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Reviews, Critiques, and Annotations

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Reviews, Critiques, and Annotations

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Virginia J.H. Cain, Richard M. Kesner, Glen McAninch, Ron Chepesiuk, W. Tony Coursey, Robert C. Dinwiddle, and Nicholas C. Burckel
REVIEWS, CRITIQUES, AND ANNOTATIONS


The Senate Historical Office, acting on the unanimous recommendation of 250 historians, archivists, and congressional staff members attending the 1978 Conference on the Research Use and Disposition of Senators' Papers, has produced this valuable handbook. Written by archivist Karen Dawley Paul of the Senate Historical Office, this volume is filled with information that staff members in senators' offices and archival repositories will find useful.

The papers created in the office of each United States Senator are the personal property of the individual senator; whereas, official records of Senate committees and of the Senate itself are federal records. Since senators' papers can be rich resources for the study of history and politics on the local, regional, and national levels, the informed administration and disposition of senators' papers is clearly an important issue and an ever-growing problem. This handbook does much to clarify many of the issues and questions surrounding the creation, use, and control of records in a senator's office. Chapters in the handbook describe files maintenance and disposition, micrographics, files management techniques, subject files and subject indexing, discarding materials, and courtesy records storage.
A particularly useful chapter, "The Management and Disposition of Automated Records," brings together invaluable information about the centralized automated systems available to senators for correspondence and information management and about decentralized office automation systems, which require knowledge of administration of automated systems, inventory of automated records, and an understanding of system documentation and products. In this chapter, as throughout the handbook and its appendices, sample forms, reports, documents, glossaries, lists, extracts from laws, and a bibliography complement the narrative.

The final chapter, "Donating a Collection of Senator's Papers," discusses selecting a repository, negotiating the legal instruments of deposit and gift, transferring the records, and applying the tax legislation which affects such a transaction. While the title of the handbook indicates that its intended audience includes both senators and their repositories, this chapter and others are written more from the perspective of the senator's office than from the perspective of the archival repository. This is not a serious limitation on the usefulness of the handbook, however, because themes such as the long-term preservation of senators' papers, the integration of records management and archives into a single program in the office, and the relationship between senators' offices and their repositories recur throughout the handbook.

Although the handbook's discussion culminates in the decision to donate a senator's papers to a repository, this decision really marks the beginning of a repository's work with a senator's papers. This handbook could serve as a developmental tool for a repository wishing to educate its staff and improve its facilities and programs in preparation for soliciting or acquiring a senator's papers, and it could also help a repository measure whether or not it is capable of handling such a collection. In addition, this handbook could be an important resource during the processing of a senator's papers.
The Senate Historical Office has indeed provided senators and their repositories with an extremely useful and practical publication. While portions of this handbook may also be helpful in working with the papers of members of the House, it is hoped that the recently established Office of the Bicentennial of the House of Representatives will be able to produce a companion work, placing in proper context many of these same principles and techniques as they apply to the creation, use, and control of records in a representative's office.

Virginia J.H. Cain
Emory University


Computers have come to play a large role in the daily activities of government agencies, educational institutions, business organizations, and even private individuals. As a significant by-product of this development, the records—vital as well as trivial—created on these machines pose a problem for the archivist and records manager responsible for their long-term storage and final disposition. While there has been to date little effort, at least among archivists, to address the serious professional challenges raised by the advent of machine-readable "fonds," there are signs of growing interest and concern.

It was, therefore, with some excitement that archivists anticipated the release of Margaret L.
Hedstrom's new work, *Archives & Manuscripts: Machine-Readable Records*. Hedstrom has already established herself as a trailblazer in the field through her work for the Wisconsin State Historical Society and as an active member of the Automated Records and Techniques Task Force of the Society of American Archivists (SAA). Indeed, over the past few years, the author has offered a number of innovative workshops dealing with the management, appraisal, and processing of machine-readable archives. Given this record of achievement, one would expect the distillation of her expertise in this brief volume to be a rewarding educational experience. Hedstrom does not disappoint in any respect.

*Archives & Manuscripts: Machine-Readable Records* is well organized, comprehensive, and effective. It is an excellent introduction for those with only a limited understanding of computers and machine-readable data, but it also serves well as a refresher for those already at work in the field. As the author points out in her preface, "Although archivists need skills, experience, and confidence to manage machine-readable records, existing archival techniques provide a firm foundation for handling these records." Rather than repeat recognized standard operating procedures, Hedstrom, therefore, concentrates her efforts in exploring those particular principles and practices that set computer-generated records apart from paper-based "fonds."

To achieve these ends, the author has organized her volume into three major sections. The first, entitled "An Introduction to Computers and Automated Record Keeping," introduces the reader to computer technology, that is, systems hardware and software, and the machine-readable record in a brief and painless fashion. Her comments on the record types encompassed within the life cycle of computerized information systems are of particular interest. Here she succinctly sorts the morass into either textual or machine-readable records related to input, processing, output, or documentation.
The second section of the volume discusses "The Arrangement and Storage of Machine-Readable Records." This particular subject is troublesome because it employs many of the same terms used in reference to traditional archival records but uses those terms to refer to different things. Hedstrom balances her narrative here with a number of extremely effective graphic and photographic representations. By the end of her disquisition, she clears all of the confusion away. The author's third section examines the "Management and Preservation of Machine-Readable Records" with a considerable amount of practical advice drawn from her own firsthand experiences. Her coverage includes a review of inventory techniques, appraisal, scheduling, accessioning, maintenance, description, and reference services.

Hedstrom concludes with a discussion of new office technologies and how they will influence the creation of records in the future and, hence, the responsibilities of the archivist. This essay is followed by a glossary and a brief bibliography arranged by subject. All in all, Archives & Manuscripts: Machine-Readable Records is a remarkably concise and informative work. It is a tribute to its author for all of her noble labors and to the SAA for recognizing the pressing need to direct the archival profession toward greater efforts in the area of computer-generated archives. As Hedstrom herself points out, "This manual encourages archivists to confront the challenges of machine-readable records." Let us hope that archivists everywhere heed her message.

Richard M. Kesner
Multibank Financial Corporation

Richard Kesner's book is a methodical tool for dealing with the automation of libraries, archives, historical societies, or government repositories and for handling the acquisition of automated records. Much of the book repeats what the author has presented previously in workshops and seminars at annual meetings of the Society of American Archivists and elsewhere. Recent trends in the archival profession belie some of Kesner's assumptions, which were made as the book was being assembled over a year ago. Yet, in some ways his model serves as a timeless approach to the adoption of automated techniques by archivists and records managers, particularly for local systems within an institution.

Though a glossary is not provided, computer terminology is explained initially in a chapter titled "EDP Options." Some explanations, particularly for operating systems, include misleading assertions that show the author's lack of familiarity with 16-bit technology. In addition, the index is not elaborate enough for the reader to find quickly a definition of all terms used. Nevertheless, the chapter serves as an appropriate introduction to concepts.

The strength of the work lies in the presentation of realistic strategies for computer applications in a variety of archival settings. The reader is provided with a myriad of charts, matrices, and sample forms as aids in applying automation to archives. His dictum to build from the simplest of automation tasks, word processing for example, seems prudent as does his advocacy for a planning team composed of people having a variety of interests. Though each type of software is linked by Kesner to one or more appropriate archival functions, more references to specific software features needed by archivists, such as variable length fields, would have been helpful in evaluating "off-the-shelf" commercial software.
Using such concepts as "need assessment," a current buzz word in the profession, Kesner imposes a business or public administration perspective upon archivists and records managers as a means of meeting the challenge of a new technological age. According to Kesner, those information providers who do not take up the challenge are doomed to nonprofessional status, because patrons will look elsewhere if one reference group does not meet their demands for the benefits of automation. Although Kesner believes too little automation has occurred in archives, a flurry of activity occurred the year the book was released.

Automation is presented by the author in a very positive manner as a problem solver. While Kesner advocates scheduling of procurement, staff training, and other parts of the automation plan during the implementation stage, he encourages flexibility as a hedge against unforeseen developments. However, he provides little, if any, discussion of staff reaction to automation, possible health hazards, or the displacement of positions associated with automation in a library environment. Without some attention to the negative aspects of automation, the reader gets an unbalanced picture.

In looking to the future, Kesner cautiously predicts a continued need for paper as a reference, if not storage, medium. He also sees an expanding role for computer output microfilm and optical storage. Despite a valiant effort by the National Information Systems Task Force, he judges that an "automated universal finding aid" is unlikely to develop. Those who are pushing for the adoption of the USMARC archives and manuscripts format will find Kesner's statement disheartening. At the heart of this viewpoint is Kesner's admitted bias toward micro and minicomputers and against mainframe computers, the mainstay of networks. This unbridled opinion may suffice for local systems, Kesner's forte, but telecommunications, which Kesner sees as important for the future, will require planning for standards in sharing information.

Glen McAninch
University of Kentucky Libraries

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With the increase of scholarly interest in American ethnic groups, more attention is being paid to the American Indian. Considerable unpublished documentation exists in the country's libraries, archives, and historical societies for the study of the American Indian, but for the most part, it has remained inaccessible. Many scholars and researchers are unaware of the location and availability of information and, consequently, have not had access to valuable primary source material that could be used to support their research projects.

This National Archives's guide, another in a continuing series of subject guides to federal records designed to make the archives's holdings more accessible, is a welcome attempt to improve the situation. Much of the guide was developed through papers prepared for the National Archives's Conference on Research in the History of Indian-White Relations, which was held at the National Archives in 1972. It describes and lists material concerned with American Indians and their relation to other Americans and to the federal government as a result of military operations or through the bureau of Indian Affairs. It is to be used as a specialized supplement to the general Guide to the National Archives of the United States (1974).

The compiler informs the reader that most of the guide entries have been limited to records that can be identified with existing finding aids. Some
agency records have not been included in the guide because there is no practical way to identify them. For example, to use National Labor Relations Board cases in which Indians were involved, it is necessary to find a reference in another source such as a book or newspaper. Another important limitation is that there is no attempt to provide information about prominent persons who were Indians but had no particular connection with Indian affairs.

The guide is arranged by record group and is intended to reflect a combination of chronology, government organization, and relationship with Indians. The book begins with a section describing prefederal records and then is followed by a listing of pertinent general records of the United States government. The remaining text describes the records of government departments, offices, divisions, bureaus, and agencies.

Within record groups, the records are listed and described by series. The compiler informs the reader that the information on individual series provided in the guide differs from that found in the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in-house inventories. He writes that it is "an attempt to present a different viewpoint with more emphasis on subject matter, specific examples and guidance on using records."

The guide has some important features that should prove useful to the researcher. Citations are provided for other available published finding aids, although there is no attempt to provide full bibliographic coverage for documentary publications and other related publications. Also, many of the records described in this guide have been reproduced as NARA microfilm publications, and citations are provided for many of these publications.

Despite its remarkable low cost, the book is easy to use and read. Some attractive photographs have also been included with caption and a file reference number for each. The index is thorough and easy to use. Overall, this guide is an important addition to the reference literature and should be purchased by
any archives, library, or historical agency serving researchers seeking information on the American Indian.
Ron Chępesiuk
Winthrop College


Where might one find record of a marriage of a Potawatomi? A confirmation of an Osage? And, what if the Catholic mission where these events occurred has been closed for more than a century, and its records are not in the state or local archives? Any researcher facing such questions will greatly appreciate the work of Philip Bantin with Mark Thiel, as will those searching for administrative records, censuses, language dictionaries, newspapers, or other records that were used or produced among Catholic missions and schools for Indians in the Midwest from about the mid-nineteenth century to the present.

The Guide is the result of a survey project, jointly funded by the Marquette University Archives and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The survey, often on-site, encompassed twelve midwestern states. Of the 832 institutions contacted, the project located Indian records in 277 churches, religious communities, dioceses, museums, historical societies, universities, and other archives.

As a directory, the Guide has its entries arranged by state and then by local area thereunder. Its format is similar to Kinney's Directory of State and Provincial Archives (1975), providing address with telephone number, hours of operation, restrictions on access, copying facilities, and holdings. Additionally, Thiel compiled a brief
history of each repository, including its relation with the mission or school or other facts pertinent to the provenance of the records. The holdings listed in the Guide, frequently at the folder or item level, do not include all holdings of the repository listed, but only those records relating to the Catholic Indian missions and schools.

The thirty-five-page index is fairly thorough, providing subject listings as well as institutional, geographic, and other proper names. However, it lacks cross-references; for instance, the English-Chippewa Dictionary cannot be found by simply looking under "Chippewa."

Physical features also leave something to be desired. The typewritten script has virtually no variation in type style, point size, or boldness; the numbering of entries is not quite enough to distinguish them easily. The pages lack running heads, so that a random opening of the volume does not readily indicate state. The spiral paper binding, due to the sheer weight and size of the volume, will not survive frequent reference.

Even so, the Guide is a valuable reference source. The vast majority of the records listed are unpublished. When one considers that this volume enables the user to locate otherwise obscure information in a specialized subject area, the Guide is definitely a bargain.

W. Tony Coursey
Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention

members, $18.00 to others from Society of American Archivists, 600 South Federal, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60605.

The publication of Administration of Photographic Collections fills one of the most irritating voids in archival literature. Archivists and manuscript curators can at last feel secure in the knowledge that almost anything they need to know about photographs and photographic collections is available in one volume.

The three authors bring considerable talent and knowledge to the subject. Ritzenthaler, who was the director of the Basic Archival Conservation Program for the Society of American Archivists (SAA) before joining National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and Ms. Long, who is the audio visual curator at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University and also teaches a course in the Administration of Photographic Collections, have conducted workshops on conservation of photographs for SAA. Mr. Munoff is now the director of Administrative Services at the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives and was formerly the curator of the Photographic Archives of the University of Kentucky.

Ritzenthaler contributes chapters on "Legal Issues" (copyrights, privacy, deeds of gift, etc.), "Preservation of Photographic Materials," and the extremely valuable "Managing a Photographic Copy Service." Ms. Long adds a general, historically oriented chapter entitled "Photographs in Archival Collections" and a quite practical chapter on "Appraisal and Collecting Policies" (how to use lead files, appraisal factors and guidelines, etc.). Mr. Munoff's contribution is in two widely different areas. His "History of Photographic Process" should be sufficient for all but the most scientifically advanced of archivists. His other chapter, "Arrangement and Description," should also please all archivists, since he pays strict respect to the principles of provenance and original order.
Indeed, one of the chief reasons this manual is so useful is because it consistently applies to photographic collections such time-honored archival principles as provenance and original order. It also works so well because it addresses a particular audience and has a clear point-of-view. This is demonstrated by the focus on collections of photographs rather than individual photographic images and by the attention to black-and-white photographs to the almost total exclusion of color photography. To have decided differently would have led the authors into a place where few practicing archivists would have cared to follow. As it is, the manual throws its light on just those subjects that are of paramount importance to most archivists.

The main body of this manual is amply interspersed with photographs and other illustrations and aided by appendices giving funding sources for photographic collections and vendors of materials useful in caring for photographic collections and by a glossary providing basic terms pertinent to the subject. There is also an extensive bibliography, which includes the titles and addresses of thirteen periodicals in the field of photography and photographic collections, and a well-organized index by Laura K. Saegert.

Robert C. Dinwiddie
Georgia State University

University Archives in ARL Libraries: Kit 107.
The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) includes the 105 largest university research libraries in North America. Its Office of Management Studies offers a number of programs, including the Systems and Procedures Exchange Center (SPEC). Since 1973 the center has published over one hundred kits: "topically-arranged groupings of unedited primary source documents—selected for their value to administrators and decision-makers—that illustrate a wide range of alternative approaches to specific issues." All are designed for use in research libraries. Recent topics have been electronic mail, nonbibliographic machine-readable data bases, branch libraries, and on-line catalogs.

Kit 107, "University Archives in ARL Libraries," resulted from a request by the University of Massachusetts Library for information from other research libraries. Through a questionnaire survey, the center sought information from fifty-eight research libraries on the organizational placement in the institution, reporting relationships, scope of collections, staffing patterns, and archives' relationship to institutional records management. The center received a response rate of 91 percent. The five-page questionnaire is reproduced at the beginning of the kit, and raw numeric data is supplied in response to the nineteen questions. A two-page summary of the findings precedes the questionnaire.

While the survey may be of some use, it must be viewed with caution. First, the survey was not of all ARL libraries, but only of public institutions. Second, the questionnaire is constructed so that it does not distinguish between older and new archival programs, or between those with responsibility for other activities and those which collect only the institution's official records. Of what value is it to know that the size of staff ranged from zero to twenty-seven or that thirty-one libraries report employing professional archivists unless one knows the size and scope of the programs? Without more complete documentation and interpretation the survey
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results provide little guidance for library planners. The Society of American Archivists' (SAA) Task Force on Institutional Evaluation is presently testing a comprehensive survey to gather similar information. It is hoped that the information collected in this manner will form a national data base that can be used to develop profiles of different types of programs. Such a data base, for instance, might be used by an ARL library to locate information on how comparable institutions deal with a variety of issues. Until that data has been compiled, this SPEC kit should be read in conjunction with an article co-authored by the reviewer and J. Frank Cook ("A Profile of College and University Archives in the United States," American Archivist 45: 410-28) and "College and University Archives Guidelines." The former provides a more detailed analysis of university archives than does the SPEC kit, and the latter outlines the components and functions of a university archives program adopted by the SAA.

In addition to the survey, the kit contains a number of documents solicited from those institutions completing the questionnaire. They include records management reports from the University of Connecticut, Texas A & M, and Pennsylvania State University; a brief statement of the purpose and goals for the university archives of the University of Oregon; policies and procedures from the University of Kansas and Washington State University; annual reports from the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Illinois; and position descriptions provided by the University of Maryland and the University of Connecticut. Although the survey also requested information on budgets, organization charts, and other material, none was included in the kit. The documents are useful, but they appear to be almost randomly selected from an unknown number of submissions. These documents could have been more useful if the compilers had noted, for instance, which institutions prepared annual reports and what
characteristics determined the selection of the two that were reproduced. Are the documents models to be emulated, in some way typical for all submissions, or representative of a range of analysis of detail? Without such information the examples are much less useful than they might have been.

The reviewer is sympathetic to the center's efforts to produce timely kits and surveys on demand and to the difficulty of meeting that goal if documents must be edited and typeset. Too little editorial oversight, however, risks publishing a kit that is misleading to decision-makers who explore the topic no deeper than the information supplied. Between the two extremes there should be adequate room for developing a more sophisticated survey instrument, for providing more analysis, and for providing some brief introduction for each of the items in the kit. If the quality of other SPEC kits is to be judged by this one, then there is cause for concern; they are less useful than they should be.

Nicholas C. Burckel
University of Chicago