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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE WPA HISTORICAL RECORDS SURVEY: A GUIDE TO THE UNPUBLISHED INVENTORIES, INDEXES AND TRANSCRIPTS. Compiled by Loretta L. Hefner. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980. Pp. 1-42 and microfiche. Paper, appendix. SAA members \$4/others \$6.)

With assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) has produced a highly useful and much needed reference work. This guide describes thousands of cubic feet of unpublished inventories, indexes, transcripts and other research tools produced between 1935 and 1942 by the Historical Records Survey (HRS) of the Works Progress (Projects) Administration. The guide itself is the result of an extended survey to locate the archival institutions which have inherited the mass of HRS materials hastily put aside when the war effort suddenly replaced unemployment relief as a national priority. The SAA survey found HRS unpublished materials in ninety-eight institutions in forty-five states and the District of Columbia and, with the assistance of those institutions, gathered at least summary data on these holdings.

The value of the guide for researchers is significantly enhanced by the expertise and care exercised in its editing and design. Vicki Irons Walch, the project advisory committee, and the SAA office staff all contributed to this success. The descriptions are uniform and concise and the format is consistent throughout despite the necessary reliance on information provided by cooperating institutions with varying levels of control over their own holdings. The author's well-written introduction quickly tells the reader how to use the guide and Leonard Rapport's brief chapter, adapted from his 1974 article in the American Archivist, is a good administrative history of the HRS and a personal insight into the origins of this project.

The four-page appendix to the guide consists of a matrix summarizing the holdings, by institution, of the most common HRS materials and showing at a glance the extent of the remaining records. A pocket on the back cover contains a ninety-page microfiche supplement offering, where available, a second level of information about holdings. For example, the printed guide indicates that inventories of state, county, and municipal and church records and transcripts of county commissioners' journals are among the 126 cubic feet of HRS materials at the Kansas Historical Society. The microfiche supplement names the state agencies, local government units, and religious denominations whose records were inventoried and transcribed.

Despite its many fine features, this guide has one glaring omission. Nowhere does it describe the information content and the research significance of the records series it so carefully enumerates. The guide lacks the sort of analysis commonly found in the scope and content note of a well-written archival finding aid. For the relatively few archivists and researchers who have used unpublished HRS materials this omission is merely inconvenient. But there is a much larger audience without this firsthand experience who might profitably turn to the HRS materials and to the archival records described in them. Hefner's guide offers this group only a glimmer of the nature and potential research uses of the riches it can find in the HRS records.

Of course, the content and accuracy of the HRS products vary with the individual surveyors, the nature of the project, and the quality of project supervision. In most instances, the basic methodology was sound for, as Hefner points out, the HRS was a milestone in the development of modern archival arrangement and description. Additionally, the national projects received careful scrutiny from HRS staff in Washington. Even the random information appearing on the unedited forms can be valuable for it frequently was based on interviews with records custodians and on patient examination of the records. The church records forms, for example, gathered historical information at the parish level-

names of early clergy, citations to published sources, and the language in which the records were written--which might be difficult or impossible to recover today and which provides an excellent starting point for further research.

The most obvious use of the unpublished HRS inventories and surveys is to determine whether specific records survived at least to the 1930s. Leonard Rapport first used them to locate and obtain more complete descriptions of New England town minutes for 1787-1791. Other researchers have used the HRS series descriptions, both the unpublished records and the more than two thousand published volumes, to pinpoint records which included information pertinent to their studies. Certainly a review of the HRS description would be invaluable preparation before plunging into the attics, basements and vaults where many records are often kept without order or identification. State archives and local archival and historical agencies have used the HRS materials as a foundation for follow-up surveys and for planning improved records and archival programs. Frequently, the records described by depression era workers no longer exist. In some cases this reflects the elimination of obsolete and useless materials but, too often, historically valuable records have been destroyed along with the routine. Such changes over time are inherent limitations to any field survey but they also give the HRS a unique value as a snapshot of the extant records of thousands of agencies and institutions at a specific moment.

In a period of eight years, thousands of HRS workers surveyed tons of historical records. Today, the record of their work can be of immense value to historical, genealogical and other kinds of research into the American past. This newly published guide makes that widely scattered record far more accessible to researchers. Loretta Hefner and the Society of American Archivists have produced a volume which deserves to be on the reference shelves of every archives and library serving researchers in United States history.

State Historical Society
of Wisconsin

John A. Fleckner

THIS SO REMOTE FRONTIER: THE CHATTAHOOCHEE COUNTRY OF ALABAMA AND GEORGIA. Written by Mark E. Fretwell. (Eufaula, AL): Historic Chattahoochee Commission, 1980. Pp. xvii-352. Maps, illustrations, photographs bibliography, index, and hardcover. \$14.50.)

The Chattahoochee River and its tributaries played a key role in the creation of the Alabama and Georgia territories. Mark Fretwell has combined various disciplines with a good use of rare sources to explore the historical and geographical development of the Chattahoochee country and those who braved both the calm and turbulent moments of their nemesis--the Chattahoochee River.

The book is filled with varied and familiar historical events, places, and people. Included are such well-known personalities as Andrew Jackson, James Oglethorpe, Henry Grady, Benjamin Hawkins, and William Bartram. Events such as Columbus' and DeSoto's voyages, the removal of the Cherokees and Creeks from the territory, gold at Dahlonega, and the Civil War and its aftermath are also discussed. The growth of such river cities as Columbus, Georgia and Phenix City, Alabama and early Indian settlements (e.g., Coosa and Coweta) are detailed. Explorations, settlements, wars, removals, and discoveries were all important events in the development of the Chattahoochee country. The author has presented these facts in a manner (chronology and biographical sketches of various personalities) which captures one's attention and transports one back to those times.

Although the chronological and biographical sketches provide the reader with a smooth, flowing narrative, the transition from one topic to another, with a sprinkling of geographical facts, is confusing at times. The book moves back and forth from a strict chronology to a discussion of a personality to a discussion of particular events or places (e.g., gold discoveries, steamboats, Indian settlements). Some discussions are so cursory that the reader is left questioning the necessity of their inclusion.

Additionally, throughout most of the book the discussion of Florida either dominates or is equal to the

discussions of Alabama and Georgia. This is especially true in the first half of the book. Hence, a more appropriate title might have been "The Chattahoochee Country of Alabama, Georgia and Florida."

One of the primary problems this reviewer has with the book is the author's perjorative terminology with reference to native Americans. Indians are referred to as "ancients," "savages," and "heathens." For example, passages referring to the Indians read as "... their captors were savages highly skilled in all forms of cruel torture," or "... the savages continued to harass them whenever opportunity offered...." It is only in Fretwell's discussion of the removal of the Creeks from Alabama and the Chattahoochee country that one gets a feeling of sympathy for the plight of the Indians. The "discoverers" encroached on their land, robbed them of their culture, and thrust a foreign way of life upon them. The natural reaction of the Indians was to fight back. This work will nevertheless prove useful as a source book for various historical facts and anecdotes.

Archivist
Atlanta Historical Society

Mamie E. Locke

ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS: AN INTRODUCTION TO AUTOMATED ACCESS. By H. Thomas Hickerson. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1981. Pp. 1-60. Diagrams, sample forms, glossary, bibliography, paper. SAA members \$5/others \$7.)

Computerization has become a pervasive aspect of modern life. Archivists, like their colleagues in other areas of the information management community, are not immune to these trends. With each new year comes an expanding array of articles, conference sessions and workshops dealing with automated records and techniques. But where does the uninitiated, and yet interested, archivist begin in his or her quest for an understanding of this new technology and its implications for archives. Hitherto, one could suggest any

number of journal articles that shed light on aspects of computer applications in archival settings. At long last the profession has a comprehensive introductory manual worthy of the designation.

Prepared by one of the recognized leaders in the field of archival automation, Archives and Manuscripts: An Introduction to Automated Access contains all those qualities in a publication that one expects from its author. The internal structure of the volume is extremely well developed and a marvel in its economy. Hickerson begins by introducing the reader to "computers and how they work." He reviews basic computer design, operation, and terminology. He also discusses, albeit briefly, various types of computer peripherals from IBM card punch machines to optical character recognition readers. Like each of the succeeding chapters, this section concludes with a well-directed, select bibliography.

"Computer operations and archival objectives" begins where the author's hardware discussion ends. Here, he considers the rudimentary aspects of computer programming and the automated manipulation of information. He suggests both the possibilities and limitations one may anticipate when working in this area. Hickerson's observations regarding both equipment (hardware) and programming (software) prepare the reader for a survey of computer applications in archival settings. The author provides a short history of early automation efforts followed by a more detailed consideration of ten ongoing systems including: MRMC II (Master Record of Manuscript Collections), SPINDEX II and III (Selective Permutation INDEXing), SELGEM (SELF-Generating Master), GRIPHOS (General Retrieval and Information Processing for Humanities-Oriented Studies), CODOC (COoperative DOCuments), the Corning Glass Company Index, ARCHON (ARCHives ON-line), the History of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Index, PARADIGM (Programmed Annual Report and Digital Information Generation Matrix), and NARS A-1 (NARS).

Each review is thorough, balanced and fair. As one might expect, SPINDEX receives more attention than other

systems; but here, too, the treatment is evenhanded. For the more successful systems, Hickerson has included sample forms and printouts. As informative as this section may be to those who have not come into contact with SPINDEX, SELGEM and the rest at conferences or through other publications, it pales in significance when compared with the volume's concluding section on "implementing automated techniques."

It is in this final chapter that the author makes his greatest contribution to an understanding of how computers may be introduced into archives. He rightly begins by emphasizing the need for an evaluation and, if necessary, a restructuring of manual operations in anticipation of automation. Flowchart symbols and examples are provided as well as an instructive narrative. Hickerson also includes sample forms for the preparation of data for computer entry as well as a brief consideration of system options. He concludes with a few words about the activities of National Information Systems (NIS) Task Force and other professional bodies. According to Hickerson, "in 1981, we are at an important point in the development of automated methods. The archival profession is faced with a number of significant issues...the articulation of professional goals and the development of national cooperation."

The recent announcement that the National Endowment for the Humanities will fund another year and a half of NIS Task Force activity suggests that 1981 is indeed a turning point for archival automation. The publication of this fine volume demonstrates the profession's commitment to this new direction. Tom Hickerson and the Society of American Archivists are to be praised for its release. The volume will no doubt serve for many years to come as an essential element in the training and education of archivists. Archives and Manuscripts: An Introduction to Automated Access also encourages us to look to the future and to seek high technology answers to our needs as managers of information.

Manager of Office Systems
and Services, F. W. Faxon Company, Inc.

Richard M. Kesner

U.S. COPYRIGHT DOCUMENTS: AN ANNOTATED COLLECTION FOR USE BY EDUCATORS AND LIBRARIANS. By Jerome K. Miller. (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1981. Pp. 1-292. Bibliography, indexes, hardcover. \$25 U.S.A./\$30 elsewhere.)

Archivists and manuscript curators were among the many interest groups who awaited the passage of the long debated Copyright Revision Act of 1976 which took effect January 1, 1978. In this volume, Jerome K. Miller of the Graduate School of Library Science of the University of Illinois reproduces the basic documents necessary to understand the substance and intent of the new law. In addition to the text of the law with its 1977 amendment, Miller reproduces the reports of the three congressional committees which wrote the law-- the House Committee on the Judiciary, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, and the House-Senate Conference Committee. In interpreting the law for specific applications, courts seeking to ascertain the intent of Congress will consult these documents for the legislative history of the law. The volume also includes supplementary documents such as passages from older congressional reports, selected regulations of the Copyright Office, statements from the floor of Congress, and statements from interested groups such as the American Library Association and the National Commission on the New Technological Uses of Copyrighted Works (CONTU). The SAA Statement on the Reproduction of Manuscripts and Archives for Research Use, though it predates the 1976 law, is also included.

Although the documents comprising the bulk of the book are available elsewhere, this is a useful one-volume compilation. Documents are not simply reproduced serially in their entirety. Miller reproduces the law section by section and attaches the relevant portions of the committee reports and supplementary documents to each section, so that an archivist interested in a problem can find all relevant statements conveniently assembled for comparison. An index further enhances access to particular issues and statements. The volume is addressed to educators and

librarians and omits the debate on jukeboxes and other issues having little relevance for library and classroom use.

About three-quarters of the book consists of documentary material. Preceding it Miller offers an analysis of the parts of the law particularly important for librarians and educators--fair use; the duplication of musical, pictorial, graphic and audiovisual works; duplication of journal articles for reserve readings; interlibrary loan regulations; copyright warnings; and the reproduction of unpublished documents. In the last instance Miller comments succinctly on the issues so troublesome for archivists. He offers a clear reading of the major advantages of the new law for archivists but follows the Copyright Office in a narrow reading of the applications of section 108 for reproduction of archival materials, limiting such reproduction to making safety or deposit copies only. He confines other archival copying to that allowed under fair use in section 107.

Miller's analysis, though useful for archivists, does not examine all of the ramifications of the law for archival materials such as reproduction, or transfer and registration of copyright. An archivist who wishes a fuller discussion of these issues will wish to supplement the documents supplied in this work with the more specialized statements of SAA counsel Alex Ladenson in the SAA Newsletter of May 1979, the article by Carolyn Wallace in Georgia Archive in fall 1978, and the recent statements of the SAA Task Force on Copyright.

Bentley Historical Library
University of Michigan

Mary Jo Pugh

INTRODUCTION TO PRECIS FOR NORTH AMERICAN USAGE. Written by Phyllis A. Richmond. (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1981. Pp. 1-321. Diagrams, glossary, appendices, index, hardcover. \$27 U.S.A./\$33 elsewhere.)

Archivists, until recently, expressed little or no inter-

est in subject indexing. Lately, however, challenges to the orthodoxy that provenance alone is sufficient to provide any user of archival records with adequate access have alerted archivists to the need to attend to indexing theory. Efforts to link archival repositories in information exchange networks almost require that archivists pay increasing attention to the body of literature represented by this manual for subject indexing using PRECIS. PRECIS is a particularly apt place for archivists to begin their studies for it represents a technique which is at the same time ideally suited to the intellectual demands of our most vocal clients and radically out of step with the administrative realities of archival repositories.

PRECIS is a classification system built around the syntax of natural language. It is based upon the construction of a "title-like" English sentence which describes the contents of the item being indexed. Unlike keyword indexing systems, PRECIS conserves the context of its terms (or facets). Unlike permuted indexing, PRECIS also retains the grammatical relationship between facets (and hence, the meaning often embedded in such constructions) by building rules of semantics into the automated manipulation of indexing phrases. Here is the sophisticated, meaning conserving, indexing system ideally suited to complex subject access without precoordination of terms.

Such sophistication has its price, however. Training in the use of PRECIS is an arduous intellectual challenge and a significant professional achievement. PRECIS indexing is highly time-consuming since each term represents the culmination of the process of constructing an adequate descriptive phrase and translating it into grammatical symbols. For novice indexers, confronting vast and non-cohering bodies of archival records, the application of PRECIS may prove overwhelming. For archival repositories it is almost certain to prove uneconomical.

Should we then dismiss the system and this manual? As a guide to implementing an indexing technique--however clear, concise and complete (all of which it is)--we have little use for it. But as an introduction to an indexing

system which was designed to overcome the limitations of many more familiar techniques, we would be ill advised to ignore Richmond's work. Literate discussions of indexing, in which archivists should increasingly participate, will assume an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of PRECIS and of its theoretical bases. Although this book is not intended to be analytical, it will serve as a convincing exponent of a proven solution to some fundamental indexing problems.

Before we are converted by the proselytizing of indexing zealots or dacoiteed by followers of Ranganathans' faceted classification orthodoxy, archivists should examine how their clientele actually uses archival records, how they formulate reference queries, and which records deserve subject indexes. Only well-planned and carefully executed user studies will justify the costs archivists would incur indexing by any system, let alone PRECIS.

Project Director

David Bearman

SAA National Information Systems Task Force

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SADDLE BAG AND SPINNING WHEEL. Edited by George P. Cuttino. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1981. Pp. 1-332. Photographs, index, charts, hardcover. \$18.95.)

Dr. George Peddy Cuttino, distinguished Charles Howard Candler Professor of Mediaeval History at Emory University, has ventured out of his field to edit a group of family letters from the Civil War. The letters comprise the personal correspondence of George Washington Peddy, a surgeon in the 56th Georgia Volunteer Regiment C.S.A., and his wife, Kate, and extend from October 1861 to April 1865. Dr. Cuttino was the grandson of the correspondents.

The letters managed to escape the predictable fate of many family collections. They were kept in the editor's great-grandfather's trunk, but the family understood the value of the trunk's contents, thus insuring their survival. The letters are now safely preserved in the library of Emory University.

Dr. Cuttino has kept the editing of the documents to a minimum, thus maintaining their spontaneity and historical flavor. The original spelling has been retained, along with the grammatical idiosyncracies. The editor has added or altered punctuation due to the "stream of consciousness" style of his grandfather. The few footnotes that appear help to put the events described in the letters in their historical context.

The volume is well organized. An introduction provides the historical setting and the letters themselves, which are numbered consecutively, are grouped into five sections. They extend from part one, the "Coastal Operations in Georgia (29 October 1861-18 April 1862)," to part five "Hood's invasion of Tennessee and the Surrender in Carolina (23 September 1864-17 April 1865)." Genealogical charts and a general index keyed to the numbered letter facilitate the book's use. As would be expected more of George Peddy's letters (166) than Kate Peddy's (50) survive.

George Peddy was an ordinary surgeon forced to serve

in the Civil War; Kate, a housewife, was left at home with their child. The letters portray two very ordinary people caught up in the trauma of war. Each letter is usually replete with tender and beautifully expressed statements of love and they could have easily been assembled and published as a volume of love letters. Thus, the letters through their intimate quality provide a poignant counterpoint to the grand events unfolding on the battlefields of the war.

Much of the correspondence is personal and gossipy. Kate talks about who is going off to war, sickness in town, infidelities, the attitudes of blacks, marriages, and deaths. Dr. Peddy queries Kate about the health of their daughter and discusses camp life, deteriorating conditions at the front, and the health of the regiment. The volume provides a graphic social record of everyday life during those troubled times.

Winthrop College Archives
and Special Collections

Ron Chepesiuk

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

FILE MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEMS. By Suzanne L. Gill. (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1981. Pp. 1-193. Glossary, bibliography, answers to chapter questions, index, hardcover. \$16.50.)

This volume addresses the needs of those concerned with the establishment and maintenance of filing systems and is directed at both the practitioner and the student working in a library, small office or corporate environment. The author begins with a brief discussion of records and information management and the history of business records. A "Procedures Manual" follows this introductory material

and comprises the largest single portion of the work. Within this section, the author considers methods of classification, processing materials (including indexing tools), the retention and disposition of records, circulation procedures, equipment and supplies, and centralization versus decentralization. The closing section of the book deals with "paperless files" and includes two corporate case studies. According to the author, "the emphasis in the text is on organizing material in a paper format in a practical rather than theoretical fashion." While the latest trends in office automation and micrographics receive little attention, the author does provide sound advice on the basics of file management. Since many archivists also have responsibility for the management of current records or they work closely with the records managers within their parent institution, File Management and Information Retrieval Systems will prove extremely useful as an instructional guide and as a reference manual. The author has also provided a series of questions and answers at the end of each chapter for those wishing to use this book in their archival administration and records management courses.

DIRECTORY OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA. Prepared by the Society of American Archivists College and University Archives Committee. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980. Pp. 1-80. Person, institution and subject indexes, paper. \$6 SAA Members/\$10 nonmembers.)
DIRECTORY OF BUSINESS ARCHIVES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA. Prepared by the Society of American Archivists Business Archives Affinity Group. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980. Pp. 1-51. Company name index, paper. \$3 SAA members/\$6 nonmembers.)

The SAA has recently updated both its college and university archives and business archives directories. The college and university directory format lists U.S. Archives programs alphabetically by state followed by a straight alphabetical listing of Canadian programs. Each citation includes an institutional identification number, institutional

name, nature of holdings, (i.e., archives, manuscripts, or both), address, phone number, staff names and their responsibilities. SPINDEX was employed to generate these listings and it appears to have done a most credible job. In addition, the volume includes a SPINDEX-generated name index and an institution and subject index. Though the subject index is rather limited, the publication as a whole is well organized and extremely informative. The business directory, by contrast, is less extensive in that it includes only 210 citations as compared to well over 1,500 in the college and university directory, nor does it list program staff and their respective responsibilities. The volume does list business archives alphabetically by state or province and includes company addresses, directors' names, collection span dates, establishment dates for archives programs, brief descriptions of archives holdings, finding aid descriptions and collection access guidelines. Thus, the business directory provides more specific information pertaining to individual programs. A brief corporate name index accompanies the listings. Both volumes will prove useful to archivists and researchers as well as indicators of the degree to which archival programs had proliferated in the 1970s.

PROCESSING MANUAL FOR THE INSTITUTE ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS MIT LIBRARIES. By Karen T. Lynch and Helen W. Slotkin. (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1981. Pp. 1-61. Preface, appendix, charts, index, paper. \$5.)

This well-written manual was created as part of an NEA grant to help MIT deal with a backlog of unprocessed manuscripts. The procedures as described provide simplified instruction for beginning archivists and students in arrangement preservation, and description using many diagrams, charts, checklists and forms. That students were used effectively in the processing is a tribute to the details provided in the manual, though the authors admit that MIT students are "exceptionally bright and capable." Oddly enough, this is carried off without providing a glossary of archival terms. Certain administrative decisions, such as the level at which a collection should be processed, are

given terse treatment presumably to fit the audience for which this manual is geared. As a processing primer this work is first-rate.