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Reviews

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Reviews

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Sarah Quigley, Christine de Catanzaro, Laura L. Carroll, Michael Law, Jana Meyer, Leigh Ann Davis, Suzanne K. Durham, Brooke Fox, Brittany Bennett Parris, Debra Branson March, Robert G. Richards, and Jordon Steele

BOOK REVIEWS

Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory. Edited by Jeannette A. Bastian and Ben Alexander (London: Facet Publishing, 2010. 286 pp.).

Jeanette A. Bastian and Ben Alexander's compilation of essays is a provocative yet accessible examination of the relationships between archives and communities. The book is based on the ideas that archives fulfill humanity's need for community engagement, and that communities express identity by keeping records. "Through their formation, collection, maintenance, diffusion and use, records in all their manifestations are pivotal to constructing a community, consolidating its identity and shaping its memories" (p. xxi). The editors are careful not to define "community archives," allowing the contributing authors to explore multiple definitions of record, archive and community, and examine the variety of forms community archives take. Contributors also examine how professional archivists can build relationships with citizen archivists, and contribute to the development of community archives. The chapters in this book challenge professionals to reexamine traditional records keeping practices, and think critically about our relationships with underrepresented communities.

The book begins strongly with "'It is noh mistri/ wi mekin histri.' Telling Our Own Story: Independent and Community Archives in the UK, Challenging and Subverting the Mainstream" by Andrew Flinn and Mary Stevens. Flinn and Stevens describe community archives as politically subversive, deliberate acts of creation that challenge and undermine traditional histories and illuminate hidden stories. Community archives are "counter-hegemonic" weapons in a fight against

“subordination and discrimination,” (pp. 7-8), and contribute significantly to what the authors call the “democratization of heritage” (p. 18). However, Flinn and Stevens caution against justifying the creation of community archives with the idea that archives create and reinforce identity. As political realities shift, minority community identity could be seen as a threat rather than a value, leaving community archives vulnerable. The solution, they suggest, is to stop relying on anecdotal evidence that indicates a causal relationship between archives and identity, and instead focus on quantifiable evidence of the work archives do in the communities they serve.

The rest of the book unfolds neatly from the first chapter. In chapter three, Glen Kelly describes how the Noongar tribes of Australia have used records such as anthropological field journals to reinforce oral tradition and support land title claims. In chapter 11, Ricardo L. Punzalan tells of residents on the Philippine island of Culion, a former leper colony, using hospital records to celebrate the island’s centennial. Though these records document many acts of erasure, oppression and marginalization, for the residents of Culion they mean much more. One resident describes the archives as something greater than a monument, “a museum full of records about our ancestors who are our heroes” (p. 208). Punzalan also offers insight into the role of the archivist. He says, “Archivists should view their actions as ‘co-witnessing’ and not only as expert authors in the construction of archives as heritage and collective memory of a community. We make archives more meaningful by being aware that, as we perform archival tasks, we participate in, and to some extent mediate, the communal remembrance of the past” (p. 214).

Part of the Facet series “Principles and Practices in Records Management and Archives,” this book is divided

into five sections, each about 50 pages long: “A Community Archives Model,” “Communities and Nontraditional Record Keeping,” “Records Loss, Destruction and Recovery,” “Online Communities: How Technology Brings Communities and their Records Together,” and “Building a Community Archive.” Each section consists of two or three chapters featuring work by respected archival thinkers. Bastian and Alexander have done well in taking a global view of community archives, though the voice of the citizen archivist is noticeably absent. Many of the authors belong to the communities about which they write, however all but one are formally trained librarians or archivists. The professional archivist could benefit immensely from the perspective of the citizen archivist struggling to preserve a history she feels has been neglected. Nonetheless, any archivist interested in the relationship between archives and memory would find this book a rich examination of complex questions.

Sarah Quigley
Robert W. Woodruff Library
Emory University

Over, Under, Around, and Through: Getting Around Barriers to EAD Implementation. By Michele Combs, Mark A. Matienzo, Merrilee Proffitt, and Lisa Spiro (Dublin, OH: OCLC, 2010; published online at: www.oclc.org/research/publications/library/2010/2010-04.pdf. 44 pp.)

After the plethora of articles published during the last few years on the many obstacles facing archivists in the adoption of Encoded Archival Description, it is very refreshing to find a new publication that gives constructive

help to professionals wishing to implement EAD. This OCLC report, which is accompanied by a webinar reinforcing the ideas and concepts of the paper (available online at <http://www.oclc.org/research/events/mediafeed.xml>), makes great strides in providing solutions to archivists who need assistance overcoming the obstacles to EAD implementation.

The report opens with a brief introduction that indicates the intended audience and purpose for the paper. Directed toward those with a “modest acquaintance” with EAD and an understanding of standard archival description, the report sets out to present a collection of helpful tools to assist readers in overcoming the informational, persuasive, or technical barriers that are often encountered in the implementation of EAD. Each of the authors has had personal experience with EAD and struggled with some of these barriers. Less a basic “how-to” guide than a set of practical suggestions to get around the problems associated with EAD, the authors seek to show that implementation is easier than is often perceived.

The paper is divided into two main sections, the first of which addresses political and logistical issues. Because institutions are frequently unconvinced of the benefits of EAD, the first few pages of the first section are devoted to providing archivists with effective arguments advocating the encoding standard. The points made here provide encouragement not only for reluctant administrators, but also for reluctant archivists themselves. In fact, the remainder of Section I addresses the most common objections that archivists frequently raise when considering the adoption of EAD. The intimidation factor – the sense that EAD is complex and difficult – is perhaps the most daunting obstacle confronting archivists in charge of small archives. The authors encourage readers to break down EAD implementation into small, logical steps. To reduce the complexity of authoring EAD documents, they

encourage the creation of templates. Advocating a “More Product, Less Process” approach to EAD implementation, the authors suggest providing minimum access to collections by encoding existing data, taking advantage of existing MARC records, or creating collection-level finding aids at the time of accession. The authors also provide solutions to workflow issues, suggesting possible ways to get started.

Outsourcing comes up again in the second section of the report, which covers the technical issues in EAD adoption. The migration of existing data into EAD can be accomplished via numerous methods. Once finding aids are in EAD, however, the problem of publishing on the Web remains. Here, too, the authors provide a range of possible solutions. Perhaps the most helpful part of this report is the series of appendices at the end. The first of these lists consortia and EAD aggregators, many of which include tools for EAD creation and best practice guidelines. Appendix II provides a comprehensive, up-to-date list of tools, including online templates, Web-based forms that produce EAD, sources for style sheets, commercial XML authors, content management systems, and much more. The final appendix provides graphic figures outlining possible EAD migration and creation paths as well as possible publication paths.

“Over, Under, Around, and Through” has contributed a great deal to the process of getting new institutions on board with EAD. There is no substitute for the support that can be provided between institutions in various stages of EAD implementation, particularly in states without consortia. Mutual support, preferably local, is key to the long-term success and sustainability of EAD programs.

Christine de Catanzaro
Georgia Institute of Technology

Personal Archives and a New Archival Calling. By Richard J. Cox (Duluth, Minnesota: Litwin Books, 2008, 418 pp.)

In *Personal Archives and a New Archival Calling*, Richard J. Cox challenges the archival profession to turn its attention outward to partner with and educate the public about the ways in which it can better preserve personal and family archives. What has prompted Cox's call to action? As he explains in this compilation of previously published essays, humans have an innate urge to create and, in turn, preserve records of historical value - it is our way of attesting "here I am." The increasing accessibility of digital technologies greatly increases the public's desire and ability to document their own lives.

Cox is at his best in chapters four, five, and six, which he admits "represent the heart of what this book concerns," when he demonstrates, through an extensive literature review, the human propensity to rely on documents to create personal identity. While there is a growing trend to romanticize the handwritten letter or leather-bound journal, the role of digital technologies in the creation and transmission of documents is his focus in this volume. In chapters five and six Cox argues that the emergence of documentary forms such as email, blogs, digital images, and family websites are changing the way we create and maintain our documentary heritage. Consider an example such as a missionary family's website featuring photographs of a recent wedding in addition to a link to the parents' blog that documents a recent missionary trip to Africa. Despite the changes in format, Cox maintains "one thing that has not changed is the interest in maintaining one's place in the world by remembering, through archives

and artifacts, where one has come from” (p. ix). Thus, Cox challenges the archival profession to capitalize on the public’s growing desire to create, document and save their personal archives.

In chapter seven, Cox argues correctly that, as a profession, we are still grappling with how to effectively manage and preserve digital material in our own repositories, using email management and preservation as his primary example. Cox states, however, that “if archivists can ascertain how to work with the public on such issues, this will reflect their own success in finding solutions posed by technologies such as email” (p. 217).

If we do not take this opportunity, the risk of losing irreplaceable aspects of the documentary universe grows by the minute. Perhaps Cox envisions the archivist embedded with records creators of all sorts (the amateur local caretaker, the literary lions, the community organizations) while they are still creating and using the records that may eventually be deposited in an archives. While courting collections, curators and archivists alike could use this opportunity to educate creators on how to manage and preserve their paper and digital legacy. While Cox does not make this specific recommendation, he alludes to the many possibilities for building relationships with records creators.

In the excellent concluding essay, Cox mentions some examples of documents and programs that seek to educate the public about the “care and feeding of personal documentation” (p. 303). These examples include programs initiated by the Minnesota Historical Society, the PARADIGM project, and the New Jersey Digital Highway. Cox applauds these projects, examples of what he terms “restor[ing] archival power to the people” (p. 297). I would have appreciated a bit more discussion on how to go about developing these types of outreach documents and programs. But this is not a how-to manual, and Cox does

not intend for it to be. A useful companion to this volume could include lengthier case studies and provide guidance on how the professional archivist can do this in his or her own environment. The professional archivist who seeks to expand his or her role in society would do well to pick up this book and join the growing group of archival advocates, as Cox calls them, equipping the citizen archivists among us with the education and tools to document and preserve their personal archives. For more information about the publisher, contact: <http://litwinbooks.com/>.

Laura L. Carroll
Emory University

From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory By John Ridener (Duluth, MN: Litwin Books, 2009. 208pp.).

John Ridener concisely relates various paradigm shifts in the history of archival theory. He attempts to remind archivists of the centrality of theory at a time when technological changes are forcing the constant evolution of everyday practice. Theory, he says, is driven by the socially defined needs of researchers and archivists' responses to those needs. Theory (especially appraisal) continues to define both the internal and external conceptions of what an archivist is and does.

The one constant throughout the various paradigms Ridener examines is the ever-present tension between the goals of objective and subjective management of the archival record. He finds the initial archival paradigm in the Dutch Manual of 1898, calling it the "consolidation" paradigm. The Manual's authors envisioned a consolidation of records, from disparate locales and differentiated

organizing methods, into central archives with standardized models for arrangement and description. Appraisal was typically rejected, though some of the precedents surrounding “respect des fonds” and other ideas of custody and original order emerged through its prescriptions for practice.

From the Dutch Manual's consolidation focus, Ridener turns to the work of Sir Hilary Jenkinson. Jenkinson built upon the foundation left him by the Dutch, but made more explicit his rejection of appraisal. The theoretical paradigm he established attempted to solidify the “keeper” role for archivists, which clearly divided records preservation from any part of their creation or selection. Ridener aligns the archival vision of both the Dutch and Jenkinson with the development of new forms of historiography incited by, especially, Leopold von Ranke. The historiographical turn through the mid-nineteenth century toward more “scientific” inquiry sought to present history “as it happened.” This disposition depended upon rejecting interpretation while relying upon causal relationships to connect disparate parts of the record. For Jenkinson, this meant that archives had to exist perpetually in the same manner they existed at inception.

The gradual movement away from “social science” historiography and toward the more relativistic views of a new generation of historians led by Charles Beard and Carl Becker in turn led to the prominent role in archival theory of T.R. Schellenberg. Ridener points to the acceptance of appraisal as a new focus for the profession, but he is careful to note the practical considerations of rapid technological change, and the massive growth of the sheer size of records collections. The move toward relativism in historiography helped to garner acceptance of appraisal, but it was the records explosion of the post-war era that created the need for the new paradigm.

The era from Schellenberg to the present becomes

something of a blur in Ridener's work. He problematically merges the rise of the Civil Rights era, the New Left, and new models of hegemony, power, and structure under the overly large umbrella of Postmodernism, and vaguely terms it the "Questioning" paradigm. He rightly notes that no single theory or theorist emerges in this era the way it did under Jenkinson or Schellenberg, and can therefore not be singularly defined. He is also adequately skeptical of applying a postmodern theory determined to reject artificial structure to a profession solely dedicated to creating organizational structure. This does not mean, Ridener says, that archivists cannot learn to glean some of the postmodernists' skepticism of meta-narrative and accept more fluidity of records.

Ridener notes the rapid infusion of technology as a force for creating new paradigms in the future. He may, however, be giving technology too much credit for the growth of new understanding of what archivists do. Technology is certainly a part of that evolution, but there is also a growing acceptance of the fluidity of records; most notably the growing rejection of notions of "permanence."

Still, if immediate technological challenges supplant the theoretical underpinnings of the profession, it will lose its balance. Ridener is right to continue to ask how subjectively archivists can treat records that are growing technologically unwieldy. His book is a welcome reminder that theory can still provide an anchor to keep archivists from being swept away by the technological winds of change.

Michael Law
Auburn University

Preserving Archives & Manuscripts. By Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2010. 2nd edition. 521 pp.).

In a budget-constrained archival world, preservation best-practices may seem unattainable. Archivists often must choose which actions they can accomplish with limited resources. Realizing the obstacles involved in preserving records, Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler has written *Preserving Archives & Manuscripts* to help archivists identify preservation priorities and take steps to implement them. Ritzenthaler's purpose is to help archivists distinguish between preservation measures that must be undertaken and those that cannot be immediately addressed. Her book is not intended to be a manual on preservation techniques, although practical information is included. Instead, it is meant to guide archivists in making the best preservation decisions feasible for the collections in their care.

In ten chapters, Ritzenthaler covers a number of areas pertinent to the preservation of archival records. She defines preservation in an archival context, and discusses a systematic approach to developing and strengthening an archival preservation program. The book examines the causes of deterioration in archival records and how archivists can create a stable environment that will aid in the preservation of records. Ritzenthaler also describes best practices for handling and storing archival records, as well as how preservation practices can be integrated into daily records management tasks. Finally, she examines the copying and reformatting of archival records, and conservation practices on a collection or item-level scale.

Throughout the book, Ritzenthaler displays extensive knowledge of her subject. Moreover, *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts* is comprehensible for the student and at the same time provides valuable information

for the professional. Most of Ritzenthaler's chapters succeed in providing an overview of potential problem areas and helping archivists identify preservation priorities. Chapter 8 is particularly valuable: it focuses on integrating preservation practices into routine records management practices. Readers interested in conservation practices for paper records will find useful introductory information in this book. In addition to a chapter on conservation practices, an appendix provides hands-on repair procedures for paper records. Accompanying graphics in this section illustrate conservation techniques.

At times, however, Ritzenthaler seems to forget that her book is intended to be a decision-making guide, not a preservation manual or history book. This loss of focus is especially evident in the third chapter where she explores the history of paper-making and the types of media upon which archival records are recorded. Although quite detailed, the chapter adds little to the overall aim of guiding archivists in preservation decisions. Furthermore, her book ends abruptly, leaving readers with no concluding thoughts on the role of preservation within the overall management of a repository. Finally, potential readers of this book should be warned: the focus of this book is almost exclusively on paper-based materials. Information on the preservation best-practices for electronic records is scarce at best. As this is the case, this book may be less useful to archivists in the coming years as archives amass a greater quantity of electronic records.

Preserving Archives & Manuscripts is a good resource on the preservation and conservation of paper-based materials. Although Ritzenthaler sometimes becomes a bit bogged down in the details of preservation practices, for the most part she sticks to the plan and provides an overview of areas that should be of concern to archivists. For the archivist seeking guidance in preservation decision-making, *Preserving Archives &*

Manuscripts should be one of the go-to books in the field.

Jana Meyer
Waring Historical Library

Revisualizing Visual Culture (Digital Research in the Arts and Humanities). By Chris Bailey and Hazel Gardiner (London: Ashgate, 2010. 216 pp.)

Revisualizing Visual Culture is the 6th Volume in the “*Digital Research in the Arts and Humanities*” series edited and compiled by the AHRC ICT Methods Network of Kings College, London. The series addresses the application of advanced ICT (Information Communication Technology) methods towards arts and humanities scholarship. Each volume is a compilation of essays written by experts in the field of digital arts and humanities research. *Revisualizing Visual Culture* is comprised of 11 chapters, each written by a different author who’s outlined in the Notes on Contributors section in the front of the book. This section, along with the bibliography, is helpful in deciphering the many acronyms used throughout.

Topics include: CBIR (Content Based Information Retrieval), metadata, the Semantic Web, Web 2.0, file preservation and migration, 3D representations of unbuilt architecture, “conceptual reorientation” (p. 3) of images and information, place making in the digital research experience, digital archival practices, accessibility, location, net art and internet art history, career shifting, theory, and “the new museum” (p. 163). Chris Baily, both the author of Chapter 1 and a Volume 6 editor, appropriately groups the above-mentioned topics into three categories, Finding, Making, and Understanding. Chapters 2 through 11 are not bound by one category, with each

incorporating a degree of understanding and application that reveals the cohesive scholarship of this collection of essays.

Finding is no longer unique to the librarian as Doireann Wallace points out in Chapter 6, *Words as Keys to the Image Bank*. She states that both the researcher and the general user sorts, labels, annotates, and searches on a daily basis, and with these archival practices now handled by the user, librarians need to rebuild the “archival relationships between image and text” (p. 85). Wallace addresses CBIR, keywording, and the semantic gap between words and images. Her essay continues the dialog initiated in Chapter 2, *Do a Thousand Words Paint a Picture*, by Mike Pringle, who explores the textual internet and how it inhibits those who “speak” visually from researching images in the digital form.

Within the context of Making, is preserving, aggregating, and creating. Core to each of these is education and research, because Making is cyclical. In Chapter 5, *Digital Exploration of Past Design Concepts in Architecture*, by Daniela Sirbu, “unbuilt architecture” is explored through “3D visualization” (p. 61). These 3D models are not digital surrogates of existing architecture, rather manifestations of theories and designs, or “cultural content” (p. 64). Additionally, these “3D visualizations” require a human-computer-interface (HCI) where “information is structured around representations of architecture” (p. 64). Therefore without research, the theories and designs of an architect or culture would never be aggregated and preserved three-dimensionally.

Understanding of the user begins in Chapter 8, where James MacDevitt invites us into a living, breathing archive that is propelled through time not by loss, but by participation. He states, “the Archive and its Users are systematically intertwined,” and that the “Archive is not a thing,” but “rather an activity, or simply, a desire” (p. 111).

Jemima Rellie matches his projection for the archive with her dialog on the evolving nature of art museums and their “ecosystem” in Chapter 10, *Museum Migration in Century 2.08*. Rellie addresses the impact of technology on art collection and exhibition, with the focus shifting to audience participation in a virtual as opposed to physical space. This participation she says, encourages the audience to “incorporate their voices back into the mix” which extends the museum’s content, “creating an ever richer, more nuanced body of knowledge and source of inspiration” (p. 145).

This text, whether used in its entirety or by the individual essay, provides a foundation for discourse and further study on the effects of technology on “the teaching, researching, and archiving of visual culture” (p. 19). The editors have successfully defined revisualization in both its current and future context.

Leigh Ann Davis
Waring Historical Library

The Story Behind the Book: Preserving Authors’ and Publishers’ Archives. By Laura Millar (Vancouver: Canadian Center for Studies in Publishing Press, 2009, 211 pp.).

Based on the title, it would appear this book was written for archivists as a how-to guide for organizing the archives of writers and publishers. Actually, Laura Millar has written a practical and easy-to-read manual for writers and publishers as potential donors of archive collections, providing a persuasive outline explaining everything from what archives are, to their monetary and intrinsic value, to what kinds of materials would be considered of permanent

value for an archives. However, Millar's insights and assessments of how libraries and archives collect, process, and use these materials are helpful to archivists who may be in line to acquire a collection related to the book trade. Many archives at some point acquire the papers of at least one author. An archivist without experience with this type of collection would benefit from the kind of background Millar provides, even though she is addressing the source of these collections. Archivists might also use this book within their own shop when it is necessary to convince or explain to the donor's legal representatives – who are often unfamiliar with the standard practices of the archives profession - how archives work, what standard donor agreements look like, how to place a monetary value on collections, and what are realistic expectations of the archivist.

In twelve concise chapters, Millar's book provides helpful guidance in negotiating the world of literary archives. She uses examples drawn primarily from collections and repositories in Canada, England, and the United States. Interestingly, she discusses the papers of British poet Ted Hughes, purchased by Emory University in 1997 for £500,000 (over \$700,000 in today's market), as an example of the monetary value placed on an author's archives. Of special pertinence to the archivist is Millar's discussion of what types of documents are valuable, enumerating a list that includes book manuscripts, editorial notes, writer-editor correspondence, page proofs, marketing plans, and book catalogs, to name a few. She makes clear the distinctions between records of permanent value and those documenting "housekeeping" details. Also helpful are the simple charts she provides to delineate between keep-discard-review actions for types of records in a collection.

Millar devotes a chapter to some of the many research uses of literary archives, including author

biographies, the history of printing and book design, children's literature as a genre, censorship, and how the use of language changes. In her chapter on electronic records, Millar advises her reader how best to name and file these documents at the point of origin, especially email correspondence, but she can only lament with the rest of us about the transience of electronic formats and the task of shepherding these records to new formats as technology inevitably changes.

Millar assumes that most authors and publishers are unfamiliar with the concept of archives or the meaning and value of their collections. She succeeds in convincing the reader why archives are important perhaps because she has her feet in both worlds in a career that has spanned twenty-five years. She holds a master's degree in archival management and a PhD in archival studies. Besides writing books herself, Millar teaches writing, editing, and information management, and has done editorial consulting for a large part of her career. She also is an associate of the International Records Management Trust. Her background gives an authority and authenticity to her advice in this book that many archivists of literary collections will find reassuring and instructive.

Suzanne K. Durham
University of West Georgia

The State Library and Archives of Texas: A History, 1835-1962. By David B. Gracy II (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010. 226 pp.)

At first glance, a book about the history of the Texas State Library and Archives might not seem broadly appealing. Books about the archives profession in general

can be tedious and dull. However, David B. Gracy's history of the State Library and Archives of Texas is a pleasant surprise. He has written an interesting account of the sometimes tenuous relationship between the library and archive functions of the state library. Extensively researched using Texas library and archives holdings, and reliance on his experience as Texas State Archivist (1977-1986), Gracy explores what he calls "the proper relationship between the library and the archival functions of government" (pp. xiv). This is the story of how Texas established its library and archives as an agency of state government to manage information, and how that classification both helped and hindered the role of the agency.

The Texas State Library and Archives was signed into law in 1909 as the Texas Library and Historical Commission. From the beginning, tensions between the two functions were apparent. Which unit is the most important? What is a state library? The answer to this depended on who was in power at the time, not just the state librarian, but also the governor, legislature, and members of the Texas Library and Historical Commission. All of these players either promoted or hindered the library and archives in its functions.

The book presents a chronological account of the founding of the library and archives, and the associated highs and lows. In eight chapters, Gracy introduces the reader to the many individuals involved in the state library and archives and their respective roles in its growth. There were many issues involved in the power struggle between the archives and the library components. Each took turns leading the agency depending on the interests of the State Librarian and the Commission. There have been a number of strong-willed individuals internally and in outside organizations, particularly the Texas Library Association, that lobbied for increased funding to the agency. The book

highlights the players from these organizations who helped build the agency.

The book concludes with two appendices, one a list of the Texas Library and Historical Commission members, 1909-1962, and a list of the Texas Library and Historical Commission and State Librarians, 1909-1962. The Notes and impressive and exhaustive Bibliography of primary and secondary sources document Gracy's meticulous examination of how the library and archives came to be.

The main points the reader takes away from Gracy's book is not only the continuing struggles of libraries and archives in gaining legislative, public, and financial support, but also the relationship between the library and the archives. It is not a new problem nor will it end as long as an attitude of "libraries and archives are good and needed, just not now and not at this cost" (pp. xx).

For an enjoyable history of one state's adventures in establishing a library and archives, David Gracy's book is the one to read. Archivists today can relate to the struggles recounted in this very interesting book. In a very readable narrative, Gracy shares the story of how Texas, over the years, addressed the struggles between the library and archives functions, the key individuals who shaped these periods of growth and change, and the effects of insufficient resources of money, space, and staff. Gracy has written what could have been an absolutely dull story into a highly engaging narrative.

Brooke Fox
Waring Historical Library
Medical University of South Carolina

The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy. By Sven Spieker
(Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008. 219 pp.)

In *The Big Archive*, Spieker highlights some of the more irrational aspects of the archival mission—particularly the mission of the nineteenth-century archive—by taking many of the concepts thought to be inherent to this mission and using examples to push them to extremes, showing what conclusions might unfold when one takes a concept to its (and beyond its) theoretical boundaries. The book challenges the reader to consider “modern” archives in somewhat of an untraditional light. Can some works and ideas simply *not* be organized through the application of “traditional” archival concepts? Would these same works and ideas fall into any sort of organizational schema in the first place? Do some materials and thoughts inherently reject spatial or temporal containment in any conventional sense? Spieker’s book successfully evokes these questions and many others, causing the reader to wonder if indeed there are remnants of human memory that inevitably resist any kind of typical orderliness and bounds that an archivist would struggle to impose upon them; furthermore, might not the gaps in the archival record be just as important as what is captured for the sake of history? These same questions bring the reader to the primary point of the book, in that the tensions surrounding these questions form a crucible that impacts art movements and artists of the twentieth century.

The chapters are laid out chronologically with earlier content focusing on the late 1800s and proceeding to the end of the twentieth century with the last chapter. From Hegel to Freud to Duchamp to the early Surrealists and onward, Spieker explores the evolution of his thesis, with several chapters focused heavily on the early 1900s. The

work is also served by introductory segments and an epilogue, as well as notes and an index. Several images occur alongside the text and while these images are beneficial, the book may have been better served by color images. As for the introduction, it presents a helpful overview of what will be covered in each of the chapters. While archivists may not be the intended audience for the work, those interested in theory, terminologies, and visual materials may find topics of interest in the book. Individuals from art disciplines and with an interest in visual culture will be served best by this text, especially those with background knowledge of twentieth-century art movements and artists.

While Spieker's examples of the intersection of archives and visual culture are thought provoking, there are elements of the book that may give the reader some pause. One could argue that he glosses over the history of archives and its principles. While the book is not geared towards professionals in the field of archives, it still may have been pertinent for him to give more depth to traditional archives. The notion of an archive is sometimes cast in a negative light in the book, as something bureaucratic, boring, and dull—a stereotype that many archival professionals encounter daily. While much of his work is based on substantive examples, it could be argued that the descriptions of an archive in its various forms and places in time are still at times too subjective and made to fit the argument at hand. A possible weakness of the book is that non-archivists will come away ill informed about the archival mission and its positive aspects. Archives are more than boxes, files, and containment contraptions; unfortunately, non-archivists may instead leave with the impression that *all* archives are, proverbially speaking, "The Man," and are in dire need of being rebelled against.

Then again, Spieker would perhaps argue that such tension is required for this “art from bureaucracy.”

Brittany Bennett Parris
Jimmy Carter Presidential Library & Museum

Web 2.0 Tools and Strategies for Archives and Local History Collections By Kate Theimer (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2010. 246 pp.).

Web 2.0 Tools and Strategies does exactly what it needs to do. Well known in the archives world as the author of the ArchivesNext blog, Kate Theimer is ideally suited to write this very good introduction, not just to the tools, but also to the rationale for using these Web 2.0 tools. The Introduction and first two chapters frame the argument for using social network tools. Theimer states, “If you agree that archives exist so that their collections can be used, then the Web is the best thing that ever happened to them” (p.4). She goes on to relate the technologies of Web 2.0 as new tools for archivists to help researchers.

She reminds us to review our already extant web presence; to be sure we’re presenting the image and information we want to searchers. Researchers are going to find our web presence and it is important before embarking on an additional layer of outreach that our more basic efforts are up to date, visually pleasing and appropriate. Theimer also advises archivists to assess their technical resources - there may be persons on staff or volunteers who are already using the tools of Web 2.0, and who can easily translate that personal interest into a presence for the archive. It may not be as hard to implement some of these technologies as you first might think.

The next eight chapters take new technologies and explain them for the novice user. The chapters are on blogs, podcasts, Flickr and image sharing sites, video sharing like YouTube, Twitter, wikis, social networking services like Facebook and a chapter that combines mashups, widgets, chat and *Second Life*. Each chapter follows the same format of explanations and specific ways your institution can utilize the technology. Each chapter also includes a real example in an interview format. Real life examples and honest explanations about what the implementations will involve are most helpful, both in attempting to evaluate which of the resources to use, and how each best fits organizational goals. For instance, the archive would not rely on Twitter to enhance the search capacities – by its nature it is used to inform core users of new items of interest or special events.

The final two chapters of the book deal with institutional ramifications of adopting these technologies - assessment and management. Of particular value are the discussions of determining assessment metrics and of creating policies. Both are most valuable to consider at the implementation of a new program, rather than playing catch up after your new service is underway.

Theimer does a good job of not being too specific with any of the technologies, but still there are changes since the book has gone to press, i.e. Facebook's use of the "like" button and changes to "pages". These in no way detract from the value of the book, and any book that deals with technology is going to quickly be dated in some aspects. She urges the reader to check the Web for the most current information about the technologies.

This book is a valuable addition to the literature and most helpful to the archivist who's been wondering how to get started. It takes what seem to be difficult topics and makes them approachable, and gives enough information for the novice to feel comfortable, while at the same time

adding valuable considerations for those who have already taken the plunge.

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To provide readers with a diverse viewpoint, the editors of Provenance present two views on a single publication.

Archives Power: Memory, Accountability, and Social Justice. By Randall C. Jimerson (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009. 442 pp.).

Well researched and thorough, this book examines the underlying power within archives and the inherent responsibility of the archivist. Jimerson, archivist and former President of the Society of American Archivists, argues that archivists are not mere caretakers of the societal record but shapers of collective memory, and should use that power for the public good.

Following a discussion of what archives are and why they should be maintained, the book looks at inequality found within archives. The inequality is present in the founding principles and administration of the archives that perpetuates a social injustice through the neglect and absence of certain records. This is due to the fact that archives were traditionally founded by and for the social elite, or are controlled by governments who have vested interests to protect. Thus, archives are never neutral. Archivists should aim to “recognize the impossibility of neutrality while accepting the responsibility of professional objectivity.”

The book takes shape with a discussion of

governments who use the archival record to prove legitimacy and manipulate the archival record. The author highlights the work of George Orwell's novels *Animal Farm* and *1984* to bolster his argument. Both novels discuss control of the archival record to reshape the past and control social memory in a theoretical setting. The examples of South Africa under Apartheid and Milan Kundera in Czechoslovakia are examined to give real examples of how this same practice continues to be used.

As societies have moved away from oral traditions, they have become more dependent on the written record as evidence of the past. Thus the archive is the place where collective memory is stored. The appraisal process then becomes the proving ground for the archivist interested in social justice. Pressure from governments or benefactors often influence appraisal. Resisting political power can be difficult, but important, if the record is going to be as complete as possible. What a society chooses to preserve in archives speaks volumes about the values of that society. Jimerson argues "archivists have a moral professional responsibility to balance the support given to the status quo by giving equal voice to those groups that too often have been marginalized and silenced."

Support comes through appraisal and collection policies that are inclusive of a diverse population and movements, as well as an open records policy that allows the archives to redress past injustices. Jimerson points to the effort to restore Holocaust-era assets to Nazi victims using the records in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as a success story. He also points to NARA to illustrate how records can be withheld from the public in the case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. In both cases, the archival record is used to remember those who may have been forgotten through negligence or government influence.

This book is essentially a call to action. Jimerson,

and the many other scholars he cites, are already using the power of the archives to include the marginalized voices of society and to open the archives for the public good. He uses a concluding chapter to outline ways archivists can respond to the call of justice. These include appraisal practices, description methods, inclusive reference, and public advocacy.

The book is well written and makes a very good case for understanding the power in archives and using that power for social justice. At times it gets fairly political and he leans to the left. However, Jimerson gives the reader fair warning in the Preface that he is a child of the Civil Rights Movement and has ever been an advocate for social justice. Despite the politics Jimerson is correct that improvements can be made to make archives more inclusive of the population they serve. He does not advocate the accrual of archival records fueled by one's personal passion or soapbox. He simply understands the essential evidence that holds our social memory together and desires for archivists to make it as complete and available as possible.

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Archives Power: Memory, Accountability, and Social Justice. By Randall C. Jimerson. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009. 442 pp.)

The culmination of a career of research and activism, *Archives Power* is an exhaustively researched case for increased social engagement amongst archivists. The volume reads like *Bartlett's* for activist archivists – quotations from leaders in our profession, including Richard Cox, Verne Harris, and David Wallace,

complement passages of popular public intellectuals such as Derrida, Orwell, and Mandela.

A renowned scholar and professor of History and Archives at Western Washington University, Jimerson challenges archivists in *Archives Power* to strengthen their commitment to social justice, government transparency, and the documentation of marginalized communities. Jimerson's politics derive from the late 1970s, in the wake of social upheaval that influenced the academy and the archival profession for years to come. He also writes compellingly about the role his father, a Baptist preacher who was driven from his church in the 1960s over his work on behalf of civil rights, played in shaping Jimerson's own commitment to social justice. This call to social obligation pervades *Archives Power*, which encourages archivists to use their professional acumen to accomplish nothing short of making the world a more just place.

Archives Power proposes an ideal for social engagement for archivists. Jimerson follows this standard with a more measured set of strategies for how archivists working in a variety of institutional contexts might adopt at least part of his suggestions.

Archives Power begins by tracing the history of archives and record-keeping from Mesopotamia through antiquity and the Middle Ages, before working up to the mercantile society during the European Renaissance. Jimerson continues on to a history of the archival tradition in the United States, following the history of the archival profession from the passivity of the first half of the twentieth century to the current postmodernist-inspired claim of inherent subjectivity.

Arguably the heart of *Archives Power*, Jimerson devotes considerable space to a detailed chronicling of the many ways in which archives have been used both to reinforce and subvert political power (and, by extension, political malfeasance). Jimerson reminds us of the power

archives and archivists “wield in mediating the past and shaping the future” through seemingly technocratic activities like appraisal, acquisition, and description.

Jimerson extensively discusses how archives can support and shape modern political movements. He spends considerable time discussing archival practice during and following South African apartheid. The author also discusses how traditional archival values of transparency and accountability have been undermined in the United States.

Jimerson closes *Archives Power* with a chapter entitled, “Rethinking Archival Ethics.” The author makes it clear that many of the ideals of social justice outlined in the preceding chapters may not be practicable for certain archivists. However, Jimerson suggests, “even archivists in repositories less fully dedicated to a social action agenda can contribute to these goals of inclusiveness, accountability, access, diversity, and social justice. It is an ethical choice each individual can make, based on personal choices, institutional constraints, and willingness to take risks” (p. 358). Jimerson demonstrates his sensitivity to the limitations within which many practicing archivists work; strategically, therefore, *Archives Power* may be an easier sell for the archival community than prior ideological challenges to archivists.

The world needs two types of archivists: managers and leaders. Archivists who are managers execute records retention schedules, preserve materials for future use, provide reference services to the research community, curate exhibitions that highlight important items, and promote their repositories through a variety of public relations strategies. Imbued with these characteristics, Jimerson argues, “[a]rchivists thus perform, often behind their professional curtains, a vitally important function of determining what sources of information society will be able to access in the future” (p. 233).

There are also archivists who engage in public debates related to record keeping, evidence, memory, and social justice. They strive to defend, with eloquence and passion, the integral role archivists play in shaping and reflecting society's values. These archivists are leaders, and aspire to be so within and outside their profession. Managers will find *Archives Power* useful; the leaders will find it an inspiration.

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