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Reviews

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Book Reviews

Archival Internships: A Guide for Faculty, Supervisors, and Students. By Jeannette A. Bastian and Donna Webber (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008. Illustrated with bibliography and index. 117 pp.).

This well-organized and honest manual thoroughly explores the discussion of professional standards to be applied to archival internships. While the Society of American Archivists has put forth in this decade a list of “recommendations” to guide the internship experience, Bastian and Webber have written a book calling for these recommendations to become standardized, and for further guidelines to create consistency across internship experiences.

They bolster their arguments in part with survey responses from graduates of the Simmons College School of Library and Information Science where Bastian teaches and where Webber supervises interns as the college archivist.

Their call for standards is premised on the long tradition of internships as an essential component of archival education. In fact, even as the definition of an archival education continues to develop, the authors point out that there was a time when a

history degree and field experience constituted the education and training of an archivist. More recently, an M.L.S. or an M.A. in history with internships in archival settings have qualified many a professional archives manager. But always the internship figures prominently in the archives education.

The nature of archival work—that is, its unique and idiosyncratic features from one archives setting to another—can defy a theoretical, classroom education. Thus, field experience will probably always be a critical component of the complete archival education, in the authors' estimation. Recent surveys, according to the authors, show that about one-third of current professionals have participated in an internship experience. Other statistics illustrate the frequency with which internships result in later hiring of the student after completion of a degree.

Having made their argument for the importance of internships, the authors have designed a manual for students, their faculty advisors, and their internship-site supervisors on a nuts-and-bolts level. They do not spare discussion of what can go wrong in these arrangements, but also offer corrective measures, which, as with so many practices in archives management, amount to common sense.

In seven chapters, liberally illustrated with case studies that any of us with archives-management experience will recognize immediately, Bastian and Webber cover the requirements of an academic internship from all relevant perspectives. One chapter is devoted to the independent internship usually sponsored by corporate, private, or academic archives at institutions that do not offer archival education.

While discussing the characteristics of a successful internship program, *Archival Internships* does not shy away from discussions of the uncommunicative site supervisor, the uninquisitive intern, or the preoccupied academic advisor. We are all products of our work environments and the demands they place on us. However, with the structure of standards, and a helpful section of sample forms, Bastian and Webber leave no facet of the internship process unaddressed.

Forms in the book include sample internship job announcements, intern work plans, internship applications, faculty expectations for educational requirements, and evaluation forms both for site supervisors and interns to gauge the meaningfulness of the experience in terms of their education.

As the authors point out, many students need coaching in job etiquette and work ethics, though a high number of archives students are studying for a second career and already have basic job experience. In all honesty, the internship may be a point where a student decides s/he does not want to be an archivist.

Consistent structure, management, and evaluation are the key elements of standardized internships, as are, of course, communication at all levels and among all the players. The needs of the internship site supervisor ideally will be met as the intern is gaining meaningful work experience. This balanced and thorough manual should prove an excellent road map for the many repositories that sponsor interns, leaving little room for vague expectations or student disappointment.

As the authors point out, in the best of all worlds, the student learns to apply classroom theory, develops professional confidence, and gains a career mentor while creating a product that is useful to the sponsoring repository.

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College and University Archives: Readings in Theory and Practice. Edited by Christopher J. Prom and Ellen D. Swain (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008. 360 pp.).

In 1979 the Society of American Archivists published *College and University Archives: Selected Readings*, a volume of practical essays covering issues of concern to college and university archivists. While the 1979 volume contains much that is useful, even after almost thirty years, a publication designed to meet the needs of college and university archivists of the twenty-first century has been long overdue. *College and University Archives: Readings in Theory and Practice* addresses the issues facing today's archivists head on, in a reader that contains often-challenging and always thought-provoking articles.

Editors Christopher J. Prom and Ellen D. Swain, both of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, have assembled a list of authors that reads like a "Who's Who" of college and university archivists. Besides the editors, contributors include Nicholas C. Burckel (Marquette), Tamar Chute (Ohio State),

Kenneth D. Crews (Columbia), Tom Hyry, Diane E. Kaplan, and Christine Weideman (all of Yale), Nancy M. Kunde (Wisconsin), Kathryn M. Neal (Berkeley), Tim Pyatt (Duke), Robert P. Spindler (Arizona State), Richard V. Szary and Helen R. Tibbo (North Carolina), and Elizabeth Yakel (Michigan). In the preface, Prom and Swain identify three overarching themes for the essays that follow: “The opportunities and challenges posed by ever changing technology, the importance of cooperation and collaboration beyond the archives’ walls, and the necessity for a proactive approach in undertaking the academic archival enterprise” (vii). These themes are played out in a series of thirteen chapters, divided into four broad topics: “Redefining the Role of College and University Archives,” “Capturing Campus Histories,” “Managing Efficient Programs,” and “Serving Our Users.”

The first section on the changing role of college and university archives opens with a chapter by Nicholas Burckel, the only contributor with articles in both the 1979 and 2008 volumes. He is therefore in a unique position to reflect upon the advances of the last thirty years. Interestingly, Burckel’s basic advice—to be proactive, innovative, and collaborative within the confines of budgetary constraints—remains unchanged; however, he notes the methods by which archivists accomplish these goals has been transformed markedly by technology. In Chapter 2, Helen Tibbo examines the changes archivists must face while working with electronic records. Archivists must manage large collections of electronic records and digital objects, with proper attention to issues such as authenticity, metadata, and preservation; they must live up to changing and increasing user populations and expectations; and they must partner with information science and technology to curate these collections successfully. Robert Spindler continues this theme in Chapter 3 by stressing the need to focus on preservation in this era of institutional repositories and electronic publishing.

Part Two focuses on innovative ways in which archivists can document aspects of their campus histories that have often been neglected. In a reprint of a 2002 article (Chapter 4), Ellen Swain describes an oral history project at the University of Illinois that documents student life and culture through interviews with alumni. Kathryn Neal (Chapter 5) provides an excellent summation of the new guidelines that promote documentation of diverse populations on campus. In the final chapter of the section

(Chapter 6), the three Yale archivists apply the Minnesota Method of appraising business records to the development of an appraisal policy for faculty papers. This seminal article, first published in *American Archivist* in 2002, has already proved influential in the development of new collection policies for these papers in other parts of the country.

In perhaps the most provocative essay of the entire volume, Christopher J. Prom writes on new approaches to processing in Chapter 8 of Part Three, "Managing Efficient Programs." In the light of the Meissner-Greene "more product, less process" recommendations, Prom asserts that the challenges of processing backlogs are at least somewhat attributable to the level of detail in finding aids, as well as the complex tools used to create them. According to Prom, archivists must increase access to their collections by employing a variety of strategies, including instituting better descriptive workflows and better management of processing as a whole. An excellent chapter on outreach by Tamar Chute and a thoughtful essay on reframing records management by Nancy Kunde round out this section.

The final section, "Serving Our Users," continues the theme of maximizing access to archival collections. The articles reflect the growing concern among archivists of how to appropriately assess and respond to the needs of the ever-changing user population. Tim Pyatt (Chapter 10) recommends balancing the issue of providing access with those of privacy and confidentiality. Similarly, Kenneth Crews (Chapter 11) advocates balance in allowing access within the confines of copyright law. In a reprint of a 2001 article (Chapter 12), Richard Szary notes the potential of encoded finding aids to provide more collections in a recognizable, standardized form. Unfortunately, as Prom notes in Chapter 8, this potential has not yet been realized. The final chapter (Chapter 13), by Elizabeth Yakel, recommends connecting with users to enhance reference. Yakel's excellent article should be required reading for all archivists involved in reference services.

Archivists with small budgets and staffs may become overwhelmed by the number and variety of recommendations contained in this volume. As Prom notes in his chapter, archivists must master description, manage people and projects, use complex technologies, and enhance online access to collections. These may seem daunting tasks, and we can only work within

the confines of what is possible in our specific situations. Prom advocates better management of processing as a means to increase access to collections. More efficient management of other aspects of archival work may provide the key to implementation of these recommendations and achievement of the ultimate goal of the archival enterprise, serving our users.

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Rescuing Family Records: A Disaster Planning Guide.

By David Carmicheal (Iowa City, Ia: Council of State Archivists, 2007. 24 pp.).

In light of the number of natural disasters that have occurred in the last few years, this booklet provides a much-needed informative introduction for those who want to understand better how to protect their records. *Rescuing Family Records: A Disaster Planning Guide* is written in a straightforward and simplified manner. Most people understand the need to protect their information but are unsure how to start and what should be protected. This booklet addresses these issues.

Chapter 1 asks the all-important question, Are you prepared?, for the list of potential manmade and natural disasters. Loss of identification, whether through theft or natural disaster, is a life-altering experience. Chapter 2 discusses why records are important and how the loss of identification and financial and health records can negatively impact one's ability to put his or her life back together after the dust settles or the water recedes. So what records should be preserved? Chapter 3 provides checklists that divide records into essential, high-risk, and irreplaceable categories. In the next chapter the checklists are expanded into tables that clarify the kinds of records and whether they should be duplicated. Before marking on the tables, they should be photocopied for later use. Chapter 5 discusses protection of family records. It is not always prudent to depend on others to maintain a copy of one's legal and financial records. The idea of placing personal financial information with family or friends may not be a good idea. Governmental agencies such as city and county governments and school boards are not experts

at protecting records. They are struggling to protect their own records from regular use and theft. The next chapter expands on the advantages and disadvantages of original versus copies or duplicated records and whether duplicates should be in paper or electronic format. A discussion of the problems of electronic files and updating software is also included.

Organizations such as state and local emergency-management agencies, as well as fire and police departments, should have this booklet available for individuals to purchase. The information contained in the booklet will enable potential evacuees to plan and prepare an evacuation kit before it is needed.

As the current director of the Georgia Archives, David Carmicheal led the Council of State Archivists' nationwide effort after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to protect essential records better. His knowledge and experience have served him well in the creation of this basic guide which will help individuals to prepare for disaster.

A CD-ROM of the work including printable checklists would be another format that many would find useful. One issue not addressed in the checklist is estate records. A spouse or family member will require a number of records which should be included in a disaster-planning kit. Regarding school records, one may do well to include at least the last two report cards for each child in the event that needed educational records are no longer available from the school board.

Carmicheal has provided much-needed information in a very accessible form. One can hope he will consider additional booklets addressing the disaster planning needs of churches, businesses, and organizations.

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