

Embracing Change in a Time of Transition

Rose Buchanan and Stephanie Luke¹

ReviewsEditor@archivists.org

Writing is an act of community, as *American Archivist* editor Amy Cooper Cary recently stated.² As the journal's new reviews editors, we are excited to join the community of archives workers, scholars, editors, and enthusiasts who bring this publication to life.³ We follow in the footsteps of Bethany Anderson, our immediate predecessor, and the many others who have worked to elevate and expand archival scholarship over the years—we know we have big shoes to fill! We are grateful for the guidance and mentorship that Bethany, Amy, and the entire Editorial Board have provided as we transition into this role, and we look forward to continuing to work with and learn from the *American Archivist* community moving forward.

This is an exciting time for *American Archivist*. The journal's transition to an all-digital publication offers us the freedom to experiment with the traditional review format. We will begin promoting our content across all our platforms to keep readers better informed of trends in the field. While the journal will continue to center on professional literature, the Reviews Portal will also feature new reviews of archives-related digital exhibits, platforms, tools, handbooks, best practices documentation, pop culture representations, and much more.⁴ Additionally, we have begun exploring alternative formats, including question-and-answer-style reviews, that incorporate the voices of numerous archives scholars and workers. We are also excited to join SAA's podcast *Archives in Context* as producers and to collaborate with the production team to deliver and promote a wider spectrum of reviews.⁵

As we announce these changes, it is fitting that the three reviews featured in this issue also deal with change: change in the way we think about archives interrupting dominant power structures and liberating the oppressed, change in the way we use archival documentation to contextualize museum objects and understand historical narratives, and change in the way we think about ourselves and our work in the context of relationships and community. Archives are more than physical storehouses for historical collections: they exist at the crossroads between past, present, and future. They have the potential to assist

in building a more just and equitable society if we, as archivists and memory workers, are willing to reorient ourselves within a framework of self-reflection, humility, engagement, and access for all.

In our first piece, Brian M. Watson reviews Michelle Caswell's *Urgent Archives: Enacting Liberatory Memory Work*, which urges us to rethink traditional Western archival theories and practices that harm marginalized communities and interrupt ongoing cycles of hetero-patriarchy and white supremacy. Sarah Demb's review of *Artefacts, Archives, and Documentation in the Relational Museum* by Mike Jones models how we can apply the themes Watson highlights in *Urgent Archives* to museum cataloging and collections management. Finally, Ted Lee's review of *Archival Virtue: Relationship, Obligation, and the Just Archives* by Scott Cline broadens the conversation to archival ethics and outlines a framework for archival spiritualism that both encourages personal transformation and challenges current archival practices.

It is clear from the publications reviewed in this issue that the future of archives is not a static one. Archivists are being called upon not only to care for historical materials but also to take an active and ethical role in creating a more representative and inclusive present. As reviews editors, we hear this call and commit to breaking down barriers to participation in the reviews process so we may better represent the diversity of background, thought, and experience in our field. We hope you will join us, and we look forward to engaging with you.

On the Reviews Portal

(Published between January 2021 and January 2022)

Laila Hussein Moustafa. [Review of Syrian Archive](#). February 3, 2021.

Erin Passehl-Stoddart. [Review of Collective Responsibility Labor Advocacy Toolkit](#). February 15, 2021.

Sister Grace Marie Del Priore. [Review of Who Will Write Our History](#). March 16, 2021.

Lauren Kata. [Review of Zoom for Oral History Projects](#). March 19, 2021.

Beth South. [Review of The Teaching with Primary Sources \(TPS\) Collective](#). May 6, 2021.

John Henry Adams. [Review of Women and the Temperance Movement Primary Source Set](#). May 20, 2021.

Kayla Harris. [Review of Libwizard Tutorials](#). May 25, 2021.

James Lowry. [Review of Off the Record](#). July 19, 2021.

Elizabeth Kobert. "It's all material, honey": Archives as Source of Creative Inspiration in *Hacks*. October 1, 2021.

Rebecca Kuske. *Review of Utilizing University Archives to Teach Students the Complexities of Neutrality*. November 3, 2021.

Myra Kahn. *Memory and Graffiti: Non-Traditional Archives in Left 4 Dead and Fallout: New Vegas*. December 9, 2021.

Ruth Xing. *Review of Teaching with Primary Sources Remotely*. January 5, 2022.

NOTES

- ¹ All views expressed in this essay are the authors' own. They do not represent the views of the authors' institutions nor any agency or office of the U.S. government.
- ² Amy Cooper Cary, "From the Editor: Writing as an Act of Community," *American Archivist* 84, no. 2 (2021): 233, <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081-84.2.223>.
- ³ For more on our backgrounds in the profession, see SAA's press release at <https://www2.archivists.org/news/2021/rose-buchanan-and-stephanie-luke-to-join-american-archivist-as-reviews-editors>.
- ⁴ *American Archivist Reviews Portal*, <https://reviews.americanarchivist.org>.
- ⁵ *Archives in Context*, <https://archivesincontext.archivists.org>.