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Reviews, Critiques, and Annotations

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Reviews, Critiques, and Annotations

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Faye Phillips, Joseph W. Constance Jr., Michael F. Kohl, Anthony R. Dees, Kenneth H. Thomas Jr., Minnie H. Clayton, and Lynn A. Bonfield

REVIEWS, CRITIQUES, AND ANNOTATIONS

Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance. Edited by Nancy E. Peace. Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1984. Pp. xi, 164. Charts, forms, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$23.00.

Finally, archivists are beginning to develop a long-overdue body of theory. Archival Choices, edited by Nancy Peace of Simmons College, tackles one of the archival world's most complex and ever-present problems--appraisal. This book begins to fill the void in archival appraisal theory.

Archival Choices seeks to "(1) describe archival practice in selected institutions, (2) examine current archival theory in light of the particular problems presented by contemporary records, and (3) stimulate new research and writing, whether along lines suggested by the contributors or in opposition to them."

A workshop on processing contemporary archival collections held at the Kennedy Library, Boston, in 1980 was the impetus for the book. Containing articles by editor Peace and six others, Archival Choices is a volume of current theory. The editor chose to exclude the appraisal of government records and focuses on college and university records, business records, congressional collections, and literary manuscripts. Appraisal in each of these areas is extremely diverse, but still similar. The articles bring these similarities and differences to light and give useful guidelines.

Peace begins the book with an overview of appraisal practice and theory, quoting from Schellenberg, Brooks, Kahn, and Bauer. She draws from Michael Lutzker's oft-quoted "Max Weber and the

Analysis of Modern Bureaucratic Organizations: Notes Toward a Theory of Appraisal" and states that Frank Burke was correct when he stated that archivists lack a theoretical perspective. Peace's introduction to Swedish archivist Nils Nilsson's textbook Arkivkunskap is enlightening. The reviewer concurs with her that a full translation of Nilsson's book is needed. After lauding the work of the National Archives in appraisal, Peace concludes, and rightly so, that more sophisticated reading and theory is needed for nongovernment archivists. Archival Choices begins at this point.

A brief look at the articles will serve as a gauge of the book's value. John Dojka and Sheila Conneen contend that records management can be one appraisal tool for college and university archives, and their article serves as a step-by-step guide to setting up a records management program. Francis Blouin addresses the problem of appraisal for business records. As he so aptly states, appraisal cannot be considered without looking at the environment in which business archivists and researchers dwell. Neither simple nor complex guidelines now exist for appraisal of business records, but remain to be formulated. Blouin presents some solutions to the problems. Patricia Aronsson offers a concise, accurate guide to follow in dealing with the complexities of congressional papers. Until now there have been few relevant guides to approaching the huge quantity of paper created by senators and representatives. Philip Cronenwett addresses literary manuscripts, which, because of their market value, create unique appraisal problems as well as ethical ones. His appraisal approaches assist archivists in becoming braver when working with literary manuscripts. All the articles are well written, thorough, and well edited.

Clearly one archival choice that must be confronted is that of deaccessioning. Unfortunately, deaccessioning has become an emotional buzzword recently, but Lawrence Dowler expertly deals with the

questions. In concert with deaccessioning must be cooperation, an issue which Gerald Ham has brought to attention. These two articles serve well as a conclusion to Archival Choices, and the book serves well as a theoretical framework for appraisal.

Peace has compiled an excellent book that is useful to beginning archivists. But more importantly, the volume is useful to those who have long since passed the beginning archivist stage and have been seeking some theoretical answers to appraisal questions.

Faye Phillips

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Washington, D.C.

Archives and Manuscripts: Conservation: A Manual on Physical Care and Management. By Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1983. A volume in the Basic Manual Series. Pp. 144. Forms, photographs, appendices, bibliography. Paper, \$7.00 to SAA members, \$9.00 to others from Society of American Archivists, 600 South Federal Street, Suite 504, Chicago, Illinois 60605.

Archives and Manuscripts: Conservation is perhaps the best of SAA's Basic Manual Series on archival management. A concise and thoroughly organized handbook, the manual provides an excellent introduction to the nature of common conservation problems and clear insight into their alleviation through proper management and treatment.

The manual is divided into two sections, the first being a textual treatment of the subject and the second a most useful group of related appendices. The textual section of the work begins by defining conservation as a science "encompassing the three explicit functions of examination, preservation, and restoration." From there it proceeds to outline the

nature of most archival materials, the proper methods to implement a conservation program, and various conservation treatments suitable for use by the novice technician. The text is most methodical in its approach and succeeds in relating enough of the very complex aspects of conservation science without sinking into the potentially frightening morass of chemical terms and equations. Particularly useful are the chapters outlining the nature of most archival materials and the causes of their deterioration. (Photographs receive only brief mention because they are covered in a separate manual.) Of no lesser import are two later sections dealing with the integration and implementation of a conservation program in an archival repository. Both sections contain excellent suggestions for implementing a program and all major points are supported by examples of various procedural forms, which may be used to document preventive and restorative measures.

Instructions for the accomplishment of basic conservation techniques are provided in the final chapter of the manual and are further elaborated in one of the many appendices. Other appendices include instructions on how to evaluate current conservation literature, an extended bibliography, a list of basic conservation supplies and their respective suppliers, and a listing of all regional conservation centers and organizations.

Perhaps the work's only weakness lies in the poor quality of the illustrations used in the basic conservation instruction appendices. The sketches are, unfortunately, very crude and, while probably adequate to deliver their point, may be insufficiently illustrative to the beginner. From an overall standpoint, however, this must be considered an excellent and timely handbook suitable for the reference shelf of nearly every repository.

Joseph W. Constance, Jr.
Georgia State University

Conservation in the Library: A Handbook of Use and Care of Traditional and Nontraditional Materials.

Edited by Susan Garretson Swartzburg. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983. Pp. xi, 234. Figures, photographs, tables, appendices, index. Cloth, \$35.00.

Anyone who approaches the subject of maintaining the collections which may be found in a library becomes aware of the various types of material, each with its own conservation problems, and the amount of technical expertise necessary for properly caring for any one type of material. Most authors have focused upon in-depth presentations of a few related media or a generalized overview of the entire topic of conservation. This book attempts to surmount this problem through the use of specialists who discuss conservation problems and solutions for ten different types of library material.

This approach benefits from each author's ability to focus upon only a part of the task of conserving library collections. Reliance upon experts in each field, moreover, permits the work to be fairly free of inaccuracies and thus a source of sound advice. The chapters on photographs and sound recordings are particularly helpful.

One must, however, recognize the limitations of any work which attempts to cover the entire field of library conservation in a little more than two hundred pages. Preservation techniques often are presented in a generalized discussion without a great deal of detail. This is to be expected when each type of material is covered in approximately twenty pages, which also include a history of the medium and a short bibliography.

Coordinating the opinions and suggestions of a number of experts is a task which the editor occasionally has found difficult to accomplish. The author for book conservation suggests that it is best to file each sheet of a manuscript collection in a

separate folder or later suggests that archival material should be housed in baked enamel file cabinets. The use of file cabinets is contradicted by the author of the section on manuscript conservation, who advocates the standard approach of storing folders in acid-free boxes. Filing each document in a separate folder is impractical in most archival collections, which sometimes measure in the hundreds of cubic feet rather than the tens of items.

The editor's choice of which types of material were to be included is somewhat puzzling in that both maps and architectural drawings are given very little attention. Videotape and videodiscs each receive separate chapters. These are rather unfortunate choices given the rapid advancement of technology in these areas. Indeed, the authors of the chapter on videodiscs admit that "videodiscs and videodisc equipment are still too new at this time to make unequivocal recommendations for their care and handling." Museum objects are another part of library collections which are not discussed.

In summary, one can say that this book serves as a useful reference work, although it does not replace other more substantive discussions on the conservation of library material. It contains a good discussion of disaster preparedness which may have deserved a separate chapter. The work also has two good appendices on suppliers and sources of help, which are likely worth the entire price of the book. One may question some of the topics chosen, but the work is aimed at the library field as a whole and not just at archival repositories. As such, it does not replace the Society of American Archivists' Basic Manual Series, which now includes several works of more substance on particular media. Other more substantial works on photography and sound recordings are also available, so the primary value of this book is as a second opinion on conservation practices.

Michael F. Kohl
Clemson University

Archival and Manuscript Repositories in California.
Compiled by the staff of the California State Archives. Society of California Archivists, 1984. Pp. 152. Paper, \$10.00, from Jane Mueller, 8021 San Leon Circle, Buena Park, California 90620.

A product of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission's California Assessment Project, Archival and Manuscript Repositories in California was compiled by the staff of the California State Archives. Publication and distribution were done by the Society of California Archivists. This directory updates and expands the 1975 Directory of Archival and Manuscript Repositories in California completed by the Society of California Archivists.

The arrangement of the directory is alphabetical by city, beginning with Alta Loma and ending with Yorba Linda, and alphabetical by repository within each city. The main body of the directory includes 401 entries, while an additional 9 make up an addendum. Information was gathered from federal and state agencies; academic collections; historical societies; town, city, and county archives; public libraries; and religious and corporate archives, which responded to the 900 questionnaires sent out.

Entries include the official name of the repository, its address and telephone number, and the hours it is open for research. Major subjects, brief description of holdings, size (usually in linear or cubic feet), restrictions, photocopying information, and user fees complete the information on each repository. An index by name of repository completes the volume.

A look through the directory uncovers many interesting collections, including material dealing with Robert Louis Stevenson, John Steinbeck, Jack London, and numerous other authors. Collections concerning Indians, Chinese in California, and Spanish are represented. Wine, petroleum, and

transportation collections have numerous entries. Collections on communications, film making, and performing arts are listed, as is one dealing with balloons used in sporting and scientific work. California repositories hold a wealth of material, both usual and unusual, both expected and unexpected. Unfortunately, the directory provides no subject access to them, and they can only be found by careful scanning of the entries.

The design of the entries provides for ease of reference, and the information is useful and helpful to a potential researcher. This is a directory well worth having in major repositories and in academic, research, and large public libraries.

Anthony R. Dees

Georgia Department of Archives and History

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives. Published for the National Archives and Records Service by the National Archives Trust Fund Board. Washington, D.C.: National Archives Trust Fund Board, revised 1983. Pp. xiii, 304. Illustrations, tables, maps, photographs, index. \$21.00 hardcover, \$17.00 softcover.

This new guide is a very important addition to research literature and completely replaces the Guide to Genealogical Records in the National Archives (1964).

The book is important for historians, both "regular" and local ones, and anyone doing biographical sketches, in addition to genealogists. Just because genealogy is the title, this volume should not be relegated to the back shelf by anyone in reference or research.

The volume is attractively published and includes charts as well as documents and photographs illustrating the various records discussed. The layout of the book pulls in the reader and makes one

want to read it. It would be a good teaching tool if one were lecturing on research sources or genealogy.

The guide is divided into four main sections. It begins with a brief orientation to the National Archives and where one starts. The book mentions so many things to send for--such as guides that give more details about the subject and an infinite number of bibliographies--that one could spend a lifetime just checking all the references and leads and never get to the records described therein!

The first records discussed are those most used for genealogical purposes--censuses, passenger lists, and naturalization records. Each portion shows examples of the actual record, gives the microfilm or record group number one would need to find the record, and provides a bibliography of supplemental reading material. The "Passenger Arrival Chart" is a very important guide to those passenger records that actually exist.

Section B covers all forms of military records including service, pension, bounty land grants, and miscellaneous. It is most important in this book to look through the miscellaneous sections because they often yield things not known to exist.

Section C covers Indians, blacks, merchant seamen, and civilian government employment records. The latter include those in the civil service of the Confederacy.

Section D is the catchall titled "Other Useful Records." Here one finds land records, which could easily be the subject of a separate book. Other valuable subsections cover claims, including the newly emerging "Southern Claims Commission"; court records, which are so often overlooked and many of which are located in regional Federal Archives and Records Centers; records of Washington, D.C.; and another miscellaneous category which includes passports back to the 1830s, federal direct tax records back to the 1790s, and mention of the Works Progress Administration. The last portion of this section deals with the National Archives cartographic collection.

If the book has any fault, it would be that some of the bibliographies do not include the latest volume on a certain subject. Some type of periodic update should be considered--perhaps an errata page or notices in Prologue. It is doubtful if any new records will be discovered, but certainly new uses might arise for some records not included in this volume.

The book brings to the reader's attention the often overlooked records of "other wars" between the Revolution and the Civil War--those of 1812, the various Indian wars, and the Mexican War. It informs the reader that many records are not actually located in the National Archives in Washington but at a regional branch. It helps the user to identify immediately which are available on microfilm.

One must remember that this is not the entire holdings of the National Archives, just their so-called genealogically important holdings. There is another guide to the entire collection. As a follow-up to this guide, NARS in 1984 initiated a series of small guides to the microfilm of important records of genealogical interest, the first being "Immigrant and Passenger Arrivals."

Because this work is so packed with information and is offered at such a bargain price, every serious user should own a copy. It is one of the five "must" books that research historians, genealogists, and archivists interested in local or state history or personalities should have at their fingertips.

Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Guide to the Microfilmed Harmony Society Records, 1786-1951, in the Pennsylvania State Archives.

Edited by Roland M. Baumann, compiled by Robert M. Dructor. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1983. Pp. vi, 77. Index, photographs. Paper, \$3.00 from the Pennsylvania

Historical and Museum Commission, Box 1026,
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108.

This illustrative guide provides essential information for researchers specifically interested in the history of the Harmony Society and its influence on the development of western Pennsylvania and southern Indiana or more generally interested in German-American studies. The guide describes the microfilmed reproductions of Manuscript Group 185 in the Pennsylvania State Archives. This collection includes 311 rolls of microfilm of the nearly 300 cubic feet of administrative, legal, business, and publications files of the three settlements of the Harmony Society. The contents of the guide include an introduction, a descriptive inventory, and an index.

The introduction gives a precise history of the Harmony Society with photographs of major personalities; a map showing Harmony, Pennsylvania, New Harmony, Indiana, and Economy, Pennsylvania--the three settlements of the Harmony Society; a history of the Harmony Society records; scope of the records; preliminaries and procedures for access to the holdings; a listing of the Harmony Society trusteeships, 1805-1905; and a historical chronology, 1757-1919, with a selection of described photographs.

The descriptive inventory format follows the arrangement of the collection. The collection is arranged at the subgroup, series, and item level. There are six major subgroups under which the series titles and items appear. They are numerically listed by microfilm roll number. The index is arranged alphabetically by special interest subjects; microfilm roll numbers rather than page numbers are used.

This guide is a very useful research tool for the archivist, especially if there is a need to explore the holdings without direct access to them.

Minnie H. Clayton
Atlanta University Center

The Massachusetts Mutual Archival Collection, 1851-1934: A Guide. Guy A. McLain, Jr. and Joseph Carvalho. Springfield, Massachusetts: Archives and Manuscripts, Genealogy and Local History Department, Springfield City Library, 1984. Pp. 81. Photographs. Paper.

When corporations decide to begin an archival program, a first consideration is the placement of the records. Most opt for an internal operation often tied to a records management program, because this arrangement offers tight control. When a corporation decides to establish an archives at a local university, historical society, or public library, implicit in the decision is that recent archival material will not be included. Such is true in the case of Massachusetts Mutual, which in 1981 placed its "historical records" in the Springfield City Library's Genealogy and Local History Department.

The Guide to the records in this collection reveals that most of the collection is not truly archival, if archives are defined as records which reflect policy decisions and are created in the daily activity of the company. The whats, whys, hows, wheres, and whos of administrative decision making are not included here.

Carefully noted in the Guide are the types of records, such as letterbook, minutes, speeches, ledgers, but little description is given of the contents included and subjects revealed in these documents. And the subject matter might be exciting, because Mass Mutual was founded and developed during a time when life insurance was not a generally accepted expense. In fact, two companies from that period, the Insurance Company of North America and the Pennsylvania Company for Insurance of Lives discontinued issuing policies for lack of success. Other subjects relative to the history of insurance

such as the founding of mutuals, the recognition of widows as beneficiaries despite creditors' claims, the beginning of mortality tables, the acceptance of cash surrender values, the growth of group plans for employees, the providing of insurance for men and women in military service during wartime, and most importantly, the regulation of the business by state governments, are not mentioned. By omitting these topics from the Guide, the collection is not placed in historical perspective in relation to the history of business and government or the changes in household economics.

Archivists will find the Guide lacking, because it ignores standard archival principles such as provenance and original order. There is no arrangement according to the structure of the company and records emanating from the same unit are not kept together. In addition, there is no explanation of appraisal criteria or listing of records not included in the collection. Was this material possibly gathered for the writing of the company's official history?

The papers have been distributed into ten series irrelevant to administrative hierarchy and both archival and printed materials are combined within series as well as within folders. Periodicals published by the company and miscellaneous material make up Series 2 and 3. This type of series is generally placed near the end of the collection. No apparent logical order within most series has been established. When alphabetical order would make sense, such as for periodicals, titles are otherwise arranged. When chronological order would reflect the historical context, such as in the presidents' files, alphabetical order is used. Company scrapbooks are filed under 'S' and company bulletins are under 'B'. The series are described in the scope and content note by subseries, but the container list does not indicate subseries, thus causing confusion. The 118 boxes are numbered beginning with 1 within each series rather than in continual sequential numbering, which would facilitate retrieval.

Among the best parts of the collection are the photographs found in Series 8. Images, however, are inadequately described as to format, and the series includes visuals that are not photographs. Through the Guide, photographs have been nicely reproduced, but the location where each can be found is lacking. The Guide is tastefully presented in spiral pamphlet form with ample margins.

Many errors might have been eliminated by careful editing, such as the incorrect heading on page 50, the lack of a 1961 issue of The Congratulator, the inconsistent description of the location of the presidents' letterbooks, the lack of bibliographical data for the company's official history, and no address indicating where to obtain the Guide.

By no means does the collection "fully document this Company's 133-year history" as claimed in the scope note. It is a business collection covering a number of years with a strong emphasis on printed materials. No mention is made about future additions to the collection and the library's policy for collecting business records is not stated.

A final note of concern is that NHPRC money was spent preparing the Guide, which in the reviewer's opinion is a questionable use of public funds. Surely an ongoing business should be expected to finance its archival program. Furthermore, this collection is "on loan" and not permanently donated to the library.

Lynn A. Bonfield

Bonfield Archival Consultants and
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SPEC Kit #104: Microcomputers in ARL Libraries.
Office of Management Studies, Association of Research
Libraries, 1527 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington,
D.C., 20036. 1984. Pp.98. \$15.00, prepayment
required.

Based on an ARL survey of eighty-five libraries currently using microcomputers in public service and technical processing departments, this newest SPEC kit provides policy and planning documents and the survey results. Because many of the libraries felt staff training was the key to productivity and effective use of the tools, the kit also contains training and personnel material.

Chattahoochee Trails. By Hoyt M. Warren. Henry County Historical Society, P.O. Box 222, Abbeville, Ala. 36310. 1981. \$10.00, softbound.

The social and economic history of pioneer days in the Chattahoochee Valley is recounted in this compilation of Warren's articles, which were originally published in the Eufaula Tribune. Oglethorpe's Indian Treaty of 1739, the steamboat era, outlaw John Murrell, famous duels, Benjamin Hawkins, and the outstanding political figures of the area all appear in the sketches. One of the sections deals with the formation of Alabama and Georgia counties in the Chattahoochee Valley, detailing changes over the decades.

In the Land of the Living; Wartime Letters by Confederates from the Chattahoochee Valley. Edited by G. Ray Mathis. Henry County Historical Society, P.O. Box 222, Abbeville, Ala. 36310. \$23.00.

Letters in this publication were written by Confederate soldiers to their families living in southwest Georgia and southeast Alabama. Both unlettered private soldiers and educated commissioned officers are represented, weaving a tapestry of homesickness and family concerns with their views of

skirmishes and battles. Most of the letters are published here for the first time and will appeal to both scholars and the general reader.

The Care of Antiques and Historical Collections.
2d. ed. By A. Bruce Macleish. AASLH Press, 708 Berry Road, Nashville, Tenn. 37204. Pp. 246. \$14.95 (\$13.45 to members), softbound.

Macleish has completely redesigned and expanded Guldbek's The Care of Historical Collections (1972). Major changes in conservation technology, a chapter of photographic preservation, an index, and sixty-six photos and drawings have been included. Aimed at smaller institutions, which must care for an assortment of historically significant materials, the volume outlines programs for storage, display, identification, and environmental control. The new edition also includes preventive maintenance for antiques in homes and private collections. Chapters 9-17 deal with the care of objects classified by composition, such as paper, wood, skin and leather, metal, textiles, ceramics, glass, bone, and ivory, with appendices on adhesives and hanging historical garments.