

January 1977

## Book Reviews

Mary E. Frederickson

*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

Mike Lewellyn

*Georgia Department of Archives and Records*

Brigid S. Townsend

*R.J. Taylor, Jr., Foundation*

Jane B. Hersch

*West Georgia College*

Maynard Brichford

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/georgia\\_archive](https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/georgia_archive)



Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Frederickson, Mary E.; Lewellyn, Mike; Townsend, Brigid S.; Hersch, Jane B.; and Brichford, Maynard, "Book Reviews," *Georgia Archive* 5 no. 2 (1977).

Available at: [https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/georgia\\_archive/vol5/iss2/7](https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/georgia_archive/vol5/iss2/7)

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Georgia Archive by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu).

---

THE PRACTICE OF ORAL HISTORY: A HANDBOOK. By Ramon I. Harris, Joseph H. Cash, Herbert T. Hoover, and Stephen R. Ward. (Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975. Pp. 98. Appendices. \$8.50)

The authors of this handbook on oral history methodology and technique, all professors at the University of South Dakota, have made a useful contribution to their goal of providing professional training for oral historians. The handbook is based on the work of the South Dakota Oral History Project which has undertaken major field programs in both American Indian oral history and state and regional oral history.

This book contains a brief outline of the development of oral history as a field within the historical profession, as well as a discussion of the present limitations and future uses of this method of research. Most important the authors include detailed discussions of their field work experiences, the "how-tos" of selecting interviewers and equipment, specific guidelines for locating respondents in a community, and several cogent and useful excerpts from actual interviews. Finally, the authors outline their method of processing and editing the interviews. The book's appendices provide a valuable addition to this topic and make available examples of the abstracts, legal release forms, and internal processing sheets used by the South Dakota Oral History Project.

Throughout, the authors emphasize the limitations of oral history and stress the fact that, like more traditional forms of historical research, it is simply another means to the end of historical analysis and interpretation. They argue that while it will never supplant traditional methods of historical investigation, oral history can add new dimensions to the study of the recent past. The most important of these

new dimensions, and to the authors the most effective role of oral history, is the study of the experience and consciousness of groups within American society hitherto deemed "inarticulate" in "a non-elitist pursuit of historical information among citizens at all levels of society."

Students and experienced practitioners of oral history alike would do well to heed the advice of the authors when they discuss the importance of preparatory work for interviewers. Emphasizing the need to be thoroughly familiar with the written source materials on a given topic before beginning the process of interviewing, the authors also stress the advantage of a multi-dimensional approach to historical research. They recommend the use of manuscripts and oral histories in conjunction with photographs, maps, folklore materials and carefully prepared field notes, and underscore the usefulness of concepts and methods drawn from other disciplines, especially anthropology and sociology.

Although in general the examples of interviewing procedures and processing which the authors use from their own research projects are easily applicable to other oral history programs, there are several exceptions. First, in discussing the always complicated procedure of choosing informants, the authors tend to over-generalize. They suggest, for example, that a "group to avoid is the clergy (unless your subject is ecclesiastical)" and warn readers that women too often make disappointing respondents because they "viewed life through a kitchen window." But the experience of other oral history projects, especially those which have sought to analyze the function of the church within a particular society and historical changes in the basic unit of the family, would point to the value and the necessity of interviewing members of both these groups.

Second, the authors endorse a method of processing tapes which is both expensive and inordinately time-consuming, for it includes transcribing every tape, indexing, editing, and retyping each transcript. While members of the South Dakota Oral History Project seem to agree that interviews often vary considerably in quality and usefulness, they do not propose that those interviews of poorer quality be indexed but not transcribed and that only those interviews with extensive editing



changes be retyped. Both of these suggestions would serve to lower the cost of oral history projects without sacrificing accessibility for researchers.

In spite of these weaknesses, the authors, with the assistance of the Microfilming Corporation of America, have provided researchers in oral history with useful guidelines and models both for the conceptualization of oral history projects and for the more practical aspects of interview processing, storage, and data retrieval. By preparing this handbook and sharing with others the experiences of the South Dakota Oral History Project, the authors have helped insure that oral history will be used "both as a research device for the present and a preservation of information for the future."

Southern Oral History Program  
University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill

Mary E. Frederickson

INFORMATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT. By Wilmer O. Maedke, Mary F. Robek, and Gerald F. Brown. (Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1974. Pp. v, 449. Illustrations, tables, appendices, index. \$12.95)

Some archivists have traditionally viewed records managers as cultural Visigoths who systematically destroy historical records in the name of economy and efficiency. This is an unfortunate misconception which this book, by its explanation of the rationale and methodology of a function which is essential to archival development, will help to extinguish.

Information and Records Management is a balanced, organized, and practical guide written in uncommonly good style for a business publication. The book is arranged in six sections: the origin and role of records management; active records; controlling records at their creation; maintaining inactive records; and micrographics. Each chapter ends with questions and projects for the student reader. In format, readability, and breadth of coverage, the book supersedes the work of William Benedon, the dean of American records managers, and the Association of Records Managers and

Administrators' testing affiliate recommends the book as one source for professional certification. The archivist may particularly profit from the discussion of forms design, filing control, security measures, and the justification of microfilm proposals.

After commending it to the readers of Georgia Archive, one hesitates to pepper the book with criticism. However, the authors fail to discuss the special problems of personnel engaged in the frequent drudgery of paper work or the general task of supervising a staff. "Costing-out" alternative record-keeping systems is an important skill, but the book does not offer an example. Assessing the administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical value of a records series may sometimes be a subjective process, but the topic merits a much more extended discussion. Few archivists will profit from the brief chapter on archives, which was written for records managers. The discussion of microfilm technology and application is intelligent and comprehensive, but a workbook of case studies would improve the capable summary. A technical omission, which particularly perturbed this reviewer, was the lack of any bibliographic citations except occasional footnotes and text references.

Most archivists will profit from this book; many will find it a suitable desk companion for their Schellenberg. This is the best medium available for training entry level and junior archivists in the fundamentals of records management. As a textbook, as a reference, or as a guide to what the records manager is doing, this book has value. Archivists must learn the language of the records manager to counsel him, to gain new tools, and to prevent the myth of the cultural Visigoth from becoming a reality.

Governmental Records Office  
Georgia Department of Archives  
and Records

Mike Lewellyn



WRITER'S MARKET. Edited by Jane Koester and Paula Arnett Sandhage. (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest, 1976. Pp. 936. Glossary, index. \$13.50). ARTIST'S AND PHOTOGRAPHER'S MARKET. Edited by Lynne Lapin, Kirk Polking, and Paula Arnett Sandhage. (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest, 1976. Pp. 718. Index. \$10.95)

The 1977 Writer's Market is the forty-eighth annual edition of a standard reference volume for freelance authors seeking the most appropriate book and periodical publishers for their work. Anyone, archivist or no, considering publishing for prestige or remuneration will be fascinated by the extensive how-to (and even where-to) sections of the book which precede the 4,095 listings for "8,577 Paying Markets." In fact, the book is so appealing it is an open invitation to anyone to become a writer.

Aside from offering the delights of authorship and some logical approaches for accomplishing the same, the volume's listings contribute limited information to the archivist. The markets are arranged alphabetically by title beneath topics, and the topics are arranged alphabetically under seven headings: Book Publishers; Trade, Technical, and Professional Journals; Company Publications; Farm Publications; Consumer Publications; Miscellaneous Freelance Markets and Services; and Foreign Markets. The listings are by no means inclusive, since these are only markets which actively solicit some free-lance writing, usually for monetary compensation. This immediately excludes most scholarly and technical journals.

Even using the index for cross-references, there are no entries for archives or archival studies as such. There are nine entries under "library science," only one of which would be of interest to archivists (Microform Review) and twenty entries under "history," three of which might be helpful (American Historical Review, Journal of American History, Virginia Magazine of History and Biography). The others are aimed at popular readership or are so narrow in scope as to be of very limited usefulness. (It is, of course, true that it is handy to know about Sea Classics in order to answer that one reference question about "ships and events at sea.")

The most comprehensive source of historical and archival materials (which can easily be missed when consulting the table of contents and index) is the twenty-eight page list of "Picture Sources" useful for illustrating manuscripts. Although most sources are companies or individuals, some museums, galleries, libraries, foundations, and governmental agencies are included. Most germane, however, are descriptions of the historical illustrations held by four major libraries, seven city or regional historical societies, eleven state historical societies, and four state archives in addition to the National Archives and Records Service and the Public Archives of Canada. There are, incidentally, no entries related to genealogy, even under hobbies, associations, or miscellaneous.

There is a glossary of publishing terms and an alphabetical index to the names/titles of all the markets. It is indeed unfortunate that there is no in-depth subject indexing. The editors themselves say "if your main area of interest is food and drink publications, you're limited to less than a dozen listings in that category. But by skimming the whole book, you'll find dozens of related listings." How much better to let an index do the job.

The 1977 Artist's and Photographer's Market is a companion to the above volume and does for the freelance photographer or artists what the Writer's Market does for the independent writer. It is again a fascinating tome, with 3,667 listings for 9,168 "Paying Markets"; but this reviewer was unable to discover any application of the book for the archivist.

R. J. Taylor, Jr., Foundation

Brigid S. Townsend

OGLETHORPE IN AMERICA. By Phinizy Spalding. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977. Pp. 207. Bibliography, index. \$12.50)

For those "un-Georgians" among us, James Edward Oglethorpe was the founder of the Colony of Georgia. Phinizy Spalding, associate professor of history at the University of Georgia and editor of the Georgia Historical Quarterly, is one of Oglethorpe's most thorough



biographers. In this treatise Spalding attempts to update A. A. Ettinger's biography of Oglethorpe, emphasizing primary source material which has come to light in the last forty years. The result is a critical study of Oglethorpe's American career. The work is marred by Spalding's topical approach and might better be termed a collection of essays.

Spalding's picture of Oglethorpe is not flattering, and it is no wonder that the book was published outside the state. This English gentleman appears as a determined egotist who wanted to play father to a colony. As a result of his rigid adherence to preconceived ideas of America, the colony nearly failed.

Oglethorpe seems to have been a poor administrator who was afraid to delegate power and responsibility to his colonists. He also stubbornly adhered to the rules of the Trustees even when it became obvious that the rules could not work. His inflexibility in the matters of land placement, the use of slave or indentured labor, economic diversification, and rum nearly proved the colony's downfall. Even his beloved Indians deserted him for better trading with the South Carolinians.

The author's stated aim is to take the Georgia hero off his pedestal and evaluate critically his effect on the development of the Georgia colony. Dr. Spalding does this in great detail, but concludes by making excuses for his subject and once more elevating him to godlike status. Nonetheless, this biography is a needed correction to more laudatory views of a complex individual and will be of special interest to Georgia scholars. The primary sources chosen by Spalding certainly give the researcher a new and needed slant on Oglethorpe.

West Georgia College

Jane B. Hersch

ARCHIVE-LIBRARY RELATIONS. Edited by Robert L. Clark. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1976. Pp. 218. Annotated bibliography, appendix, index. \$15.95)

This collection of essays by six authors is a useful addition to the literature on the relationships between archivists and librarians. Older members of



the profession will read it as recent history, and their younger colleagues will find it a readable introduction to the contemporary situation. Though the shared concerns of archivists and librarians about professional research, program evaluation, reference service, and physical facilities are omitted, the reader gains a comprehensive, if somewhat disjointed, picture of relations between archivists and librarians over the past forty years.

Most of the contributors have had both archival and library experience and are qualified to discuss settings, similarities, differences, common issues, shared concerns, and professional communication. The treatment of archival institutions is extensive, and library concerns are generally those related to archival practice. From an archival viewpoint, the most valuable contributions are Frank Burke's essay on library and archival education; Miriam Crawford's contributions on legislation, copyright, access, and social responsibility; and Frazier Poole's article on conservation. Much of the content of these sections is either new or stated in brief, understandable prose that is rarely found in professional journals.

Frank Burke's survey of recent education for librarianship is lively and accurate, and his discussion of archival education is one of the best in print. Its realism and avoidance of simplistic solutions is commendable. He identifies the conflicts between graduate education in a subject field, thorough training in research methodology, and the smorgasbord of course sequences, institutes, and in-service training programs that pass along archival skills to career entrants, whose entry into the profession is still dependent on passing a civil service examination, possessing the proper academic credentials, or having sufficient work experience.

Burke's essay on materials and methodology offers an interesting discussion of acquisitions, processing, description, and use, accompanied by speculative comparisons and contrasts of the practices of archivists and librarians. Some of the confusion in this essay could have been avoided by the inclusion of definitions. His essays on public relations and fund-raising and on collection building and acquisition policies are well

written and should be considered with similar contributions in the July, 1975, issue of the Drexel Library Quarterly.

Miriam Crawford's account of legislation is a valuable discussion of recent history, but would have benefited by a more critical evaluation of H. G. Jones's conclusions regarding the Federal Records Act of 1950 and by the inclusion of a paragraph on the institutional development of the Library of Congress in the twentieth century. Included are sections on library legislation and the ALA Washington office, a stimulating discussion of the development of federal grant support in the 1960's, and six pages on copyright and literary property rights which set a worthy precedent in brevity and clarity for those who will be explaining the new copyright law. Her essays on access and confidentiality and social responsibility cover many interesting parallels between archival and library experience. Archivists need this kind of summarization of their recent history, which is too often scattered in newsletters and reports and obscured by the rhetoric of the protagonists.

Contributions by Robert Clark include an essay on the archival setting, which is marred by a number of statements that are not based on careful historical research, and a discussion of the library setting which emphasizes the use of technology to reduce "the forces of distance and time" and supports the position that state libraries should administer archival programs and the collection of historical manuscripts. His discussion of the archivist and the librarian avoids the usual pious platitudes only to fall into a potpourri of generalizations, stereotypes, speculations, and rhetorical surveys.

The Clark essay on standardization and technology contains a useful introduction to standards affecting archival and library practice and devotes several pages to the development of the MARC format for manuscripts. While the MARC format has given "insight into the unique problems . . . in the control of original material," an orientation toward library control, excessive detail, and an involved structure render it virtually useless for the control of archival and manuscripts collections. Clark concludes that standardization is more useful to institutions than to users and that the



demand "is strongest when the material is distributable, or when uniqueness is absent."

Frazier Poole's contribution is an excellent brief discussion of the importance of the conservation of archival and library materials, the current state of the art, and the need for new techniques and trained personnel. Robert Brubaker's articles on professional associations, relations between the Society of American Archivists and organizations of historians and librarians, and the regional archival associations are a helpful summary of recent events. The volume ends with an annotated selected bibliography of thirty-eight items from which Frank Evans's Modern Archives and Manuscripts: A Select Bibliography was unfortunately omitted.

Archivists and librarians should have an opportunity to relate to each other as well as to the archives and libraries where they are employed. These essays will guide them.

University of Illinois  
at Urbana-Champaign

Maynard Brichford