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Reviews

Cyntia Pease Miller
U.S. Senator Daniel P. Moynihan

Penny Cliff
Thomaston-Upson (Georgia) Archives

Tina Mason
Southeastern Library Network

Sheila McAlister
University of Georgia

Stephen Miller
University of Georgia

See next page for additional authors

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Authors
Cyntia Pease Miller, Penny Cliff, Tina Mason, Sheila McAlister, Stephen Miller, Annie Tilden, and Kaye Lanning Minchew

REVIEWS

American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice. Edited by Randall C. Jimerson. Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2000. Index. 656 pp. Softcover, $44.95 (member price $34.95).

This recently published volume edited by Randall C. Jimerson brings together twenty-eight articles published in various archival journals over the last fifteen years. Twenty of these articles are reprinted from the *American Archivist*, five from *Archivaria*, two from *Archival Issues*, and one from *Electronic Records Management Program Strategies*. Jimerson sees this work as a supplement, a sequel and not a replacement, to *A Modern Archives Reader*, edited by Maygene Daniels and Timothy Walch, and *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance*, edited by Tom Nesmith. It also is not intended to be a basic manual and does not replace the fundamental manuals of the Society of American Archivists. He stresses that the selection is his own and the reader must take it on those

terms. This reviewer will not quibble with his choices. Each of us has a "short list" of pertinent professional literature.

What distinguish this compilation are the thoughtful essays Jimerson has written. A long introduction traces the paths, priorities, and growth of the archives profession over the last twenty years. It sets the context and explains his selection of articles. It alone is worth reading.

The book is divided into nine sections (in addition to the Introduction), with no more than four articles, within each. It includes theory and practice, history and management. The spectrum of archives work is reflected in the chapter headings: Understanding Archives and Archivists, Archival History, Selection and Documentation, Appraisal, Arrangement and Description, Reference and Use of Archives, Preservation, Electronic Records, and Management. A brief introduction to each section sets the context for the topic and his justification for the particular articles within it.

The articles provide important perspectives both on basic elements of archival practice and on fundamental principles in archival theory and methodology. This is a useful volume that deserves a place on every archivist's bookshelf. Not everyone reads the *American Archivist* or has every issue for the last fifteen years and not everyone has access to the journals with a smaller distribution. It is a contribution to the profession to have such a periodic review of the literature.

Cynthia Pease Miller
Archivist
U. S. Senator Daniel P. Moynihan

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Pen, Ink & Evidence: A Study of Writing and Writing Materials for Penman, Collector, and Document Detective. By Joe Nickell. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, index. 240 pp. Hardcover, $49.95.

When is a letter not a letter? After reading Joe Nickell's *Pen, Ink & Evidence,* the enormity of antiquity comes to bear. The history of handwriting in all of its forms is collected in a handsome hardback volume packed with vast amounts of exceptionally well-documented information, including numerous black and white photographs and several "recipes." How to make ink: crush oak galls with mortar and pestle and....

Nickell's work not only is a testimony to the most thorough of research but also is such an attractive presentation it is the perfect coffee-table book. However, unlike most coffee-table books, *Pen, Ink & Evidence* is not a work one can just skim through. It is easy to become so immersed in the detail Nickell fills in every sentence, to find only a few pages have been read in the space of an hour.

The work is divided into five sections: "Writing Instruments," "Ink," "Paper," "Writing," and "Examining Documents." Each of the five sections is divided into subsequent sections with the three appendices being nice references to the historian, archivist, or interested reader. Appendix 1 gives examples of various eighteenth-century scripts. Appendix 2 gives the chronology of writing and writing materials; and for the sleuth, Appendix 3 discusses laboratory identification of pens, inks and papers.

Each section is chronologically organized. Organized under "Writing Instruments" are The Quill, Durable Pens, Reservoir Pens, and The Pencil. The reader can never look at eighteenth and nineteenth-century letters quite the same again after reading about how to cut a quill. Photographs and directions for how to cut a quill are a temptation to put down the book to see if the reader can follow the book's directions.

Examples from a wide gamut of sources are sprinkled throughout his work in forms such as poetry, quotations, and lots of primary source material. The beauty of this work is that nothing is wasted; each poem, quotation, account, or piece of trivia has purpose. The density of this two-hundred-plus-page volume can be attributed to the author leaving seemingly no questions unanswered. In discussing ink erasers, Nickell starts at the nascent attempts of correcting mistakes with a simple "sharp knife" and ends with answering the reader's question, "What about today?" by discussing "the laser eraser—a pulsed laser beam that is absorbed by the ink, which is vaporized and burned away, while the paper is uninjured."

Of particular interest to the archivist is Section 8: "Papermaking." Complete with a "how-to" on hand papermaking, this section tackles various types of paper and problems attributed to certain forms of paper. Full of tantalizing trivia facts for history buffs, a plethora of tidbits fill the book's pages—"Paper was first used in England in 1309 and soon become common, although it was not made there until 1495," and "By the mid-1830s machine-made paper had become relatively common, and the United States was the world's dominant paper-producing country."

Each section in this work is worthy of commendation; however, for the archivist Part Five: "Examining Documents" is especially exhilarating. Decipherment, Age Determination and Questioned Documents tackle issues common to the archivist/historian investigator. Particularly fascinating is Nickell's section on questioned documents. Nickell, a former professional investigator, brings under the microscope issues such as forgery, handwriting identification, "genuine fakes," and laboratory analysis.

Pen, Ink & Evidence provides an invaluable resource to understanding the creation and use of the historical record. Not only is it a useful tool for comprehension of the records in an archivist's care but also is fascinating reading for the general public.

Penny Cliff
Director/Archivist
Thomaston-Upson (Georgia) Archives

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Moving Theory into Practice: Digital Imaging for Libraries and Archives. Edited and principally written by Anne Kenney and Oya Y. Rieger. Mountain View, CA: Research Libraries Group, 2000. Index, illustrations + color plates. 189 pp. Softcover, $80.00; $72.00 for RLG members.

In recent years, we have witnessed dramatic changes in how users access information. Libraries and archives are interested in learning how to digitize their collections and make them more accessible through enhanced Internet presence. Due to the ever-changing digital landscape, institutions need to think critically and make informed decisions on where and how they fit in.

Moving Theory into Practice: Digital Imaging for Libraries and Archives, a primer on digital imaging projects, is the latest offering from Cornell University, which remains one of the leaders in imaging practice and research. While many publications on digital topics focus on theory, Kenney and Reiger also provide practical advice on selection, digitization, quality control, metadata creation, image processing, systems building, access, preservation, and management. The book is intended to provide a methodology of decision making, so that institutions can responsibly set guidelines, taking into consideration their own criteria and resources, and basing these guidelines on standards and

best practice. Throughout the text the notion of continued resource management of digital files—looking at these files as institutional assets and not merely surrogates—is emphasized.

The book draws on the expertise of the authors as well as the experience of some of the most knowledgeable practitioners in the field. Many of these experts have contributed articles that are included in the text as sidebars. The format of the sidebars is a little distracting, but they provide more in-depth information on topics, such as copyright, interpreting equipment specifications, OCR technology, outsourcing, and production tracking.

Moving Theory into Practice, a companion to the weeklong workshop of the same title at Cornell University and a follow-up to Kenney and Steve Chapman's 1996 publication *Digital Imaging for Libraries and Archives,* provides the tools to develop a program appropriate to an institution's needs. The book is required reading for any institution embarking on a digital imaging project.

Tina Mason
Preservation Education Officer
Southeastern Library Network

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The EAD Cookbook. By Michael Fox. Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, EAD Roundtable, July 2000. Links to EAD tools, stylesheets, templates. 45 pp. Electronic form only.   <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/ead/cookbookhelp.html>.

Michael Fox's *EAD Cookbook*, available on the Society of American Archivists EAD Roundtable web site <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/ead/cookbookhelp.html>, is a suite of tools to enable repositories both to mount web-viewable encoded finding aids and to create suitable print

versions. Divided into eight parts, the *Cookbook* provides a brief overview of the suite; a discussion of the principles behind the encoding schema; the protocol itself; an overview of the supported authoring software (XMetal version 1.2, Author/Editor, or WordPerfect 9) as well as software-specific macros and programs; instructions for converting SGML files to XML; an overview of the XSL stylesheets provided with the package; the steps needed to transform the XML files into more universally viewable HTML; and finally, a section on additional methods to provide online delivery.

According to Fox, the *Cookbook* was designed to facilitate the transport of data between systems, the creation of union catalogs of finding aids, the use of the data for multiple purpose (i.e. the creation of MARC records from a marked-up inventory); online navigation within inventories themselves, and the presentation online and in print. Tested by volunteers, the *Cookbook*'s suggested encoding standards are based upon the practices of the Library of Congress and the Minnesota Historical Society, the *EAD Application Guidelines*, and suggestions made by reviewers. The conventions and stylesheets created for the *Cookbook* are intended for encoding inventories of collections of papers or records divided into series rather than those containing subgroups. For more complexly arranged collections such as those containing subgroups, encoders will need to alter the provided stylesheets.

In his instructions, Fox provides an element-by-element description detailing the proper method for marking-up an inventory; however, he does not often cite precedents for his encoding decisions. The conventions found within the *Cookbook* do not allow for the use of the <frontmatter> element, and the templates (one for personal papers and one for organizational records) also do not currently include provisions for edition statements, notations about changes to the inventory or explications about the encoding methods employed by the repository. By encouraging the use of

the MARC21 encoding analogs, Fox allows for the transformation of the finding aids into MARC records. In addition, the stylesheets are designed to convert selected encoded data into metatags that would facilitate online retrieval through the use of many common search engines.

The *Cookbook*'s instructions are clearly and simply written to assist the novice encoder. For the most part, steps are transparent and complete. For example, in the section of authoring software, Fox includes installation procedures, customizations, macros, and templates for each of the supported packages. On the other hand, in the sections on transforming documents, more information or links on DOS commands may have been helpful to those less than familiar with the DOS environment. Additionally, references to resources that summarize the structure of XSL stylesheets would have been beneficial for new users interested in their modification. Fox's inclusion of a sample XML document and the outputs from the various stylesheets allows readers to analyze their own inventories and encoding decisions in the light of the provided samples. The XSL stylesheets are annotated, and Fox actively requests feedback from users and adjusts them accordingly. All in all, the *Cookbook* is an excellent tool for the lone or novice encoder.

Sheila McAlister
Digital Metadata Coordinator
Digital Library of Georgia
The University of Georgia Libraries

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Handbook for Digital Projects: A Management Tool for Preservation and Access. Edited by Maxine K. Sitts. Andover, MA: Northeast Document Conservation Center, 2000. Index. 179 pp. Hardcover, $38.00. Also available online at <http://www.nedcc.org>.

The Northeast Document Conservation Center's *Handbook for Digital Projects: A Management Tool for Preservation and Access* is an important new publication of interest to any institution involved in or considering a digital project of any kind. Following the curricula of the popular "School for Scanning" workshop series, the book provides an in-depth analysis of both the management and technical issues involved in digitization.

As would be expected of a book of this nature, the Handbook for Digital Projects provides an excellent overview of the technology and processes involved in digitization. Steven Puglia's Technical Primer chapter provides detailed information on scanner technology, resolution, color systems, image processing, and compression. The next chapter includes information on best practices from a number of sources, detailing guidelines for printed text and manuscripts, photographs, maps, microfilm and working with OCR. Also included is a brief overview of the advantages and pitfalls of cooperative imaging projects.

The most valuable sections of the *Handbook for Digital Projects*, however, cover information not found elsewhere. Diane Vogt-O'Connor's chapter on selection of materials for scanning provides a ready-to-use framework for the nomination, evaluation, and prioritization of materials to digitize in addition to covering the complex issues involved in the selection process. The chapter includes detailed examples that fully and clearly explain how the process works in action. Nomination and selection forms and an invaluable checklist for evaluation of collections are also included. In her chapter on vendor relations, Janet Gertz considers the benefits and downsides of working with out-

side vendors in digital projects. Most importantly, she provides a checklist on how to choose services and vendors and detailed information on the Request for Information (RFI) and Request for Proposal (RFP), including checklists of what to include in each and how to evaluate vendor responses. Further, writing contracts, working and communicating with vendors, and quality control processes are discussed in detail.

A strong focus of the NEDCC manual is the preservation of digital materials. In his chapter "Overview: Rationale for Digitization and Preservation," Paul Conway emphasizes the importance of preserving the digital products created by digitization processes as well as the access to those products. In a later chapter, Howard Besser characterizes the problems inherent in maintaining digital information and suggests paths to improving digital longevity through preservation techniques and adequate metadata.

Although Besser's chapter makes a brief reference to preservation metadata, the book is unfortunately very weak in the important area of metadata, omitting a detailed overview of descriptive, administrative, and structural metadata for digital projects. Likewise, although digital imaging technologies and best practice development are well covered, image management systems and methods of making images, texts, and metadata available to users do not receive the attention these important areas deserve.

As stated in the preface, the goal of the book was to create "an easy-to-use primer focused on meeting the information needs of libraries, museums, archives and other collection-holding institutions." It succeeds at this goal, providing very clear and extremely useful information in an accessible manner while avoiding a simplistic treatment of the technical and policy issues underpinning digitization. Although it lacks substantial information on the important

areas of metadata and delivery methods, the inclusion of such valuable information and guidelines on selecting materials and working with vendors makes the *Handbook for Digital Projects* an excellent addition to the literature on digitization.

Stephen Miller
Director, Digital Library of Georgia
The University of Georgia Libraries

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Practice to Deceive—The Amazing Stories of Literary Forgery's Most Notorious Practitioners. By Joseph Rosenblum. Newcastle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000. Illustrated, index, bibliography. 360 pp. Hardcover, $39.95.

The word *"Stories"* belies the heavily researched, footnoted, and documented work that Rosenblum offers us. For each of his infamous forger subjects, he obviously immersed himself with each person's chronicle, so that we the readers can surround ourselves with the lives, environments and historical milieus of these criminal practitioners. The author carefully delineates the "reasons," which can frequently be read as "excuses" for this particular form of chicanery, and yet as these "stories" unfold, the reader senses a blending of the whys of literary forgeries.

Rosenblum provides a synopsis account of literary forgery "from antiquity to 1700" before he launches us into individual's stories, and this illustrates the uncertainty of dealing with "ancient history," as errors are perpetuated and layered into later periods. One can picture sedimentary rocks covering a geological "inaccuracy" or fault until an historian or archivist breaks the underlying falsehood loose at a later date. The author does, however, capture the wisely acquired fear of all in the archival profession today that we will misattribute some item or pronounce a signa-

ture or writing "genuine," when it is actually an ersatz product.

"David the Armenian," mentioned in Rosenblum's introduction, posits several reasons for forgery, including the thrill of deception, monetary gain, and the supply of perceived demand. The author himself lists "religion" as a reason for such fakery, but this reason can be used to bolster a belief's adherents through the manufacture of supposedly sacred writings or such a "discovery" can add controversial material to a stew pot of beliefs as with Hoffman's "addition" of a "Second Anointing Ceremony" to the literature of Mormonism. The "delight in deception," seems to provide a portion of the motivation to "George Psalmanazar" for his elaborate and entertaining eighteenth-century ruse of life as a Formosan, but the public's complicity in wanting to believe in such Asiatic, exotic renderings lends a major hand to this symbiotic falsity. "Psalmanazar" also preyed on the readership's ignorance of any Formosan facts, including basic geography.

"Delighting in deception" also seems to give a definite "edge" to several forgers, as they were very scantily educated, having had to leave school because of lacking familial funds. This motivation is almost definitely preceded by Rosenblum's mentioned need to make money, but this reviewer observes, a need to make money married to an unwillingness to engage in honest labor. From *Practice,* forgers do not seem to launch themselves fully formed, but they develop incrementally, with the "cooperation" of an audience. Although a concept not mentioned by Rosenblum, literary forgers of the past could be described as entertainers, or even script-laden "jesters." At times, the forger attempts to pull back from falsehood, as with James Macpherson, the fabricator of verse and lyrics supposedly gathered on "field trips" into the Scottish highlands, who would seem to resist "production" until prevailed upon by a demanding, and paying, public.

Rosenblum's work does not tell us how archival professionals can avoid being duped by literary forgers, but his carefully written chapter on each "practitioner" details his incremental development, and through these accounts we can envision "intervening" or "derailing" such activity. In October 1979, Mark William Hoffman sold a forged document to a "curator of special collections" (whose personal and repository names I have intentionally left unmentioned) for $60.00. Had this curator "put on the brakes" and submitted the possible purchase to a review committee, or delayed the purchase for a prescribed waiting time, such an "inexpensive" item might not have eventually become so very costly.

Annie Tilden
Library Resources Specialist
Library and information Center
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

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Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States. Edited by Anne Bruner Eales and Robert M. Kvasnicka. Washington, D. C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2000. 3rd edition. Illustrations, index. 411 pp. Softcover, $25.00; hardcover, $39.00.

Genealogical Research is a must-have volume for libraries and archives with genealogical collections as well as for individuals planning a research trip to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) or one of its thirteen branches. Superceding the 1985 edition, this volume brings Archives researchers into the twenty-first century by addressing Internet resources, by giving new descriptions of records held by NARA, and by listing citations to new microfilm publications. While some of these new resources, particularly the Archives web site and its NAIL

(National Archives Information Locator) research engine, have changed the way many do genealogical research, the need for this volume remains strong. Being familiar with the contents of this volume will enable researchers and reference staff at archives and genealogical libraries everywhere to get the most out of time spent with National Archives records.

As this volume makes clear in its introduction, this is not a"how-to-do-genealogy" book. This is, instead, a detailed guide to help one prepare to use federal records. Chapters focus on a variety of topics, from widely available census, passenger arrival and naturalization records, and military service and pension files to lesser-known materials relating to particular groups, such as files about Native Americans, African Americans, Merchant Seamen, and civilians affected by wartime actions. Land records and maps are also described. Each chapter is extensively illustrated and provides bibliographic citations and tips on where to look for additional information.

This volume contains much expected information, such as detailed lists of what is included in each census and guides for using soundex indexes of the census. Equally important are examinations of the unexpected, at least to those who do not use federal records on a daily basis. For instance, records of Confederate soldiers can be found outside the South—files should be found both in the state they served and at the National Archives. Additionally, most of the records in the National Archives date after the establishment of the United States of America. Records from the early settlement of the Americas and from the colonial period are found in other repositories.

The primary shortcoming of this volume is that it is a published book. The Internet and rapidly developing technology and resources help make this volume outdated just months after its publication. For instance, the Ellis Island web site, which provides an important new gateway to immigration records, debuted soon after this volume became

available and made searching for many first-generation ancestors much easier. The 1930 population census will be in microfilm rooms across the nation in April 2002, but is not mentioned since it was not available at the time of publication. New indexes and guides to research are being added to NAIL at <http://www.nara.gov> while sources like the 1880 National Census and Index published by the Church of Latter Day Saints are changing the way one does research.

While these new resources make this reference volume dated at the time of its publication, this does not lessen the value and importance of this volume. Successful researchers and reference staff will be able to find additional information about federal records and to learn how to interpret findings. A copy of *Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States* should be found in every local history and genealogy library and should be studied by everyone searching for ancestors or helping genealogists and local historians.

Kaye Lanning Minchew
Director
Troup County (Georgia) Archives