

These are small quibbles. This book opens a new world for archivists, one that was always there but which few of us could ever see through the fog of our focus on the more technical issues in the field. This book is a call to action, a roadmap, and an avuncular advisor all at once. *Donors and Archives* codifies something core to the archival enterprise yet one treated with something worse than disdain—with neglect borne out of our certainty there was just too little there to consider. Now, our consideration can begin, and we can thank Aaron Purcell for getting us started.

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Preserving Our Heritage: Perspectives from Antiquity to the Digital Age

Edited by Michele Valerie Cloonan. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2015. 736 pp.
Softcover. \$110.00. ISBN 978-1-55570-937-2.

This monumental work by editor Michele V. Cloonan serves as a survey and commentary on the cultural preservation and conservation literature from 740 BC to today. Cloonan, dean emerita and professor of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College, has thoughtfully built upon her expertise as editor-in-chief of *Preservation, Digital Technology and Culture* and her service on the editorial boards of *Libri*, *Libraries and Culture*, and *Library Quarterly* to create a magisterial summary of core preservation writings. Compiling preservation literature thematically focused on libraries, archives, museums, information sciences, informatics, and historic preservation (architecture), as well as the preservation of time-based media and digital preservation, this work presents the reader with an enriched and condensed source of core readings in a single volume. Cloonan thoroughly covers the management issues of what work should be done, where, and with what resources; who should do the work and why; and why we are attempting to preserve these materials and for whom, and how they will be shared.

This volume does not focus on how preservation work should be done, as a step-by-step manual might. Instead, *Preserving Our Heritage* explains and expands upon a unified field theory of cultural preservation that is essential for anyone teaching graduate students in archives, library science, museums, informatics, or historic preservation. It will also be useful for those attempting to broaden their knowledge of the field of preservation. The volume is organized around the following topics: history (early perspectives); context (libraries, archives,

museums, the built environment, and architectural preservation); activities (collections development and management, conservation); risks (time, nature, and people); and philosophical and theoretical issues (frameworks for digital preservation, preservation policies, ethics and values, multicultural perspectives, and sustainability). While not without some significant topical gaps, this work does an impressive job of covering a challenging and ever-changing turf.

Rather remarkably packaged as a huge and heavy softcover book, the readings in this work range from the Old Testament (Jeremiah 2:14 and Isaiah 30:8), the Koran (Surah 85, "The Constellations"), and Shakespeare's "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?," to Paul Banks's "A Library Is Not a Museum," David Bearman's "Retention and Preservation," and Karen Gracy's "Preservation in a Time of Transition: Redefining Stewardship of Time-Based Media in a Digital Age." While these literature selections may occasionally strike the reader as eccentric, the wide range, great depth, and useful nature of this carefully selected compilation, which will be of great interest to many archivists, can't be denied. Cloonan states in her preface that she looked for "classic readings in preservation" that had been continuously cited in literature and used as both course readings and professional references (p. xvi). She accepted fifty literature suggestions from colleagues and used an impressive advisory board of experts to vet the selections. The literature selected forms the basis of much contemporary library, museum, and archival practice and thinking, representing a range of cultural heritage preservation fields while providing new approaches.

Despite Cloonan's impressive breadth of sources, the volume does not cite key works relating to the theory of planning, building, renovating, or operating an archives, library, or museum exhibition, or storage buildings as key components in preservation. Also missing are cornerstone pieces on effectively communicating to management and the public the values of preservation, why it must be funded, and what is lost when it is not funded (which might come from the historic preservation community that does this so well via legislation and public involvement). The volume lacks discussions of how preservation priorities may best be identified, taught, implemented, and adjusted to changing circumstances in order to maximize the preservation of crucial collections when we face increasing climate-based risks of disaster, infrastructure risks, and increasing budget pressures that may close some repositories. Who will become the regional preservers of last resort? How are the collections handled when repositories fold? Finally, what might a unified field of cultural heritage preservation professionals do to improve the profession's visibility, standing, and support? Within a preservation context, these missing pieces become even more evident when one considers that the volume has extensive writings on frameworks for digital preservation and guidelines for time-based media. If a second edition is ever published, some of these omissions should be remedied.

This volume's purpose is, as the author states, "to introduce students and professionals to readings that will help them in their studies and in their professional practice" (p. xv). Particularly useful is the inclusion of the literature of many fields that are considered interlocking parts of cultural heritage preservation as a whole. This big picture approach is both appropriate and useful. The volume provides a very helpful overview of the theories, language, and practices of the various professions, as well as a way to drill down to better understand much of each of the cultural heritage profession's key preservation concerns and issues.

Preserving Our Heritage has a very helpful historical time line, which the editor states is "[t]o serve as a reference for the readings and place them in context" (p. xxiii). Checking the citations against the time line enhances the readings by spelling out the technological, social, professional, economic, and political factors influencing preservation practices and deterioration risks over time. The articles are essential to understanding the time line by noting how such actions and events were playing out in the field, as well as the new methodologies, theories, strategies, and policies that developed from addressing the issues. For example, if you read John Murray's letter to *The Gentleman's Magazine* describing problems with poor quality paper in 1823 and then check the historical time line, you discover that chlorine bleach was added to paper as early as the 1790s.

The editor has taken on a huge task with this work, which attempts to summarize preservation in archives, libraries, museums, and architecture. Cloonan not only addresses the full range of historic perspectives on preservation, but she also dares to discuss the meanings of cultural preservation and how they have changed over time. She reviews how various professions address these meanings and apply them to their work, discussing how institutional collecting and management have changed these meanings and placed them in differing contexts. She also addresses the risks to cultural heritage preservation, which she categorizes as time, nature, and people, and clarifies various preservation issues for readers, providing a deep context for understanding preservation theory and practice throughout history.

Each chapter starts with a literature survey, some premises to be considered on the readings, and comments on the readings to follow. Cloonan often offers a capsule summary of key points in each reading, sometimes with commentary on how the focus has shifted in recent years to address certain matters ignored earlier, and she explains why a work is included in the volume and in a particular chapter. She discusses how concepts are related and cites related literature that identifies priorities on a topic or states its issues. Endnotes that incorporate citations follow each chapter's commentary. After the endnotes, a full separate bibliography on the chapter topic is included. Separate credits

for each chapter conclude the volume along with a bookwide author/title and subject index.

The writings on archival preservation are pithy, accurate, and thoughtful, showing a knowledge of the centrality of accessioning, boxing, foldering, and housing and making references to provenance and original order as essential preservation issues. This makes it doubly hard to understand why the editor does not address the issue of the role that archival facilities, and their planning, operations, and modifications play in preservation.

Cloonan comments upon and provides readings on the care, treatment, and remediation of cultural heritage materials and collections today, followed by an overview of frameworks for digital preservation. She then moves on to a swift, if somewhat terse, discussion of preservation policies, including ethics and values. She follows up with readings on multicultural perspectives, including who owns cultural heritage, who should preserve it, for whom it should be preserved, and how it should be preserved. The editor finishes her volume with a section on sustainability and resource commitments, linking them to the key concept of good stewardship as a core institutional value.

An epilogue spells out some new areas where research (especially interdisciplinary research) is needed, including in digital media; in science, technology, and ecosystems; on information creators and users; and on the impact of citizen science, citizen journalism, and citizen archivists. Cloonan ends with a well-thought-out set of key questions to be answered (p. 660):

- What are we trying to preserve?
- Why are we trying to preserve it?
- Who will preserve it?
- How will we preserve it and how will it be funded?
- Where will we preserve it?
- For whom will we preserve it? How will we make the preserved materials available? To whom?
- What is the scope of the preservation effort?

To these excellent questions, I would add:

- What can cultural preservation professionals achieve if we work together across our professions to identify common priorities, to enhance fiscal support, and to build public involvement?

I highly recommend this monumental and useful volume for archivists, librarians, curators, historical preservation professionals, and all who care about the future of cultural resources, both in the United States and abroad. This book should be in every archives, museum, and university library, and major public libraries nationwide.

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