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## Reviews, Critiques, and Annotations

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## Reviews, Critiques, and Annotations

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Christopher Ann Paton, David E. Alsobrook, Kaye Lanning, Vivian S. Rice, Michael F. Kohl, and Robert Bohanan

## REVIEWS, CRITIQUES, AND ANNOTATIONS

Archives in Appalachia: A Directory. Edited by Ellen Garrison. Appalachian Consortium Press, 1985. Pp. 61. Paper. \$2.00 from the Appalachian Consortium, University Hall, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina 28608.

Archives in Appalachia is the published result of a project undertaken in 1984 by the Appalachian Consortium, with support from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, to survey institutions in south central Appalachia and locate records pertaining to the history of the region. Over 1,000 questionnaires were sent to appropriate repositories (such as colleges and universities, historical societies, museums, and public libraries, but excluding governmental repositories and state archives) located in North and South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Georgia. The guide contains responses from 181 repositories and includes basic information about the repositories and their holdings, indexes by subject and type of material, and a list of coming attractions, that is, institutions that did not collect relevant materials at the time of the survey but planned to in the future.

The stated purpose of the survey and resulting directory was to provide research access to local resources documenting south central Appalachia. The directory accomplishes this purpose in a straightforward, no frills fashion. The main entries are arranged first by state and then alphabetically

by name of repository. Each entry includes the name, address, and telephone number of the repository, with the name of a contact person; the type of repository; the types of records held; and the span dates, volume, and broad subjects of the holdings. Information on subjects, types of records, and types of repositories is conveyed through two-letter abbreviations rather than descriptive narrative. The system is simple and the meaning of each entry is clear. A complete list of all of the abbreviations and their meanings is conveniently located at the beginning of the guide, immediately preceding the main entries. Although brief narratives would be welcome, primarily to clarify the point-of-view of each repository (religion through the eyes of a church-sponsored mission?, health science promoted in opposition to traditional home cures?), the entries as published provide adequate information for most purposes.

The directory offers two indexes, one by record type and the other by subject, which allow researchers to pinpoint likely sources for the materials they seek. Each record type or subject category lists the reference numbers of applicable main entries. Like the main entries, the reference numbers within each category are also subdivided into groupings by state, a helpful feature.

One problematic quirk in the format of this publication is the alphabetical arrangement of the main entries. The introduction to the directory notes that "the form of entry used for a repository depended primarily on the form used by the individual completing the questionnaire." The resulting inconsistencies can cause complications in locating a particular institution. In some cases, repositories are listed under department names (such as Special Collections), so that a researcher using the guide to check the holdings of the University of Kentucky, for example, many have to look in several places to find the entry. In addition, a repository's name is found under the first word in the name, regardless of the name by which it is commonly known. The introduction

to the directory advises users to check all possible locations for names of specific repositories. Nevertheless, cross-references would be helpful, and in a larger publication, would be essential.

Archives in Appalachia does fulfill the purpose for which it was intended--guiding seekers of resources on south central Appalachia to the ends of their various rainbows. While much of the information is also available in other publications, this new reference work provides updated, specialized information, aimed at a particular audience, in a suitable, usable format.

Christopher Ann Paton  
Georgia State University

Assessing Alabama's Archives: A Plan for the Preservation of the State's Historical Records. Published by the Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board. Montgomery: 1985. Pp. xi, 267. Glossary, bibliography, spiral binding.

The Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board, with the National Historical Publications and Records Commission's support, recently coordinated an extensive survey of the state's records. To carry out the work of the Alabama Assessment Project, a distinguished group of Alabama archivists, records managers, librarians, historians, government officials, and private citizens were organized into three task forces: State Government Records, Local Government Records, and Historical Records. This published report summarizes their findings and recommendations.

Although Chapter 1, "Alabama's Archival Heritage" by Richard J. Cox, is not a task force report, it sets the stage for the detailed analyses that follow. This chapter will be of particular interest to

Alabama archivists as well as patrons of the Alabama State Department of Archives and History (ASDAH). Cox traces the evolution of the ASDAH from its founding in 1901 by Thomas M. Owen to the present.

The task force report on state government records reveals how the ASDAH has failed to live up to its archival responsibilities as envisioned by Owen. Nearly every state, with the exception of Alabama, has produced finding aids for its records. Furthermore, Alabama records that have been identified as historically valuable are inadequately preserved and arranged. There is little systematic scheduling of state records for retention or disposal.

A state records management program is desperately needed in Alabama. Such a program will enable the ASDAH staff to work closely with state agencies in drafting records schedules for orderly disposal of nonessential materials and preservation of historically valuable items. A state records center also is needed to handle records from creation to disposal, temporary storage, or permanent retention. Freed from the onerous burden of maintaining tons of worthless records, state agencies can serve Alabamians more efficiently and economically, and the ASDAH can provide better access to historical sources.

To achieve these goals, the task force recommends that future legislation defining public records emphasize origin rather than format, thereby allowing the ASDAH to accession computerized records, videotape, movie film, and other nontextual materials. This task force also calls for expanded leadership roles in records management for both the ASDAH and the State Records Commission.

Many of the findings and recommendations of the first task force are similar to those of the other two groups (Local Records and Historical Records). Theft and negligent destruction of local government records have become so epidemic that any future discussions of records management programs may be moot--these records may disappear. More public

pressure must be brought to bear upon the elected officials who are legally responsible for these records. Laws can be drafted to guarantee that historically valuable records are maintained in the proper archives with specific guidelines for preservation and access. A statewide union catalog or computerized finding aid should be designed for all of these records. Yet, these recommendations will not eliminate widespread conflicts and competitiveness in collection policies (especially among local repositories), nor will they alleviate the general lack of cooperation among many archives in the state.

This ambitious preliminary report calls for a new awakening of archival professionalism and cooperation in Alabama. The ASDAH must assume a primary leadership role in this campaign, but the other state archival entities must pull their share of the load. Increased public awareness of the value of historical records is needed; but perhaps, if archivists concentrate on doing their jobs well and serving their constituencies in a competent, professional manner, there will be no need for an aggressive public relations effort aimed at enhancing the image of the archival profession. This report is an important step toward revitalization of Alabama's archival heritage. The staff of the Alabama Assessment Project are to be congratulated for an exemplary publication. Now, members of the entire Alabama archival community must respond to the challenges presented by this report.

David E. Alsobrook  
Carter Presidential Library

Managing Local Government Records: A Manual for  
Local Government Officials in New York State.  
Albany: New York State Archives, 1985. Pp. vi, 105.  
Forms, appendices. Paper. Single copies available

free from the New York State Archives, Cultural Education Center, Albany, New York 12230.

Managing Local Government Records is the first manual ever produced in New York to show local officials how to deal with their records problems effectively. The manual is certainly a must for local officials and researchers in New York state; however, the volume makes a larger contribution by being of value to officials outside the state. Persons working to establish control over local records in places from Macon, Georgia, to Eugene, Oregon, should find this useful. Though few new ideas are presented (alas, no amazing shortcuts or cure-alls have been expounded), the steps needed to create a total records program are carefully and clearly detailed in these eight chapters.

Prepared by the New York State Archives with partial support from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, this manual is similar to manuals prepared by other states in recent years, including Georgia's Managing Public Records, Local Government Handbook. As an overall introduction to records storage and care, the volume is designed more for local officials new to the world of records management than for archivists and records managers who have faced similar problems for years. However, even veterans will find this a useful reference tool as a source for new ideas or as a checklist to gauge progress being made at their own records centers.

The book begins by laying the burden of responsibility on local government officials. Help from the state archives will come primarily in the form of advice, suggestions about specific problems, and publications. As noted on page one of the introduction, local officials should expect only "limited field assistance" from the archives's staff. Since the care of records created 10, 75, or 175 years ago does not inspire the same front-page news coverage as a new hospital wing or improved roads,



local officials have frequently ignored records problems in the past. The introductory chapter reminds these officials that it is their duty to care for local records and that records are "an essential informational resource and an important cultural asset."

Basic records management concepts are detailed in other chapters. Inventorying, scheduling, microfilming, retention, and disposition are all explained with suggestions regarding implementation. For instance, a three-page insert following the chapter on surveying and analysis contains step-by-step instructions on inventorying records. Another chapter addresses the need to care for archival records. The preservation and care of the five percent of local records that typically have permanent value is seen as an integral step in establishing a good records program. While not specifically naming all records of archival value (readers are referred to other publications of the New York State Archives), the authors stress the importance of these records and the steps required for preserving and making them accessible to the public. Simply establishing a sound and effective records management program over local records does not mean a local records official's job is done--records meriting permanent retention will require further care.

Three-fourths of this book will be of value to local officials everywhere. The last thirty pages will be of greater interest to New Yorkers. A chapter on where to go for more assistance (including brief bibliographic entries), laws and regulations relating to local records, and a list of the findings and recommendations of the New York State Historical Records Advisory Board in 1984 remind that this volume was prepared for the people of a particular state.

Bruce Dearstyne, New York state's Principal Archivist for External Programs and Executive Director of the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators, did a

commendable job in writing this volume. The mere fact that the manual may be of interest to officials in states far from New York raise a central question: Do we really need fifty such volumes from each state in the Union which repeat the same basic ideas and then conclude with several pages of interest primarily to those living in that state? State politics might necessitate the need for fifty manuals, but perhaps the National Information Center for Local Government Records (NICLOG) will provide a service to local and state officials by showing that while schedules for individual records series need to be prepared on the state or local level, manuals for the care of these records can be prepared for a broader audience. NICLOG's manual should be available this spring. In the meantime, New York's volume should serve as a model for others to follow.

Kaye Lanning  
Troup County (Georgia) Archives

Researching the History of Your School: Suggestions for Students and Teachers. Albany: New York State Archives, 1985. Pp. iv, 40. Photographs, bibliography. Paper. Single copies available from the New York State Archives, Cultural Education Center, Albany, New York 12230.

Researching the History of Your School is a forty-page booklet which has, as the title suggests, a worthwhile purpose. The manual, published by the State Archives of the New York State Education Department, declares in its introduction an "underlying theme of the manual--that local resources can be used by students and teachers for the recovery and understanding of local educational history." (p. 1)

Unfortunately, the booklet will have limited use

in advancing that theme outside New York. Chapter II, "The Development of Elementary and Secondary Education in New York," is a short overview that might be of interest to those in that state, but it would not be significant to students elsewhere. Chapter III, a tabular listing of educational milestones, also applies only to New York.

The heart of the manual rests in Chapters IV and V. The booklet lists sources for the researcher to consult in his quest for school data. However, the lists are too general to be more than common sense; certainly, they are not specific enough to be timesaving.

Possibly a novice teacher could gain insight and confidence from the general checklists and suggested lesson plans. In addition, the bibliography would be useful for a New York teacher. However, this limited usefulness would not warrant purchase outside the Empire State.

Vivian S. Rice  
Morrow (Georgia) High School

Guardian of Heritage: Essays on the History of the National Archives. Edited by Timothy Walch. Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1985. Pp. v, 93. Photographs. Paper. \$7.00 from Guardian of Heritage, Dept. 417, Publications Sales Branch (NEPS), National Archives, Washington, DC 20408.

This slender volume about the history of the premier archival institution of the United States will be standard reading for the next generation of budding archivists, taking its place next to works such as the Society of American Archivists's Basic Manual Series. A copy of this work should be issued to all new National Archives and Records

Administration (NARA) employees in order that they may gain a better idea of the history of their agency. This volume, moreover, serves as a good introduction to the National Archives for the general public, including those individuals who hold the purse strings.

A 1984 issue of Prologue published in celebration of the National Archives's fiftieth anniversary is the source for this collection of essays about that institution. Great demand for the issue encouraged NARA staff to undertake further essays to complete the overview of its history. In this endeavor the staff has succeeded beyond the expectations usually related to anniversary publications.

The primary strength of this volume is the lucid, objective account of the history of this institution which permits the work to be accessible to disinterested citizens, overworked graduate students, and seasoned professionals. The text is amply illustrated by photographs which help to distinguish it from dry and seldom-read works. These photos may overemphasize the archives leadership, but they also include rarely printed images of actual archival activities and working conditions of which the general public, including graduate students, are not aware. Photos of a dozen processors in one large room sitting at what were, no doubt, navy-gray desks or a trio of staff members wheeling in metal containers filled with records provide unusual glimpses of archival work.

In his introduction, Timothy Walch identifies the major weaknesses of this work. This is by no means the definitive history of the agency; rather, these are perceptive essays created under the constraints of time and publication space limitations. Each author's narrative has its own perspective. There is a certain amount of repetition, particularly among the first three essays, which could have been reduced. The essays discussing recent events will be subject to revision by later historians. There is little space devoted to archival developments outside

the National Archives, though comparisons might be illustrative.

Walch states that this book is a "modest" effort which fills a void in historical literature. That is an understatement. The essays provide a solid basis for an understanding of this guardian of our heritage. The essays do not gloss over the problems and politics of this institution, such as racial discrimination, internal politics which forced the resignation of an Archivist of the United States, or the traumatic episodes related to the Nixon papers.

This book is highly recommended. It is not only informative, but easy reading. In an image-oriented age, there is hardly a leaf in the book without a photograph. The work is a major service to the archival profession and one which should be on any reading list of courses in archival administration.

Michael F. Kohl  
Clemson University

MARC for Archives and Manuscripts: A Compendium of Practice. By Max J. Evans and Lisa B. Weber. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1985. Pp. 259. Appendices, three-ring binder. \$15.00 to SAA members and \$20.00 to others.

MARC for Archives and Manuscripts: The AMC Format. By Nancy Sahli. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1985. Pp. 252. Glossary, bibliography. \$20.00 to SAA members and \$30.00 to others.

Both may be ordered from the Society of American Archivists, 600 South Federal, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60605, at a cost of \$32.00 to SAA members and \$45.00 to others.

Because of their arrangement, these two manuals

look alike at first glance. Both duplicate the field-by-field structure of the tenth update of MARC Formats for Bibliographic Data published by the Library of Congress in 1984. This publication revised the standards for all MARC formats then in use, including Archives and Manuscript Control (AMC). It was not intended to be a manual and cannot function as one.

From the Formats, Nancy Sahli has extracted the information relevant to the AMC Format, expanding, explaining, and arranging this information in a useful manner. A helpful introduction (in question and answer form) provides information about the AMC format's development, structure, and implementation. Also included are examples of a data entry form and AMC format records, as well as the SAA's "Data Elements Dictionary," published separately in 1985. Sahli's manual is written with more grace and goes into much greater detail than the AMC manual recently published by OCLC (Online Catalog Library Center). It is essential for anyone using the AMC MARC format.

Of equal interest is Max Evans and Lisa Weber's Compendium of Practice. It is the product of a national conference held at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in the fall of 1984 in which representatives from institutions which had implemented or were about to implement the AMC format met to compare and examine their practices. Since it contains little prefatory material, some familiarity with the AMC format is necessary to appreciate this work. It is arranged like the Sahli manual and contains the USMARC definitions and OCLC and Research Library Group policy statements for each field. Specific examples from each of the repositories using the format are included in the field descriptions. Particularly useful are the lengthy descriptions of the main entry (6XX) fields.

Taken together, these two manuals provide archivists using the MARC AMC format with all the information they need. Archivists not planning to use MARC, who simply wish to gain some understanding of AMC and its impact on the profession, may be

better served by more general discussions of the uses and implications of archival automation such as Katherine D. Morton's article in the Winter 1986 issue of The American Archivist, "The MARC Formats: An Overview."

Robert Bohanan  
Carter Presidential Library

Library Automation; Issues and Applications. By Dennis Reynolds. 1985. R.R. Bowker Co., 205 E. 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017. \$37.50.

A must volume for the neophyte, this is a comprehensive treatment of the processes which are touching all our professional lives. The volume is divided into three broad sections--History and Background, Planning and Preparation, and Applications--with chapters covering topics such as online catalogs, online search services, optical disk storage, and shelflist conversion. Best news of all: It's lucidly organized and easily understandable.

Standard Citation Forms for Rare Book Cataloging, by Peter Van Wingen and Stephen Davis, 1985, \$10.00. Bibliographic Description of Rare Books, Rules formulated under AACR 2 and ISBD(A) for the Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books and Other Special Printed Materials, 1981, \$7.50. Graphic Materials: Rules for Describing Original Items and Historical Collections, compiled by Elizabeth Betz, 1982, \$12.00. All three titles are available from the Library of Congress, Cataloging Distribution Service, Washington, DC 20541.

These three guides exemplify LC's commitment to standardizing access points. Standard Citation Forms, while not attempting to be a recommended canon of bibliography sources, does reflect those bibliographies found most useful in describing special collections holdings at LC, with input from the Rare Books and Manuscript Section of ALA, and the American Antiquarian Society.

Bibliographic Description expands and elaborates on AACR 2's brief section on rare printed materials--a response to the need to have a single, thorough cataloging standard.

And, Graphic Materials fills a gap in cataloging guidelines for those thousands of research libraries, archives, historical societies, professional organizations, and private collections which are custodians of graphic materials. These rules provide guidance within AACR 2, with attention to the impact of automation on inventory control and research access.

Reference Services in Archives. Edited by Lucille Whalen. 1986. Haworth Press, 28 E. 22nd Street, New York, NY 10010-6294. \$24.95.

All phases of archival reference services are covered in this compilation--organization and arrangement, guides and collection inventories, national information centers, RILIN's Archives and Manuscript Control project, evaluation techniques, and many others. The volume should be a part of any archives professional reference collection.

Video to Online: Reference Services and the New



Technology. Edited by Bill Katz and Ruth Fraley. 1983. Haworth Press, 28 E. 22nd Street, New York, NY 10010-6194. \$29.95.

Practical advice, with comparative assessments, make this an important addition to professional collections. There are chapters on database choices, bibliographic retrieval, comparisons of online and manual searches, free vs. fee searches, applications to interlibrary loan searching, and on integrating local data bases with print materials and reference services.

American Historical Supply Catalog. By Alan Wellikoff. 1984. Victorian Accents, 661 W. 7th Street, Plainfield, NJ 07060. \$16.95.

The nearly five hundred nineteenth century products represented here are still being manufactured. The value of the catalog to historical repositories is in terms of the identification of artifacts and gizmos. Entries include descriptions, history, and lore surrounding the items, and range from clawfoot tubs to birch bark canoes.