Tom Nesmith and Elizabeth Yakel seems at odds with the increasingly institution-driven and proscribed archival roles suggested by Robert Horton and Bruce Bruemmer. In all, this collection paints an expansive picture of a multidimensional and varied archival landscape that is at once alluring and pitted with landmines.

Each of these essays follows a very individual and very thoughtful path toward the question of the archivist's control of the past. Through the lenses of their own workplaces and experiences, the authors reach conclusions, that, while not always encouraging, nonetheless reflect the imperatives of the twenty-first-century world that are not only Cook's concerns, but ours as well.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section, "Documenting Society," includes nine essays that directly consider questions of records selection and appraisal. The widely different lenses create dynamic conversations between the essays themselves. Vermont State Archivist Gregory Sanford, for

example, presenting the political realities of archivists needing to understand the imperatives of lawmakers rather than the other way around, offers successful strategies for raising government involvement in record-making and -keeping. From a similar institutional context, Minnesota State Archivist Robert Horton, in a fascinating report on the vagaries of government-think, is, in spite of the best efforts of the state archives, unable to offer similar happy endings. Corporate archivist Bruce Bruemmer makes an analogous case in a related institutional context. In a useful and clear-cut description of the relationship between a corporation and its archives, he also emphasizes the primacy of the corporate/institutional mission and context to the survival of the archives. While Horton writes, "Archivists have to expand our perspective, broadening it to include the myriad factors that will affect our attempts to enact any archival concepts"(p. 188), Bruemmer observes, "Justifying archives where the bottom line is measured quarterly will always be a tough sell"(p. 169). In a similar vein, records management consultant Rick Barry traces the trajectory of the electronic records explosion in the context of organizational culture, urging archivists to embrace these cultures and offering guidelines.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Joan Schwartz takes us deep into the heart of pure archival analysis as she crafts a detailed and compelling examination of a visual document: an iconic nineteenth-century photograph of a bridge over Niagara Falls that is at the same time a case study of "documenting" in all its attendant intellectual nuances. Nancy Bartlett offers a fascinating and highly original meditation on the very specific information values of color, its presence, and its absence in the academic archives. Archival educator Tom Nesmith, identifying the appraising archivist as a crucial element in the appraisal process, describes and analyzes a long list of attributes that the appraiser must bring to this task.

Other equally compelling cases in this section include Richard Cox on the historical development and appraisal challenges of various forms of document copying through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and what these mean for archivists. Information educator Paul Gandel and consultant Richard Katz take a close look at the archives profession itself, offering both an analytical and a futuristic vision as documentation moves increasingly into the purely digital. They observe that "the emergence of multiple digital media . . . is changing the nature of human interaction" (p. 217).

The seven essays in section two of this collection, "Representing Archives/Being Archival," shift the discussion to consider aspects of those records that have already been appraised and sit in collections. As in the first section, the essays embrace both the macro and the micro, ranging from Francis Blouin's general discussion of the development of the divide between archives and history, to the narrow, highly detailed focus of Brian Brothman's analysis and mapping of three contemporary records strategies from the viewpoint of visual

representation. They range from David Bearman on the forms of digital documentation as ways of appraising their functions, to James O'Toole's broad discussion of the historical development of the "archival perspective" in the United States. As also in the first section, this section includes innovative strategies for expanding and enhancing the relationship between records and society. Elizabeth Yakel, pursuing the access potential of social media that she pioneered in the Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collection continues her exploration of archival representation as shared authority. She "envisions how distributed curation could benefit communities that have traditionally felt disenfranchised and left out of the archives by enabling multiple voices and contexts for the records" (p. 259).

The last two essays round out the second section well. One is a compelling discussion of archival ethics by Verne Harris who, rejecting neat and formulaic ethical responses, offers insights into his own work with the Nelson Mandela archives and the larger ethical questions that this work engendered. Rand Jimerson's essay takes us back to George Orwell's concept of controlling the past that inspired both Samuels's initial concept of the proactive documenting archivist, and by natural progression, the theme of this book. Jimerson furthers our understanding of Orwell and his vision as he brings us full circle back to Samuels and the importance of her vision for the archival profession.

In the final section, we hear from Helen Samuels herself, first through an analysis of her writings by Elizabeth Kaplan, who draws together the major themes in a bibliographical essay that showcases the progression of Samuels's thinking. The last word belongs appropriately to Samuels herself, who reflects on her career, on the formation of her ideas, and on her current retirement.

A matter of concern, though not intended as a criticism in any way, is the Festschrift nature of this volume, which may be both a strength and a weakness. The strength is the platform it provides for original and innovative thinking around a broad theme, an opportunity for some outstanding thinkers in our profession to muse on issues of particular interest to them without being confined by too circumscribed a topic. The weakness is the potential difficulty in accessing these essays individually. How findable and searchable are these essays to students, researchers, or archivists who would all surely benefit by reading them?

In the aggregate, this collection not only represents creative and exciting thinking by intellectual leaders in the archives profession, but also suggests just how all-encompassing this profession has become. In many ways, the collection exemplifies Helen Samuels's own advice in the final chapter: "And if my career contains a lesson for young archivists, it would be this: ask questions, listen, find that next question, and savor the joy of becoming, and then always being, a learning archivist" (p. 413).

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Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives

By Francis X. Blouin, Jr. and William G. Rosenberg. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 257 pp. Hard cover. Available from the Society of American Archivists, $64.00 members, $74.00 nonmembers. ISBN 978-0-19-974054-3.

This volume addresses two questions: How have the practices of archival administration and academic historical writing informed each other in the past, and how will they do so in the future? The authors are Francis X. Blouin, Jr., a professor of history at University of Michigan, and William Rosenberg, director of the Bentley Historical Collection at the same institution. Blouin and Rosenberg previously co-edited *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, a volume of essays on archives and culture that grew out of a related year-long seminar hosted at their institution. The pair has extensive experience analyzing the nature and history of archival practice, and they are quite thorough in exploring the ways in which the field of archives has lately tended, in their view, to diverge from the field of academic history. Their premise is that archivists and historians no longer share the same conceptual space: Archivists have responded to the scope and complexity of the modern recordkeeping environment by resorting to what the authors call an "archival essentialism," wherein the appraisal and description of archives are guided by considerations of the processes and organizational exigencies through which records are created (i.e., their provenance), rather than by their potential scholarly uses. While archivists increasingly focus on fidelity to organizational structure, academic historians increasingly seek meaning through examinations of culture and society that privilege individual voices and social memory at the expense of traditional emphases on formal institutional and political history. The purpose of *Processing the Past* is to inform archivists and academic historians about the past and current developments in their respective fields that have caused this divergence, and to persuade them that a more cooperative course of action would benefit all concerned.

The book is divided into two major sections. The first, entitled "The Emergence of the Archival Divide," is devoted to a historical analysis of the relationship between historians and archivists. Through a discussion of the respective rises and mutually reinforcing activities of national archival repositories and the school of scientific history, Blouin and Rosenberg convincingly establish that the two fields at one time shared a common conceptual space; archivists and historians valued the same records (largely those of national governments

or associated personnel) for the same reasons, and archivists made decisions about collecting and describing collections that both informed and were informed by current practices in historiography. The eventual intellectual and professional divergence of the two professions is covered in separate accounts of the decline of traditional institutional history and the rise of interventionist, noncustodial approaches to the management of an increasingly complex American records environment. This historical section is nuanced and well sourced, especially the discussion of the shift of emphasis in seventeenth-century European government archives from transactional records (such as vital recordkeeping associated with the church) to file-based administrative records (such as diplomatic reports). This account of how "'authority' in the archives . . . migrated toward the politics of administration, rather than toward accuracy" is particularly interesting (p. 20).

The term *authority* appears, in various and sometimes problematic guises, throughout the book. While the discussion in this first section of archival history and theory is generally an excellent read, often this book seems to speak more from the world of academic history than from archives or library and information sciences. The use of "authority," which is absolutely crucial to understanding the book and its message, belies this tendency, and its use is occasionally unclear, regardless of the provision of explicit definitions:

> For archivists engaged in preserving a historical record, there was a fundamental reliance on historical "authority" in the appraisal and acquisition of documents. Although the term has centered much of our discussion so far, we put it in quotation marks here because it has both a general and specific meaning for archival practices. The general meaning connotes the reliance of collectors on the views of historians themselves to determine what constituted a proper documentary record of the past. Within archives, its more specific and technical meaning relates to the practices of description. "Authority" in this context is a technical term. It pertains to the source for particular descriptive identifiers used to catalogue a collection of documents. The larger the collection, the more important the categories by which the material is arranged and described. [p. 33]

Of course, the more commonly accepted use of "authority" in archival description derives from library science and applies specifically to preferred subject headings identified to prevent confusion in access (and not to a general pool of identifiers chosen according to personal or professional whim). One of Blouin and Rosenberg's basic assertions is that provenance-based description hinders the production of current modes of academic history, in which the voices of the powerless are sought and the history and actions of institutions themselves are less desirable. "Authority" in this context must be taken to refer to the motivation behind archival selection and description:

> The authorities used to describe correspondence, orders or decrees, individual diaries, architectural plans, and the like derive from an understanding of their context within organizational processes. . . . Archival authorities in this sense create the repository's organizational scaffolding. "Authority"-based descriptive terminologies derive from a specific archival conception of provenance, a term signifying that the agency of origin of a record or record group is its fundamental characteristic. Provenance thus describes an axiomatic and organic relationship between records and the processes that generated them. . . . The description of records thus embeds these authorities in the archive. [p. 34]

But the imprecise definition of "authority," primarily in its usage in the library science sense of the word, lessens the impact of the argument.

The second section, entitled "Processing the Past," is devoted to more current developments in each field and is intended to foster dialogue and mutual understanding. Chapters cover the role of social memory in historical research (and the prospect of using traditional archival sources to support such work), the nature and impact of the modern electronic records environment, and various aspects of archival work arising from the need for regular intervention in the selection of archival records. While this section contains more information and commentary about the archival side of things, and would seem to have more utility for interested historians, it has much to offer the archivist. The discussion of social memory and associated coverage of creative uses of institutional archives (what the authors, referencing Ann Stoler, refer to as reading the "archival grain") is particularly insightful. While "authority" predominates in the first half of the book, the "contest" of the title factors heavily into the second. Analysis of the archivist's role in the public forum and as a shaper of the historical record complements, and indeed rather overshadows, the related analysis of the activity of academic historians included here.

Blouin and Rosenberg restrict their explicit recommendations and conclusions to matters of interest to both archivists and historians, offering conciliatory recommendations for cooperative activity. But for archivists alone, the overall question raised by their book seems to be "can we operate in a vacuum?" As time has gone by, undeniably, archivists have sought to create a largely self-contained professional sphere. The twenty-first-century professional archivist, more often shaped in schools of library science than in humanities departments, generally seeks to apply archival theory and practices to produce collections usable and appealing to multiple constituencies. It is assumed that adherence to provenance and original order in arrangement and description ensures that the essential characteristics of the records and their relation to the creator are preserved, characteristics that are universally appealing and useful to researchers. This book challenges that assertion by claiming that at least one very significant archival constituency is not always best served by resort to naked

provenance and that the needs of historians today largely do not match up with the approaches of archivists who might be seen as beholden to the institutions and organizations they document, or at least their organization charts. The criticism of provenance (at least as a guide for archival description), its reduction to "archival essentialism," is bracing, unexpected, and thought provoking.

Can we serve patrons without making specific reference to their various disciplines or research methods in the education and professional development of archivists? Is technical and professional education, combined with adherence to correct archival practice, enough to create universally usable collections? Our standards for professional qualifications, education, and development implicitly deprecate the relevance of subject knowledge and the benefit of familiarity with current research methods. Although their formal recommendations do not go much farther than encouraging the participation of historians in the description of archival records, Blouin and Rosenberg would argue that professional development and the creation of a unique archival identity should not preclude the recognition of constituencies and discussion of the ways to best serve them. Members of the academic history community still believe in and rely on the trustworthiness of archival materials, and rely on the archival imprimatur for their own professional advancement. Historians need archives and archivists, and want archivists to be more responsive to their needs, and this work is a step toward re-establishing good relations between the two. And the rigor and sophistication of this volume, exceeding that of much recent work on archival topics, only underscores the potential benefits of more fully embracing perspectives and partnerships outside of the strictly archival field.

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Archival Anxiety and the Vocational Calling

By Richard J. Cox. Duluth, Minn.: Litwin Books, 2012. 374 pp. Soft cover. $35.00. ISBN 978-1-936117-49-9.

"As I have gotten older and more experienced, my worries about the archival profession and its mission have increased" (p. vii). So opens the latest, and as author Richard J. Cox ponders, possibly the last book he will write directed *at* the archival field. It should be noted, however, that this is certainly not the last book *about* matters related to archives and records he plans to write. Cox is one of the most, if not *the* most prolific author of the modern archival field. His enviable output—fifteen highly sourced monographs and countless articles and blog entries to date—and its often challenging, sometimes cranky tone, is testament to his tremendous passion for and commitment to the role of records and

archives in society, his voracious reading, and his relentless tracking and exposure of relevant cases. Cox is, in many ways, the conscience of the American archival profession. He forces us to debate difficult issues, to confront those of our own professional and academic behaviors that are less worthy or principle grounded than we would like to admit, and to lift our heads above the daily grind and backlog to remind ourselves of the broader societal landscape in which we toil and how important that work actually is. This book, as his own words indicate, is the work of someone who wants to make some capstone statements on certain concerns that have, for him, been key preoccupations in the course of his career. It is also, perhaps, his most personal book to date. For example, in a chapter relating to his most recent research on the Secretary's Office at Colonial Williamsburg (discussed at length in the previous chapter as one of the first public records offices in the country but no longer remembered as such) and also in discussing the Lester Cappon papers, Cox recounts the profound influence that his many visits to Williamsburg (dating from his first fifty years ago) have had upon him and his own archival calling. However, Cox also posits that he is not alone in some of his misgivings about the current archival field: "My sense, as reflected in these various essays, is that a substantial portion of the archival profession is also anxious about a variety of issues. Whether I am exaggerating *how* anxious is a matter for debate" (p. vii).

Archival Anxiety revisits several themes Cox introduced in his very first book, the Waldo Gifford Leland Award–winning *The Age of Archival Analysis*.[2] That book, also a collection of essays, which reviewer Joel Wurl states is "not merely a product of its time; it might well come to be viewed as the epitome of the American archival profession of the late twentieth century"[3] focuses on "the archival mission, the archival community as profession, a basic core of knowledge, relationships with the information and historical professions, and an agenda for change" (*Archival Analysis*, p. xi). Twenty years later, with *Archival Anxiety*, Cox compiles several previously published essays, as well as blog entries and some new essays, and bookends them with contextualizing and concluding chapters. His interests again center on the U.S. context and clearly derive from his own early professional background working with public records and state archives as well as from his past two decades as an academic, founding and directing what has become one of North America's pre-eminent graduate archival education programs. The book integrates personal reflection and advocacy, and the extensive bibliographic notes that readers have come to expect from Cox's work, with well-documented case studies. In line with his concerns about the vocational calling, the case studies take to task archival actions and behaviors, in particular those of the National Archives and the Society of American

[2] Metuchen, N.J., and London: Scarecrow Press, 1990.

[3] *The American Archivist* 56 (1993): 130.

Archivists (SAA) relating to the National Archives declassification controversy that broke in 2006, SAA Council's decision to destroy the archives of the Archives and Archivists Listserv, and the Anthony Clark case that Cox in particular exposed through his blogging in 2009.

The first section of the book explores the notion of an archival calling, "because our mission in administering and protecting records is about far more than just holding a job" (p. vii). That calling is, he argues, about bringing passion to our workplaces and a commitment to a societal good. The second section addresses government secrecy, which Cox sees as "one of the pre-eminent challenges of our time" and a grave potential threat to the societal role of the archival profession (p. vii). The third discusses the importance of every information professional having a practical ethical perspective; and the fourth, and perhaps most eclectic, section "concerns issues of teaching and cases that also suggest contentious or controversial changes facing the archival community" (p. xi). The chapters in this last section include "Revisiting the Archival Finding Aid," "Arguing about Appraisal in the Age of Forgetfulness," and my personal favorite chapter title, "Teaching Unpleasant Things."

At first glance, this might appear to be a rather quirky compilation. The reader needs to understand, however, that the thread that runs through the book is indeed Cox's anxiety about upholding the archival societal role, the kind of outlook archivists and archival institutions and professional associations need to carry out that role, and the ways in which archival education can and should contribute to preparing individuals accordingly. In his introduction, Cox firmly sets out his ideas about this: "Being a professional is more than being paid to do something: it is, among other things, committing to a lifelong pursuit of enhancing one's knowledge, whether through formal education, self-directed reading, continuing education opportunities, or a mentoring relationship" (p. viii). At the same time, he laments the drift in higher education toward a more corporate model that places less emphasis on the notion of a calling and more upon credentialing. He also argues that a calling should include the desire to contribute to the development of the profession through reading and writing.

This is clearly, and distinctively, a book written by someone whose primary role within the field for the past two decades has been as an archival educator and scholar deeply involved in attracting students into archival education and preparing them for careers as archival professionals and academics. Notwithstanding that some of his essays on government secrecy and archival ethics would make excellent readings in support of class discussions, Cox offers a perspective on the contributions of graduate archival education to the archival vocation, professional needs, and possible futures that other archival faculty might welcome but that might not necessarily always align for practicing archivists. One senses that the situation and contributions of graduate archival

education were uppermost in his mind as he wrote, especially when reading the book's concluding chapter. Cautioning that progress does not inevitably make all things archival better (despite growing strength in archival education, research, and networking) and warning that current times may require a particular tough-mindedness in pursuing the archival calling, Cox lists several steps that the archival community can (and, one can imagine he believes, should) take to manage archival materials into the future (pp. 261–70): *Do the right things* (attract students with solid potential and a genuine archival calling, limit class sizes and program length, and identify more closely what should be taught in the classroom and what learned in the workplace); *send the right message about the archival mission* (including developing a more specific and diversified body of archival knowledge, as well as clarifying the trajectory that is established through initial archival education and how it can evolve and mature as an archival career advances); *promote a reasonable holistic approach to managing records* (underscoring in the public and professional perception the common agenda among archivists who work in different sectors and with different media by letting the power of records and evidence shine through); *strengthen and support graduate education*; *get passion back into the professional community*; *don't back off from critical or controversial issues* (the need for new leadership and new heroes in the archival community); and, finally, *separate the archival impulse from the professional community* (regardless of the monikers attached to those who do it, the archival function needs to be embedded in recordkeeping practices, systems, and institutions).

In this concluding chapter, his challenges are mostly directed to his educator colleagues, for many of the items on his list will be difficult to achieve in light of contemporary campus dynamics and concerns, and will require leadership within the academy as well as within the field. For this reason alone, the book would be worth adding to the academic's library. However, it also makes a valuable and timely contribution to the rest of the archival field by bringing to the attention of archival institutions and practitioners not only concerns about vocation, leadership, and ethics, but also the issues and contributions of graduate education.

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Lost Rights: The Misadventures of a Stolen American Relic

By David Howard. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010. 344 pp. Hard cover. $26.00. ISBN 978-0-618-82607-0.

It is one of our country's great treasures: an original, hand-inscribed parchment of the Bill of Rights commissioned by George Washington and sent to North Carolina in 1789 and one of a set of fourteen originals, thirteen for the states and one for Congress. In 1865, a Union soldier with General Sherman's army apparently stole it from the North Carolina statehouse in Raleigh during the chaos and destruction that took place at the end of the Civil War. Looting and trophy hunting are predictable consequences of wartime confusion, but what followed was far from predictable. Despite the general principles of the 1863 Lieber Code prohibiting looting and despite a specific 1865 directive for the return of stolen property, including archives, to North Carolina's secretary of state, the Bill of Rights remained precariously in private hands for 138 years. After several unsuccessful attempts by the state to recover it, an FBI sting operation and a decade of litigation were required to pry it from the hands of dealers trying to convert the relic into several million dollars in profit. Finally, in 2005, the governor of North Carolina officially reclaimed the Bill of Rights for the state, as archivists provided measures for the document's proper conservation, long-term storage, and security. A scan of the document is now available on the North Carolina State Archives website.[4] The final court decision to return the Bill of Rights to North Carolina was not a foregone conclusion. The courts have recently denied similar claims to state documents made by Maine and South Carolina.

Author David Howard is a travel and sports writer, the executive editor of *Bicycling* magazine. Even though the author does not have an archival background, I asked to review this book because the case dramatizes a fundamental professional challenge: protecting the American public's shared archival heritage. What I did not expect was such a well-researched and vividly written book that is a pleasure to read. Archivists close to the litigation over the North Carolina Bill of Rights tell me that Howard was exceptionally diligent in his research and interviewed the participants in great detail. He respectfully describes scholarly archivists in the case and their tenacious work to recover a state treasure: These are my personal heroes.

Of greater instructional value, perhaps, is the sympathetic but clear-eyed portrait of the late Wayne Pratt, an ebullient and gregarious antique furniture salesman, who was once a host on the popular PBS television series *Antiques Roadshow*. Howard has done a great service by stripping away some of the mythology surrounding Pratt. The result is a believable sketch of a man who tried to commodify a public treasure basically in the same fashion that he might buy and sell a fine antique chair. Buy low, sell high. According to Howard, the potential threat of a state replevin claim was apparently used to keep down the price paid

[4] See North Carolina Digital Collections, http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/p15012coll11&CISOPTR=29&CISOBOX=1&REC=2, accessed 21 February 2012.

to the family that had the Bill of Rights in its possession for over a century (p. 73). Pratt would assume the risk. Originally, a lawyer was retained to determine the legality of selling the Bill of Rights. The lawyer's fees were to be contingent on a sale; the idea was to compensate the lawyer with a percentage of the profit (p. 37)—no out of pocket expenses. Pratt hoped to make something on the order of five million dollars.

Howard gives both sides of the story in a balanced fashion, without telling the reader what to think. He includes an interesting historical survey of the pervasive problem of displaced cultural heritage, especially in wartime. We know the arguments on the archival side. This is property of the American people. Government care of archives, while once negligent, has now become highly professionalized. Much material has been damaged and lost in private collections. Marketing lies and obfuscations about provenance are undermining the research value of trophy archives. Profiteering has artificially jacked up the prices of documents in general. Online auction venues have encouraged the theft of documents from the government. Howard also reviews the arguments on the side of private ownership, including buying and selling, of public documents. The finders-keepers principle has a strong tradition in this country. Over the past couple of centuries, government agencies have been appallingly lax in preserving our American heritage. The profit motive provides an incentive to preserve documents. Our country was built on free enterprise. And then there is the argument that has appeared in the South Carolina court decision against replevin: There is already so much displaced government documentation in private hands and in worthy institutions that a precedent for returning them would open the floodgates and tear apart collections all over the country.

This last issue requires closer examination. Howard provides an interesting parallel case, one that I think deserves close study. The North Carolina Bill of Rights was not the only one to go astray. Nine of the fourteen copies stayed in official custody. Five were somehow displaced. Two are thought to have been lost to fire (in New York and Georgia), and three are thought to have been stolen (in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Maryland). During World War II, the brilliant rare book dealer A. S. W. Rosenbach knew of an original Bill of Rights in private hands. He arranged for a Hollywood mogul to purchase the copy and donate it to the Library of Congress. It was a good deal all around. The publicity was good for the purchaser, the donation promoted American patriotism, the dealer received a commission, and the Library of Congress acquired a great document. What was not to like? As Howard concludes: "Rosenbach's parchment had to be stolen property" (p. 288). What to do? Force the Library of Congress to surrender the document and return it to Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, or Georgia?? Is the best solution a kind of statute of limitations; what was once acceptable practice is no longer considered ethical or even legal? Do

we give up on the return of stolen government property? Do we go after old cases and recover the losses of years past? Howard leaves the questions open.

I recommend reading this book together with the relevant sections of the Council of State Archivists website.[5] Each state has a slightly different take on the subject, but increasingly there is a pragmatic consensus. The strategy is not to right all past wrongs, but to build a legal system that protects our cultural heritage. A key element is to strengthen laws against the sale of public documents. That provision would make it possible to take the huge profit out of theft and especially to block the use of online auctions as a venue for "fencing" stolen property. The California replevin process includes an exception based on two conditions. Documents that are not being sold can stay in private hands if the materials are cared for according to professional practices recommended by the Society of American Archivists and if the materials are freely available for research by the public.

Howard does not attempt to provide a scholarly analysis. Don't look for footnotes, a formal bibliography, or even an index. At the end of the book, he describes his extensive and wide-ranging sources for each chapter. While you will not find the page numbers for quotes, you will find the titles of the books and articles he used. The interviews Howard conducted are primary sources, unavailable elsewhere, that provide valuable insight into the world of collecting and the market in cultural heritage. Howard himself, in telling the story with such verve, reveals the way an intelligent nonspecialist sees the world of manuscript dealers and curators. There is much new material here of interest to archivists. I recommend the book as a good read and as a cautionary tale, this time with a happy ending.

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Archives: Principles and Practices

By Laura A. Millar. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2010. 280 pp. Soft cover. $75.00 ISBN 978-1-55570-726-2.

Archives: Principles and Practices is the latest single-volume introduction to archives and archival work to appear in print. The author, Laura Millar, is ideally suited to write a survey on archival work. She has been an archival consultant for more than twenty-five years, published extensively in the archival and records management fields, and taught archives and records management courses, most recently in the Information School at the University of Toronto. Millar's

[5] See CoSA's section on issues at Council on State Archives, "Sales of Public Records," http://www.statearchivists.org/issues/publicrecordssales/index.htm, accessed 29 November 2011.

book is directed primarily toward practicing archivists, particularly those lone arrangers who labor in relative isolation, often in underfunded institutions. A secondary audience is archival studies students and new professionals in the archival field. The book includes some features that make it unique among archival primers. First, Millar addresses archives from a far more international perspective than most other introductory archival books. This is not surprising since Millar has a good deal more international professional experience than most archivists. She completed her archival education on two continents (master's in archival studies, University of British Columbia and PhD in archive studies, University College of London), and her consulting work has taken her throughout the world (Ghana, Canada, Bermuda, and Trinidad and Tobago, for example). Second, archival books tend to be split into the practical and the theoretical. Millar consciously attempts to provide both in this relatively short book. The book seeks to be both a "why-to" and a "how-to" book, according to Millar (p. xvi). Third, Millar acknowledges the wide variety in archival work situations throughout the book. She intentionally attempted to make the book as useful as possible for "diverse archival environments" (p. xxi). The book's unique orientation is at times an asset, while at other times it creates limitations.

Archives: Principles and Practices adequately covers most of the topics that should be included in an introduction to the archival field. Subjects like the history of archives, reference, arrangement and description, preservation, acquisition, accessioning, and outreach, for example, are addressed with impressive clarity and efficiency. The book includes many practical and useful hypothetical and real examples to further demonstrate archival concepts and practices. It is sprinkled with a number of sample documents, such as a donor agreement, an acquisition policy, and a preservation policy, which are standard in introductory texts. Millar also includes a selective and appropriate bibliography and a glossary of archival terms. There is much to recommend in Millar's introduction to the profession.

Surprisingly, she does not fully address some topics. The most obvious exclusion is that of any substantial discussion of records management. Millar makes an occasional reference to records management concepts, but these are sparse. She acknowledges in the introduction that the management of active records is important for archivists, but that to attempt to address issues related to them would have made the book too long or other sections too thin. The discussion of appraisal largely ignores the extensive debates of the last thirty years. This is surprising given Millar's willingness to tackle other theoretical complexities. Lastly, the section on digital records is limited and somewhat uninspired when compared to the rest of the text.

Millar successfully bridges the gap between theory and practice in a number of examples. Perhaps the best is her discussion of key archival concepts in chapter 5 ("Provenance, Original Order, and Respect des Fonds"). Millar explains the theoretical underpinnings of the concepts, but adds a sophisticated consideration of how the concepts might function in practical terms. Millar argues that "in truth, provenance, original order, and respect des fonds can be and often have to be defined less in accordance with the theory of archives and more in keeping with the reality of the materials in hand" (p. 98). It is a serious and complex presentation that problematizes how these concepts actually work in the field. Most practicing archivists will find this approach refreshing and far more realistic than definitive positivist approaches often found in introductory archival texts.

Millar's unique international approach—which is generally limited to English-speaking countries—is an asset in a number of ways throughout the book. Millar argues that archival "conventions adopted often reflect the cultural and professional choices within the jurisdiction developing these tools, and so again there is variation across regions or nations" (p. 113). Millar's discussions of how cultural/national conditions led to different archival traditions in different countries are wonderful. For example, her explanations for archival differences between a number of countries, like Canada and Australia, are unusual in this type of introductory work, which usually limits considerations of archival traditions to a single country. Millar also highlights the different terminologies sometimes used in different countries, arguing that, at times, "which term to use is influenced as much by culture and politics as it is by theory" (p. 103). Yet another example of her international approach appears in the chapter on arrangement and description (chapter 7). Millar includes a useful discussion on the differences in descriptive standards accompanied by an explanatory chart contrasting *ISAD(G)*, *RAD*, and *DACS* (pp. 160–61). Introductory archival books are typically far more narrowly centered on the practices, processes, and archival traditions within a single country.

The international approach also has limitations. Millar can provide specific practical guidance within a number of topics, such as preservation, because the information crosses national boundaries. The science of preserving archives is consistent. The guidelines for heat and humidity controls are the same in the United States, Canada, and Australia. But this global reach is not true for all aspects of archival work. The international perspective restricts her ability to move beyond vague and general guidelines in some instances. It at times limits the "how-to" goal of the book. For example, discussions that involve legislation are necessarily limited in their usefulness because legislation differs from country to country and to address the legal environment in diverse countries would be both confusing and take far too much space. This is especially apparent in

the sections on copyright, public domain, and fair use. Millar can only report that these are important issues that archivists need to know more about. Introductory archival texts directed at American audiences (Gregory Hunter's *Developing and Maintaining Practical Archives*, for example) usually go into far more detail about legislation related to acquiring and making available archival materials and the consequences of that legislation for practicing archivists. This includes not only changes in copyright legislation, but also privacy laws; in the United States this includes the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), which are by definition and political boundaries specific to the United States.

Millar presents archival practices and processes as broadly as possible throughout the book. She regularly uses multiple examples to explain that particular archival functions will be carried out differently depending on a variety of factors, such as the researcher and the particular work environment. Millar's discussion of the reference interview provides an example of this. She explains that while the archivist may have a specific idea of how the reference interview should go, it really depends on the researcher. The needs of an academic researcher will likely be quite a bit different from the needs of a local citizen looking for family history materials. The how-to in archival work often leads to far more responses than introductory texts are usually willing to acknowledge. Millar demonstrates this throughout the book.

Millar's book is ambitious, engagingly written, and thoughtful. It is surely a difficult task to include an international perspective, address both practical and theoretical concerns, and pay close attention to the wide variety of archival situations in a relatively brief (280 pages), introductory text. *Archives: Principles and Practices* largely succeeds in its goal. It is an important contribution to the archival literature that is already accumulating well-deserved accolades in the profession. The Society of American Archivists recently awarded it the prestigious Waldo Gifford Leland Award. The book would be most useful for those archivists and archival students interested in an archival introduction with an international approach and one focused on manuscript materials. The book will likely be used in introductory archival management courses.

Wayne State University

How to Keep Union Records

Edited by Michael Nash. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2010, 228 pages. Soft cover. $35.00, members, $49.00, nonmembers. ISBN 978-1-931666-35-0.

Michael Nash is codirector of the Frederic Ewen Academic Freedom Center and director of New York University's Tamiment Library. He is a certified archivist and has written about the relationship between contemporary scholarship and archival practice. Nash is author of *Conflict and Accommodation: Coal Miners, Steel Workers and Socialism* and co-editor of *The Good Fight Continues: World War II Letters from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.* He teaches in the NYU History Department. All of the contributors to the volume have some experience with labor archives.

The collection of ten essays on union records and archives is dedicated to the memory of Debra E. Bernhardt, a scholar of and advocate for the history of the working class in New York City. Bernhardt was the author of the previous *How to Keep Union Records,* subtitled *A Guide for Local Union Officers and Staff,* published in 1992. As Nash explains in his preface, the initial intent of the current volume was to update the previous project, and it was conceived as a manual for "labor union administrators who have archives and records management responsibilities but little or no formal training" (p. viii). While the George Meany Center for Labor Studies had originally planned to support the publication, fiscal challenges forced it to withdraw. The Society of American Archivists then offered to publish the manuscript, if it could be revised for an audience of professional archivists. The result is, however, a mixed bag of basic records management and archival practices reinterpreted with a labor background.

Nash begins with a valuable overview of the perspectives on labor history and the records collection practices that correspond to those perspectives. As he explains, from the beginnings of labor study at the University of Wisconsin at the launch of the twentieth century, the objective has been to demonstrate the positive impact of the labor movement and collective bargaining in American life. To pursue the research to support that thesis, it was necessary to collect the data through the labor records. Nash observes that recent union archiving practice favors relationships between labor unions and collecting repositories often associated with educational institutions rather than the part-time union officer with archival duties within the union itself.

Pamela Hackbart-Dean discusses the necessity for "strong relationships with individual unions and the labor movement" for the success of any labor archives program (p. 17). Her emphasis on the need for trust, important in any donor-depository relationship, is particularly true with labor unions, which experience a degree of marginalization in mainstream American society. The Robert F. Wagner Archives at New York University maintains the relationship between the unions and the depository through the service of an advisory committee, with representation from the Central Labor Council of New York.

William Lefevre addresses the need for internal records management practices if unions are to be able to address the legal reporting requirements of the Department of Labor, as well as the more refined practices that involve work with historical and institutional memory. He observes that "Inventorying and scheduling are the keys to good records management" (p. 36) and provides basic information about retention periods for particular types of records as well as a sample inventory worksheet. Thomas James Connors, in his chapter on "Appraisal," asks the key questions of "What do we keep?" and "What do we throw away?" Connors points out that to answer those questions, the archivist must understand how a union is organized structurally and functionally, the place of a particular union within the broader labor movement, and the culture of the union. The volume could have provided more detail in this area, as union structures are simultaneously expansive and very local. While Connors makes a stab at representing a generic sense of the scope of labor organizations, he directs the reader to the "extensive labor and social history literature" for an understanding of the differences between traditional bureaucracies that have shaped the appraisal process and that of labor unions (p. 48). A separate chapter may have been more useful to the reader.

The collection provides a chapter on "Consolidations and Mergers" of labor unions and the effects of such practices on archives maintenance. James P. Quigel, Jr., explains the need for engaging union archivists in the planning for the merger of records at the same time that unions plan for the merger of administration, offices, and personnel. Especially when the organizations' archives are held in separate repositories, it is necessary to engage the host institutions in the process. Quigel also makes a strong case for the value of local union records and suggests that local community cultural institutions—such as historical societies and libraries—arrange to preserve the materials relevant to local community history. These local repositories are particularly important to researchers. All too often, community resource centers own the odd or occasional collection related to their own communities, and information to support that material could be valuable to archivists.

Nash follows with a chapter on "Arrangement, Description and Preservation" and notes that, for the most part, "labor archivists rely on the general principles that have been developed for providing access to organizational records" (p. 77). He highlights the need to be mindful of the shift in the theoretical foundation for labor research, from the former frame that followed an organizational top-down approach in evaluating materials to a more contemporary emphasis on frontline organizers, activists, and rank-and-file membership.

Diana Shenk makes that emphasis clear in her opening statement in the chapter on "Reference and Access": "Labor archives . . . must . . .

develop programs for making the history of working people accessible to union members, students, scholars and the general public" (p. 89). Access must be defined in policies ensuring intellectual and physical avenues for use and incorporating the use of new technologies in assisting the researcher. Shenk points to several well-designed websites that enhance access to valuable collections, such as the Walter P. Reuther Library and Temple University, Urban Archives, but does not outline what makes the websites well designed. Again, this could have been another chapter that would have pushed past the traditional content of the collection and added value to the publication.

The oral history interview that Bernhardt conducted with Abram Flaxer, head of the left-wing, white-collar United Public Workers of America, was critical to my research on the impact of frontline organizing in the Chicago Public Library in the 1930s and 1940s. Given that second-tier organizers are seldom part of the official record of an organization, oral histories are a way to bring the voice of everyday activists into the historical memory. Lauren Kata's chapter on "Oral History" provides an outline of approach to the collection of memories about labor events and activities. While Kata recognizes the tensions inherent in the interview process and the disputed value of personal memory unconfirmed by physical evidence, she also proposes that oral history "opened the door for scores of collaborative projects that brought academics, archivists and trade unionists together" (p. 106).

As the cover of the collection illustrates, media communicates another level of information about unionists and organizing. The image of women and black men gathering for information during a hospital strike in New York in 1964 at the table of the Local 1199 Professional and Technical Office Workers vividly represents the marginalized workers still searching for some influence within their work environments. Barbara Morley provides an overview of the significance of "Photographs, Recorded Sound, Moving Images and Objects" in supplementing the written records of labor archives. As Morley also observes, they have complicated the role of the archivist, who now requires more technical skills to work with historical objects.

Nash and Julia Sosnowsky confront the reader with the challenge of "Electronic Records" in the final chapter of the collection. The issues of authenticity and various risks to sustainability may well make the digital age the era of transient history. Even so, programs such as the National Digital Information Infrastructure Preservation Program are enabling various institutions to archive websites of different organizations. Within the field of labor, New York University's Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives has collected more than forty labor union websites (p. 162). However, that does not guarantee control over the materials, and, as with many industries, the digital age may

require new strategies, procedures, and policies once it is as established as the analog environment.

The collection includes a bibliography of relevant works, developed by Hackbart-Dean. A "Directory of Labor Archives in the United States," compiled by Quigel, is listed in Appendix B arranged geographically. While the list of resource locations is valuable, SAA could consider supplementing the print publication with a searchable database that would more readily support the work of researchers. The collection does update Bernhardt's previous manual, but may have limited itself with that model.

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