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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

RELIGIOUS ARCHIVES: AN INTRODUCTION. Written by August R. Suelflow. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980. Pp. 1-56. Bibliography, appendices, sample forms. Paper. SAA members \$5/others \$7.)

Why should the series of manuals published by the Society of American Archivists include one on religious archives? Is there a basic difference in the manner in which the principles of provenance and arrangement are applied in a state archives and in a church archives? To be sure, the subject matters in the offices of creation are different, but archivists do not arrange records according to subject. Principles for arrangement should not vary in any great degree--or so it appears.

Obviously the Society of American Archivists acted in response to the many requests for such a manual on religious archives by the large number of people who are custodians of religious records. For at least twelve years the Church Archives Committee (later the Religious Archives Committee) discussed the need for a manual on religious archives and sought to outline the contents that should be included. As a church archivist, I appreciate the response of the Council of the Society of American Archivists to the concerns of this segment of the Society. Yet the question remains. What can be said or should be said about the care of religious archives that is not already more fully examined in the other manuals published by the Society?

For whom then is this manual written? Pastor Suelflow, it seems to me, had a rather difficult assignment. How does a writer speak to the situation in the more than "500 religious archives and

historical institutions functioning at various levels" referred to in the opening sentences of this manual? He or she cannot. Religious archives are established and unestablished, funded and not funded, well-staffed and poorly staffed, adequately housed and less adequately housed. Thus it is. The more professional religious archivist has access to a larger corpus of literature. The less experienced one may find the compression of a great deal of material into such a small space somewhat confusing. It might have been more profitable to use a "case study" method to illustrate how the religious archivist applies the general archival principles to his/her situation. Yet this would have necessitated the choosing of a structure of one church, and problems could have resulted from this approach. In any case, the various churches must supplement this manual with more practical guidelines.

Pastor Suelflow is a professional archivist who has been active in the Society of American Archivists for many years. He is a fellow of the Society and a former member of the council. He is a competent professional and has worked diligently in establishing an archival program in his church. For many new religious archivists he has been a source of strength and encouragement. In this manual he has given a concise overview of the problems in religious archives, discussed the general principles of archival management, and described related activities such as oral history and museums. I think that his assignment may have been somewhat more involved than those of us in the older Church Archives Committee considered in our deliberations over nearly a dozen years. It appears that in our conversations we were less realistic in our plans for a manual than we might have been. It may be that with the publication of the basic manuals by the Society of American Archivists there is no need for a specific one on one religious archives unless a radically

different approach is followed. Bellamy et al. Book Reviews

Archivist of the
Episcopal Church

V. Nelle Bellamy, Ph.D.

ARCHIVISTS AND MACHINE-READABLE RECORDS. Edited by Carolyn L. Geda, Erik W. Austin, and Francis X. Blouin, Jr. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980. Pp. 1-248. Paper. SAA members \$7/others \$10.)

In this publication the Society of American Archivists reproduces proceedings of a conference on the archival management of machine-readable records held at Ann Arbor, Michigan in February 1979. The text offers its readers a wide-ranging report on the current state of machine-readable data management, a history of archival involvement in the field, and a compelling argument for greater participation by archivists in future technical developments. The conference was the culmination of efforts by Jerome Clubb (executive director of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research), Robert E. Warner (Archivist of the United States and former director of the Bentley Historical Library), Meyer Fishbein of the National Archives and Records Service, and Ann Morgan Campbell (executive director of the Society of American Archivists) to bring together an international panel of experts in the area of machine-readable archives. For their parts, Carolyn Geda, Erik Austin and Francis X. Blouin, Jr. did an outstanding job in the editing and preparation of this volume.

The contributors' papers are grouped into sections by common theme, including: research opportunities; archival programs for machine-readable records; management and dissemination of machine-readable data for social research; developments in computer technology; and confidentiality and privacy.

The volume concludes with a summary section that concerns itself with the implications for the archival profession of technological and social change, particularly in the areas of data creation, communication, and storage.

The first group of papers suggests a number of new research areas for those working in university and government records. Meyer Fishbein observes that the quantities of computer data created by institutions, agencies and businesses results in unparalleled appraisal and description problems for archivists. He challenges researchers to assist archivists in the development of selection and retention criteria for these records. In the section on archival programs, Harold Naugler (Public Archives of Canada), Charles Dollar (NARS), and Michael Roper (Public Record Office, UK) describe their respective approaches to the problems of computer record appraisal, preservation, and dissemination. Thomas Mills of the New York State Archives, calls upon archivists to contribute to the decision-making process concerning the disposition of machine-readable records at the time of their creation. Similarly, William Rofes of IBM advocates interdisciplinary cooperation among concerned organizations towards the creation and maintenance of automated records in accessible forms.

The third section of this volume outlines two cooperative efforts involving data sharing, data base maintenance, and hardware and software maintenance. Carolyn Geda and Erik Austin of ICPSR and William Gammell of the Roper Center describe the history, operation, and problems of their respective agencies in this context. Contributors to the section, developments in computer technology, describe some of the exciting innovations in the areas of mass storage and peripherals that promise to ease the archivist's tasks. However, Gregory Marks warns that the immediate outlook is for increased technical diversity with corresponding problems of

hardware incompatibility and software inadequacy. Richard A. Volz and Bernard Goller discuss two advances of particular interest to archivists: the development of inexpensive mass storage capacities in computer systems, and the evolution of software designs that may eventually serve the archivist as MEDLINE and MUMPS serve the medical community.

In the final group of proceedings papers, Judith Rowe notes that recent United States legislation has tended to encourage institutions to place global restrictions on their automated data. She urges persuasively that archivists should acquire data management skills to enable them to protect confidentiality while making valuable research data available to users. Richard Hoffbart is particularly concerned that data collected by private consultants for public policy evaluation find its way into archives where it would be readily accessible. Finally, Paul Zeisset describes Census Bureau procedures designed to allow important research to continue while protecting the privacy of individuals. In closing the proceedings volume, Clubb, Warner, and Blouin urge the archival profession to acquire sufficient computer literacy so that we may influence the development of new technology, the creation of machine-readable records, their servicing, and the policies affecting their use.

Although contributors to ARCHIVISTS AND MACHINE-READABLE RECORDS are all specialists, each succeeds in addressing his or her complex area of responsibility in laymen's terms. This book is an excellent training tool for those seeking a survey of technical information and practical applications as they relate to the management of machine-readable records in an archival setting. The editors have organized the volume so that the sections follow logically and flow into one another. The archival profession is, in short, well served by this informative and carefully

prepared work. It is a credit to all those involved in its publication.

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Anne Sims

ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS: EXHIBITS. Written by Gail Farr Casterline. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980. Pp. 1-70. Bibliography, appendices, diagrams, illustrations and photograp[s]. Paper. SAA members \$5/others \$7.)

ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS: EXHIBITS, the latest addition in the Society of American Archivists Basic Manual Series by Gail Farr Casterline is a very useful and practical publication. This manual, not meant to be a definitive guide, will serve as an excellent beginning point for anyone who wishes to use documentary material in exhibits. Ms. Casterline's immediate audience is archivists. EXHIBITS, however, should prove beneficial to anyone wishing to understand how archival material can be used to enhance exhibits. Overall, ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS: EXHIBITS will be a valuable tool to everyone. Ms. Casterline has outlined each chapter in a clear, logical order that can be followed to accomplish a successful exhibit. Beginning with the simple question, "Why Exhibits?" Ms. Casterline discusses planning and development, conservation, design and technique, program coordination, and administrative considerations. Additional material such as where to go for help, supplies and equipment, sample forms, and a bibliography, are covered in appendices. While it is not included, an annotated bibliography would have been useful.

The strength of this manual is that it has been published at all and that it does not become immersed in the battle which so often rages between archivists

on whether or not to exhibit. Once Ms. Casterline raises the question of "Why should we exhibit?" she quickly, efficiently, and quite effectively states her reasoning and presents a very admirable case in favor of archival exhibits. While EXHIBITS will not meet with total acceptance from staunch opponents of archival exhibits, those in opposition are possibly the ones who would benefit the most from just such an approach.

The chapter on planning and development is perhaps the best section in the manual. Most failures in exhibits of any type usually occur as a result of insufficient planning and improper development. In the chapter she deals with defining your audience, choosing the right topic for your institution, organizing your time in order to accomplish all that will be needed prior to completion and opening of the exhibit, selecting material appropriate for the exhibit, and combining manuscript and archival material and graphics in a manner which will be pleasing, attractive, and understandable to your visitor.

The chapter dealing with design and technique includes a great deal of "nuts and bolts" information. Indeed, the entire publication is an excellent practical guide, and this section is of particular note. Ms. Casterline presents design, layout, mounting procedures, matting and framing, and labeling in an easily understandable fashion.

Like many other exhibit publications, however, Ms. Casterline has relied on illustrations that demonstrate her particular point but, at the same time, demonstrate other bad exhibit techniques. One illustration which shows a young man stooping to read a label represents an excellent example of a primary cause of museum fatigue. However, it was selected to illustrate how label text can be augmented by additional material and graphics. Another illustration selected to demonstrate the use of toning and cropping

photographs depicts an exhibit that is too busy to be effective. Simplicity and good design are not opposing points of view. Many museums have been ruined by the "chrome and plexi" look and have been over-designed with the result that visitors cannot concentrate on the objects being exhibited. These distractions should be avoided in archival exhibits as well as museum exhibits.

One important area of interest which has been included in EXHIBITS but unfortunately is ignored by far too many professionals is program coordination. Too often an exhibit is produced to wither on the vine for want of public attention. So much can be accomplished through posters, catalogues, publicity, and coordinated events and activities. By following Ms. Casterline's examples the reader can discover "means of sharing exhibits with present, distant, and future audiences." This is a very good thought and one worth holding in mind when developing any exhibit.

At first glance, the title of the manual, ARCHIVES & MANUSCRIPTS: EXHIBITS, might lead some to think a great mistake has been made. Everyone is aware that archives retain and preserve their collections for research and that museums exhibit their collections. However, thankfully, there is no mistake. EXHIBITS is a welcome "how-to" manual for which the Society and Ms. Casterline should be congratulated. As Ms. Casterline admits in her opening statement, this publication "is bound to raise some eyebrows." Hopefully, it will also serve to open many eyes to new opportunities in dealing with their collections, their public, and their colleagues.

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American Association for State and
Local History

WOMEN'S HISTORY SOURCES: A GUIDE TO ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, VOL. I/ COLLECTIONS, VOL. II/INDEX. Edited by Andrea Hinding, Ames Sheldon Bower, and Clarke A. Chambers. (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1979. Vol. I: pp. ix-1114; Vol. II: pp. vii-391. Hardcover, sold only as set \$175.)

Requiring more than five years of the most exacting research and literally countless hours of dedicated, editorial labor, WOMEN'S HISTORY SOURCES: A GUIDE TO ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES has finally appeared. So ambitious is the publication, so useful is its design, that a whole range of new possibilities for fundamental research in women's history has now opened. Covering a 350-year period, the compendium offers an unparalleled opportunity for all sorts of investigators to develop new sources and data. While some of the material has

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been available in typescript for two years, the completed guide with its sophisticated index reveals the full utility of this massive effort of compilation.

In the past, both the character of the traditional sources and the ways they have been indexed have served to obscure women's materials. For example, women's diaries, letters, and journals which contain information about daily life are often hidden under a catch-all category of "family papers," listed only under a male name. Likewise, certain institutional or organizational collections may include women's collections, but traditional indexing methods do not make this fact obvious. The World War I Council of National Defense, for example, contains the papers of the Committee on Women's Defense. Then there are collections of denominational world mission boards, containing personal reminiscences and papers from countless women missionaries. Papers of famous women have always been accessible in archival collections; it is the little-known but still important women, the waiting-to-be-rediscovered women, as well as social history, family history, and popular culture studies that are given such an impetus by these volumes.

Volume I lists and describes 18,026 collections of non-book materials in 1,586 locations in the U.S. and is arranged alphabetically by state and city. The source list includes over 150 oral history collections, 36 photograph collections, the more usual papers and manuscripts, and film archives. Descriptions always give span dates of persons and organizations, as well as the size and kind of collection and what restrictions are placed on its access.

The two volumes are easy to use together, for they include clear prefatory material on how this reference work may best be exploited. There are also instructions on archival usage and a glossary.

A clear cross-referencing system was devised so that a woman's married name(s), pseudonym, nickname, and given name will all lead to the same source. In as many cases as possible, the multiple names are sorted out and assigned dates by an ingenious (and very labor-intensive) method of cross-checking correspondents, places, subjects, etc. The result is a listing of thousands of women's names and dates, most of whom are not included in existing sources. If one wants to know more than simply what is available in a particular city or university, then the index volume is essential. Here one finds listed not only every proper name used in the descriptions of the collections of the first volume, but also listings of professions, topics, themes, and genres. Bold-face type designates a collection solely on that topic or person.

In using the sources, I found much factual information I was unaware of (relationships, works, etc.), at least twenty research topics of interest and importance to me, and many exciting possibilities for student research. There are some gaps in the listings, as was bound to be the case. For instance, important manuscript collections of women evangelists and preachers active in the early days of the abolition movement from the African Methodist Episcopal Church at Wilburforce University and in Philadelphia are not listed. There are other collections missing, no doubt because certain archivists and curators were not contacted by the survey team. For example, neither the collections in East Tennessee State University's Archives of Appalachia nor Appalachian State University's Oral History Collection appear in this volume.

The other weakness of this work is more serious but less easily corrected. **WOMEN'S HISTORY SOURCES** does not, and cannot, get at that material which has never been collected or written down--the non-prominent woman whose papers have been lost, the life of

the anonymous ^{Georgia} ~~White~~ ^{Woman} ~~Journal~~, No. 4, 1979, with the inclusion of the oral history, photograph and film archives, the listings will go a long way toward providing the material for the writing of the history of women's lives and work in this country. As editor Andrea Hinding says in the preface, WOMEN'S HISTORY SOURCES "is a compendium of women's experience in the United States. It describes women who were arsonists, astronomers, attorneys, botanists, legislators, madams, paleobotanists, physicians, and stagecoach drivers, along with those whose contributions were made as wives, mothers, homemakers, and leaders of or participants in local civic and cultural organizations. It describes women who were conventional and those who were eccentric, those who promoted suffrage while opposing birth control and others who did the reverse" (p. xi).

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Margaret McFadden

SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES EXCHANGE CENTER; PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS, KIT 69. Prepared by the Office of Management Studies, Association of Research Libraries. (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1980. Pp. 1-109. Illustrations, sample forms. Paper. \$7.50 ARL members/\$15.00 others.)

Planning to prevent disasters and planning to minimize the effects of disasters is the cheapest and most straightforward program that an archives or library can implement to preserve its collections for future generations. PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS gives a brief and incomplete introduction to this planning process.

This ARL SPEC KIT consists of a two-page introduction and a collection of eleven planning documents and three case histories. Many of these source documents are excerpts from longer reports. The availability of

the original documents is not noted, and the lack of adequate citations for many of these source documents would make their acquisition difficult. For instance, the Cornell University Emergency Manual, which has been available to the public in the past, is not given a complete citation. The introduction to the SPEC KIT is quite good considering its brevity, and it should be read with careful attention. However, the extremely brief format of the introduction has led to a serious omission: The crucial distinction between planning for life safety and planning for the protection of collections has been missed. Life safety planning, or emergency planning as it is usually called, carries a great burden of moral, financial, and legal liability with it. Advice and consent must be sought from legal counsel, insurance carriers, and purveyors of emergency services in the development of a life-safety planning program.

Planning for the prevention of avoidable disasters and preparing for unavoidable disasters can and should be undertaken by the custodians of archive and library collections. As noted in the introduction to the SPEC KIT, a comprehensive disaster plan consists of three elements: 1) prevention through reduction of the potential for disaster; 2) preparedness to limit the effects of disasters; and 3), preparation for recovery or salvage. Effective planning of parts one and three will require consultation with building engineers, maintenance staff, and local fire and police authorities. Such discussions are an opportunity to convince these staff and other authorities that the collections are important resources worthy of protection. This involvement may lead them to feel that they are part of a team with the responsibility to protect a valuable local resource. The sense of a common and vital mission may be essential during a disaster when there is competition for emergency services. The consultation process will also usually provide invaluable information necessary for detailed planning. One

institution, for example, found that even if they had a disaster plan, the library disaster team would not be allowed in the building after a calamity. Several months of negotiation were necessary to get special permission and badges to gain entrance to the collection areas.

The introduction also makes reference to three printed resources which will aid in the planning process. Of these three reference tools, Hilda Bohem's booklet, DISASTER PREVENTION AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS (University of California at Berkeley, 1978), is the only available disaster planning guide. The other two references are Peter Waters' PROCEDURES FOR SALVAGE OF WATER-DAMAGED LIBRARY MATERIALS (Library of Congress, 1975), and John Morris' MANAGING THE LIBRARY FIRE RISK (University of California at Berkeley, 1979). These sources are most valuable as adjuncts during the process of local disaster plan formulation.

One of the most valuable aspects of the SPEC KIT is the publication of several implemented disaster plans based on, or compatible with, Mrs. Bohem's planning guide noted above. The guide was written as a flexible model which can be adapted to local needs and resources. The use of Mrs. Bohem's document in conjunction with the implemented plans presented in the SPEC KIT from the University of Rochester, University of California, Riverside, and the National Library of Medicine should allow any archives or library to design its own disaster plan. The SPEC KIT alone is probably not sufficient to enable archives or libraries to accomplish either emergency or disaster planning, but it is certainly a necessary acquisition because of the guidance which can be obtained from the plans of the contributing institutions.

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SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES EXCHANGE CENTER: BASIC PRESERVATION PROCEDURES, KIT 70. Prepared by the Office of Management Studies, Association of Research Libraries. (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1981. Pp. 1-116. Sample forms and documents. Paper. \$7.50 ARL members/\$15.00 others.)

The Systems and Procedures Exchange Center Kit #70, BASIC PRESERVATION PROCEDURES, is the third to result from its March 1980 survey on preservation, following #66, PLANNING FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS (July-Aug 1980), and #69, PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS (Nov-Dec 1980). Kit #70 is a compilation of twenty-six documents (116 pages) including policy statements, guidelines, and procedural instructions from universities, libraries, and conservation centers.

The purpose of the kit, as stated in the introduction, is to combat the "myth of the expensive expert." The object is to present actions a library can take to prolong the life of its collections but which do not require large sums of money or highly specialized knowledge.

Kit #70 is divided into four sections, the first being devoted to the shelving and handling of books. Discussed in this section are proper environmental controls, including temperature and humidity for books and manuscript materials; proper bookhandling, including shelving, transferral of whole collections, and book removal from shelves; and a section on consciousness-raising among patrons. Many of the suggestions presented in this section are rudimentary,

such as the need to reinforce very thin items, keep huge books flat, and leave an air space at the back of the shelves. The really creative recommendations in this section come in the Columbia University contribution on "Consciousness-Raising Among Patrons." The thrust here is to make your patrons aware of the way they handle library materials through messages printed on bookmarks.

The second section of the kit delves into actual treatment of materials which can be executed inexpensively by staff members with only basic training. This section begins with discussions of standards for materials to be used, and the screening of materials to be treated. Specific materials such as adhesives, polyvinyl acetate, board, cloth, leather, and papers are discussed in some detail, as is the meaning of "conservation binding" (p. 47). This section also contains rather in-depth treatises on matting and framing documents, polyester film encapsulation, and the treatment of leather bookbindings.

The problems and advantages of photoduplication are discussed in section 3, Preserving Information Through Reproduction. Policies followed by several repositories, including Stanford and the New York Public Library, are presented here, as are the guidelines used by Yale on the physical handling and storage of microforms. Covered in these guidelines are considerations not only for microforms, but also for lighting, humidity, temperature, and acoustics. Storage for both positive and negative service microforms is discussed in detail as are microform production and processing and printer's printers.

The last section of the kit deals with preservation decision making. Included here is a "Brittle Books Information Sheet," provided by the University of California, Berkeley, and the New York Public Library's statement of guidelines concerning the permanent retention of materials in their original formats.

Documents Presented in their original form causes a few problems for the reader of the SPECS Kit #70. There is, for example, some repetition of information, particularly in section 1. In addition, the differences in style and in documentation from memoranda to instructional papers makes the reading a bit difficult. In spite of the problems, this kit contains valuable information and the reassurance that basic preservation need not be postponed due to a lack of funds or highly-trained staff.

Tennessee State Library
and Archives

Susan Tannewitz-Karnes

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

THE JOURNAL OF THE BIRMINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Edited by Marvin Yeomans Whiting. (Birmingham, Alabama: The Journal of the Birmingham Historical Society, 2020 Park Place, Birmingham, 35203. Subscription rate: \$10 for libraries; \$5 for Society members; and \$6.00 for non-members. The JOURNAL is issued semi-annually).

The Volume VI, Number 4 issue of the JOURNAL OF THE BIRMINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY (July, 1980) has just crossed the editor's desk. It is an impressive publication in terms of both its content and its layout. This particular issue is devoted to "Birmingham Remembered: A Decade of Change, 1910-1920," and includes articles by Michael A. Breedlove and Marvin Y. Whiting as well as a survey of location names (complete with a town map) as of June 10, 1914 edited by Alice M. Bowsher, Ann M. Burkhardt, Eva M. Holley, Mary S. Miller and Marvin Y. Whiting. The JOURNAL is an excellent reminder of the contributions of local historical societies to the preservation and greater appreciation of our material culture. Archivists