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## Reviews, Critiques, and Annotations

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## REVIEWS, CRITIQUES, AND ANNOTATIONS

*Managing Archives and Archival Institutions*. Edited by James Gregory Bradsher. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. Bibliography. Pp. xvi, 304; index; ISBN 0-226-07054-9; \$45.00.

This is an excellent single-volume treatment of the ever-broadening range of archival functions and activities in the United States for both beginner and experienced archivist. According to Frank B. Evans in his foreword to the book, *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* takes the place so long held by Theodore R. Shellenberg's *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956). By today's standards, Shellenberg's archival world is a very limited one, not only smaller but also concerned primarily with public records in paper form. *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* provides a larger view of the archival scene, including manuscripts and new media and technological

developments as well as a concern for professional development, outreach, and effective management.

*Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* is presented as a "handbook," one which is "broad enough to apply to all types of archival institutions and custodians of archival materials" and also "general enough to be useful to records and information managers, historians, librarians, and anyone with an interest in archival materials." In keeping with this objective, the editor, James Gregory Bradsher, has concentrated on major theories, principles and practices, issues, problems, and challenges.

The volume succeeds quite well in fulfilling its stated purpose. It is a good one-volume endeavor and concern. The chapters are almost all uniformly well done and fit well together, though they are designed to be read separately. All are well indexed, facilitating the identification of certain subjects in more than one chapter (for example, there is coverage of magnetic media in the chapters on audiovisual archives and security as well as in the one on machine-readable archives). Complementing the chapters (which are footnoted sparsely, if at all) is a list of sources for further reading which is arranged by chapter topic, with an average of about fifteen to twenty entries for each one. All of these elements make *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* a very useful resource.

The volume starts out with an excellent brief introduction to archives and is followed by a history of archives administration from ancient times to present day. Succeeding chapters cover the relationship between archivists and records management; records appraisal and

disposition; arrangement and description; the management of different kinds of archival material—personal papers, cartographic and architectural archives, audiovisual archives, machine-readable archives, and oral history records; new automation techniques; reference service and access; ethics; preservation; security; public programs; exhibits; management; and effectiveness. This is certainly significant coverage of archives administration. Deliberately left out, however, because of space limitations, are such topics as printed archives, reprography, and buildings and supplies. Because the emphasis of the volume is *modern* archives, specialty areas such as paleography, diplomatics, chronology, and toponymics also are not covered.

Of the eighteen contributors to this volume, twelve are on the staff of the National Archives and Administration. The others are from a variety of other institutions: New York State Archives, Catholic University's School of Library and Information Science, the United States Senate Historical Office, the National Gallery of Art, the John F. Kennedy Library, and the Smithsonian Institution. One is an archival consultant.

While it is perhaps possible to find fault with the contributors' being so overwhelmingly from NARA and other federal institutions, the volume does not really suffer from any significant limitations as a result. To the contrary, most of the topics are treated from a very open and broad-based perspective, rather than "this is the way we do it at the National Archives." The broad range of

coverage may mean, however, that those in some smaller or specialized repositories may not find the volume entirely to their liking. And some specialists will undoubtedly take issue with some of the viewpoints or techniques recommended. This is to be expected in a volume such as this. A more serious shortcoming, however, is the lack of any illustrative material such as photographs and forms or of references to case studies or "real-life" situations and examples. These would certainly make the presentations considerably more attractive and useful (though also requiring another volume and additional cost as well). Considering the volume as a whole, however, archival educators and their students, resource allocators, archival administrators, and beginning and experienced archivists seeking information on the field and recent developments will be pleased with this publication.

Of special note regarding the topics covered is the emphasis on archives administration as a complex, dynamic, and evolving field. In addition to identifying, arranging, describing, protecting, and preserving archival materials, archivists must also be concerned that those materials be used, that the wider world is made aware of their purpose, value, and usefulness. To ensure that all of this dissemination is successful, the final two chapters deal quite well, if briefly, with two subjects that have recently become of more widespread concern in the profession: archival management (including planning and reporting, management and measurement, budget, and personnel) and archival effectiveness (planning, organizing, leading, controlling).

While the volume does not cover the entire gamut of archival activity, it does, as stated earlier, cover all the major areas of concern in this country. With this in mind, *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* bears a favorable comparison with another very useful recent one-volume treatment, Ann Pederson, ed., *Keeping Archives* (Sidney: Australian Society of Archivists, Inc., 1987). While *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* lacks the basic, practical how-to approach of *Keeping Archives* (along with its fine illustrations and examples), it is nevertheless more comprehensive in its coverage, especially in the areas of archival background, nontextual media, technological developments, and management issues. It also speaks more directly to archival functions and activities in this country. Given the nature and pace of change in archives administration, it is impossible to predict how long *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* will enjoy its eminence as the successor to Shellenberg's *Modern Archives*. For now, however, it should be in the hands of every serious and aspiring archivist.

Roy H. Tryon

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*Records Management Handbook for United States Senate Committees.* Karen Dawley Paul. Washington: United States Senate Bicentennial Publication #5 (S. Pub. 100-5),

1988. Pp. x, 170; forms, appendixes, bibliography. Paper; single copies available without charge from the U.S. Senate Historical Office, Washington, D.C. 20510.

When the National Archives was first organized in 1934, the early employees recognized the importance of getting control of documents as soon as possible after their creation. They knew from experience the problems neglect could create. Horror stories abound of the deplorable storage conditions afforded the nation's most valuable documents up to that time and of the loss to our heritage because significant portions of the early records of our republic did not survive this lack of care.

As the documents that remained were found and brought into the archives, it was discovered that a great quantity of material had survived, in fact, so much that the new archives building—meant to last decades into the future—was quickly filling up. The problem was not the quantity, but the quality. A significant portion of what had been lost was the valuable documentation needed to write the history of the United States, while some of what was saved was not nearly as significant.<sup>1</sup> And not long after

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<sup>1</sup> Decisions as to what is "historically significant" can be debated for years, and the author would be loath to argue that the documents saved are not significant. Yet few would argue that the journal of the First Continental Congress is less historically significant than the stamp sales reports of the postmaster of Bent Elbow, West Virginia, for the years 1933-35.

this problem surfaced, the United States entered World War II. The need for additional office space impelled many formerly reticent agencies to "dump" on the National Archives huge quantities from their files. The haste enforced by war meant there was no time to sort and dispose of unwanted material, and soon the wartime agencies took much of the experienced talent from the National Archives, further compounding the problem. A backlog of processing developed from which the National Archives has not recovered to this day.

While working for the various services during the war, former National Archives employees began to develop the fundamentals of records management. The concept was simple: if a determination of what was historically valuable could be made at the time of creation, if a decision could be made on how long the rest of the materials needed to be kept, then the result would be beneficial to all. The archives would automatically get the historically valuable materials, and great savings would be realized in office and file space by keeping other documents only as long as they were actually needed.

Following World War II many former employees returned to the National Archives and worked with the two Hoover Commissions to get this new concept, records management, accepted by the United States government as the standard. The National Archives formed a unit to assist agencies in evaluating their files and writing the schedules necessary to implement a records management program. One of the leading exponents of this new



approach, Robert Bahmer, became the fourth archivist of the United States. There was a general understanding of the need to work with the files from the moment of creation to ensure that proper documentation reached the archives and that the government operated efficiently.

Unfortunately, as that generation of archivists passed from the scene, their replacements began to stress more and more the savings government could realize from good records management practices and less and less the importance of the proper documentation of agency activities. As this change in emphasis developed, the two branches began to grow further and further apart. The net result was the development of two professions—archivists and records managers—and a growing estrangement between the two.

Thus it is significant that the *Records Management Handbook for United States Senate Committees* should be written by an archivist in the Senate Historical Office. Further, it is "U.S. Senate Bicentennial Publication #5"—part of a historical series, reinforcing the emphasis on the need to save the proper documentation of senate committees' activities for the historical record. This motivation primarily, rather than the efficiency of Senate operations, provides the impetus for this records management program.

Yet this handbook is neither an unreasoned harangue from the archives to save everything in sight nor a stab at records management by the uninformed, but a balanced, professional presentation that provides for not only permanent retention needs but also disposition and

sampling guidelines, instructions for filing and filing codes, indexes and standard topic or keyword lists, system documentation, and tips on effective ways to establish a viable program. It is written in common, nontechnical language that can be easily understood by secretaries with little or no records management experience. (This is important, because more often than not the secretary is the person who implements the records management program.) In short, it is a well-rounded document that provides adequate guidance to the user and establishes reasonable schedules for disposition of the records.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most interesting portions of this handbook is the attention paid to automated records. As is effectively pointed out, the successive drafts of legislation and committee reports are particularly important in later determination or legislative intent. Making changes easily is the nature of word processing, but it poses a difficulty for the retention of copies, as (depending on the system) the last copy, or the next to the last copy, is automatically erased. Unless something is done to preserve these successive copies, they will be lost forever, with the result

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<sup>2</sup> No attempt has been made to evaluate the retention times in schedules or disposition instructions. These instructions seem generally sound, and there is every expectation that adequate documentation will survive without undue excess paper being saved overlong. Furthermore, these obviously are the result of a good deal of negotiation to reach this consensus. No one familiar with this process would consider criticizing such a product.

that future historians will be unable to trace the thought process that went into the final product, and who made which input.

The *Handbook* addresses this issue and calls for Senate committees to work with the archivist to establish ways to capture important changes in drafts of bills, reports, and statements. Users are advised how automated systems can be linked to traditional paper filing systems and the same criteria for retention and disposition applied. And the staff is advised to consult with the archivist to determine which medium (paper, microfilm, or tape) will be used for permanent storage.

While a laudable amount of attention has been paid to the question of automated systems, it might have been helpful to have a few more examples of how the capture of this information could be facilitated. Perhaps there simply has not been enough experience in this area to provide samples, but the balance of the *Handbook* has so many clear, concise, and easily understood exhibits that the reader almost feels cheated that there are not as many to provide guidance in this new and difficult area.

Dealing with individuals about their records is always a difficult task requiring tact, sensitivity, and diplomacy. If average people are difficult to deal with regarding their papers, one can imagine what the super-sensitive, highly political, pressure-packed world of the United States Senate is like. This handbook provides an excellent example of a workmanlike, straightforward, simple way to approach such a situation.

There are many things that can be learned from this publication. Records managers and archivists dealing with legislative bodies at all levels will find the common-sense approach helpful, and should be able to copy this approach. Manuscript repositories that hold papers of current or former United States senators ought to consult it to make certain they have not inadvertently received federal records along with the senators' materials. Historians and other researchers could profit by learning what documentation will and will not be available to them in the future from Senate committees. The appendixes provide excellent examples that can be copied profitably and a useful collection of federal laws and executive orders relating to records. And it is written well enough that it is enjoyable for the casual reader.

But the success or failure of this volume will be found in the archives of the United States Senate. If the *Handbook* does its job, historians of the future will have the documentation they need to write the history of United States Senate committees. If not, we will all be the poorer. I suspect the former will be the case.

Donald B. Schewe  
Carter Presidential Library

Editor's note: See the Spring 1989 issue of *Provenance* for another review of the preceding publication.

*A Guide to the Records Relating to Winthrop College.* Compiled by Ron Chepesiuk and Gina Price. Rock Hill, S.C.: Winthrop College Archives and Special Collections, 1990. Pp. 88; index, appendixes, illustrations.

Increasing the visibility and encouraging the research use of archives continues to be a major goal of the archival profession and should be, as well, an important goal for any individual archives. The second edition of *A Guide to the Records Relating to Winthrop College* should prove to be a useful tool in promoting and facilitating the understanding and use of this particular college archives.

Begun as the Winthrop Training School in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1886, the school became a women's public educational institution of the state of South Carolina, moved to Rock Hill in 1895, and became fully coeducational in 1974. The first half-time Winthrop College archivist was appointed in 1962. A separate archives department under the direction of a full-time archivist was established in 1974. As with many colleges and universities, decades of record keeping preceded the appointment of an archivist or the establishment of an archives. The hard work of the Winthrop College Archives to locate, acquire, preserve, arrange, and describe the records of its parent institution is evident in the wide variety of records from throughout the institution's long history listed in this guide.

A detailed table of contents gives an overview of the organization of the guide, while a foreword lays out its purpose, acknowledges and accounts for many of the gaps

in the records, outlines the scope of what is and what is not included, and interprets notations and measurements used. The organization of records into record groups, subgroups, and series is explained in a brief but understandable narrative description that spares the general reader too much detail or archival jargon. While much information can be gotten directly from the guide entries, a useful foreword is especially important in a guide intended for such nonarchivists as students and researchers from outside the institution.

Retained in the second edition is the interesting introduction to the first edition written by the late Arnold Shankman, Winthrop faculty member and longtime archives supporter. Dr. Shankman acknowledges that the use of college and university archives is frequently limited to those writing institutional histories, to genealogists whose ancestors were prominent faculty or alumni, and to students writing term papers on "the way college life used to be." He encourages broader use of academic archives and cites for exploration in the Winthrop College Archives such potential research topics as pay parity for women professors and the history of the home demonstration movement. In his introduction to this second edition, college historian Ross Webb offers general comments on the history of the institution and of the archives.

Interesting photographs throughout the guide range from historical images of students in college uniforms to modern pictures of activities in the archives and library. Useful appendixes consist of three chronologies listing

campus buildings, events in the history of the school, and events in the history of the Winthrop College Archives. Information on collecting policies and regulations for use of the archives would have provided other useful information for appendixes.

The guide is attractively and consistently presented, making good use of boldface type, upper-and lower-case letters, and spacing on the page to facilitate both detailed reading and scanning. Brief narrative notes give an overview of each record group, subgroups are clearly differentiated, and series entries include dates, extent, and usually brief identifying information. While more information might be desired, especially about such materials as photographs which are only briefly listed as a series in the audiovisual materials record group, one assumes the existence of detailed finding aids which can be used once the research appetite has been whetted.

Name changes for buildings, administrative units, and organizations are noted, administrative reorganization is explained, and any restriction on access is included. As with most college and university archives, record groups are a combination of those truly defined by provenance (Office of the President, Office of the Provost, School of Home Economics) and those that are collective in nature, bringing together many like series that do not truly share a common provenance (Student Organizations, Special Collections, Faculty, Audiovisual Records).

A particularly helpful feature of the guide is the index, which includes entries for proper names of departments, offices, individuals, buildings, publications, and

organizations; topics such as coeducation, uniforms, history, home economics, library, songs, and the school mascot, the eagle; and forms of materials such as Christmas cards, post cards, films, and floor plans. Researchers wishing to find related administrative records or scattered records relating to a single topic will be well served by using this index as a starting point for their research.

While there is practically no cross-referencing among related entries in the guide, and descriptions of records in formats such as films, videotapes, and photographs are not fully integrated into the guide, this valuable intellectual linkage may be found in the index. Form access points may be the most limited, for these entries seem to be confined to those around which series defined by form of material are organized. There are, for example, no entries for "diaries" or "speeches," two types of material frequently sought in a college or university archives.

This guide has been simply produced, using camera-ready copy from a personal computer, black-and-white illustrations, and a paperbound format. While this process has diminished the quality of photographic reproduction, it has nonetheless resulted in an attractive and readable product that should be easy to update in future editions. Especially when used in conjunction with guides to the Winthrop College Special Collections listed at the back of this publication, this guide to the archives is indeed a valuable tool in the aggressive outreach program of the Department of Archives and Special Collections, and it



obviously serves an important public relations role for the archives as well. It could also serve as a useful model for an archives or small manuscript department considering its own publication of a guide to its holdings.

Virginia J. H. Cain  
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*National Register of Historic Places, 1966-1988*. National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, et al. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1989. Pp. xxiv, 807. ISBN 0-942063-03-3. \$89.95 + \$4.95 shipping, paper; \$76.50 library price.

The *National Register of Historic Places, 1966-1988* is the long-awaited joint effort of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (represented by one officer per state and territory), the National Park Service (NPS) which oversees the National Register Program within the Department of the Interior, and the American Association for State and Local History, which coordinated the publication. Except for a brief introduction about the National Register program, the book is essentially a data listing containing approximately three lines on each of the more than 52,000 National Register listings as of the end of 1988. Each entry includes the name of the property and its address or general location. No data as to age, description, or significance is given.

The information is a cumulative listing taken from that published each year in the *Federal Register*. While it gives a state-by-state, county-by-county listing, the entries are too brief to give much information to the reader about such important features as historic districts or multiple property nominations. There is no index, so there is no way to determine just how many covered bridges or Carnegie libraries, for example, are recorded throughout the nation.

The National Register, created to be a national planning tool, will never be a finite list, but one to which new properties will be added each year. This is because properties become eligible once they are fifty years old; thus more properties become eligible each year. When the program started in 1966, only properties built before World War I were eligible; now many of those built during the New Deal era have become eligible.

The soft-cover book carries a hefty price for anyone wanting a current listing for only their area—the Georgia section covers just twenty-one pages, yet the book costs over ninety dollars including postage. While the book is actually the latest update in a series of similar publications done in the 1970s by the National Park Service, no mention is made of these previous printings.

The cover carries an attractive color photograph of Glebe House in Arlington, Virginia, without mentioning that is also the headquarters of the National Genealogical Society.

The seven-page introduction outlines the National Register program and explains how properties qualify. The

National Register criteria for evaluation are given, and each state historic preservation office is listed for those who wish to make inquiries for future listings or seek copies of the nomination forms for those mentioned within. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the introduction is the statistics taken from the "significance" areas of each nomination. These reveal that architecture is still the most often selected "area of significance," with seventy-seven percent of the approximately 52,000 listings being significant in that area.

The book does not mention that the original copies of the National Register forms have been microfiched and deposited at the National Archives. While some states may have made similar donations to their state archives, Georgia's complete National Register files remain within the Historic Preservation Section of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, which also has computerized data from NPS for all of its nominations giving more data than appears in this book. The National Register data is also on microfiche and available for purchase, as mentioned within the seven pages of advertisements accompanying the book.

All in all, the book will be a useful reference work for interested parties, especially librarians, to get an initial idea if something in their county is on the National Register. But because this list, like all printed lists, will go out of date fast, it is important to always check with the

state's historic preservation office to be sure of the latest listings or work in progress in their particular area.

Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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*A Guide for the Selection and Development of Local Government Records Storage Facilities* (NAGARA Local Government Records Technical Publication Series, No. 1), compiled by A. K. Johnson, Jr., is the first publication in a series planned to make available to local governments the basic principles, criteria, and considerations for establishing and carrying out a sound records management program. Published by the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) in cooperation with the International Institute of Municipal Clerks and the National Association of Counties, the twenty-page, 8½-by-11-inch booklet defines local records, discusses the benefits of preserving them, and describes criteria for layout, shelving, temperature and humidity control, fire protection, security, and vaults for

records center buildings (as opposed to archival storage facilities).

The appendices include model floor plans, a shelving plan for a small government, a checklist for evaluating potential storage facilities, and a bibliography. The manual is available for \$5 a copy from Jeff Jagnow, Council of State Governments, P.O. Box 11910, Lexington, KY 40578. Discounts are available for ten or more copies.

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*Managing Cartographic, Aerial, Photographic, Architectural, and Engineering Records* is the latest instructional guide published by the National Archives and Records Administration. The forty-four-page guide contains information on the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of such records and also on their identification, preservation, and transfer to the National Archives. The illustrated guide is well designed for easy reference. Its two appendixes are "Disposable Records" and a glossary. Copies are available from the Records Administration Information Center, National Archives and Records Administration, NIA, Washington, DC 20408 (FTS or 202-724-1471). There is no charge, but quantities may be limited.

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*State Government Records Programs: A Proposed National Agenda* (NAGARA Government Records Issues Series, No. 2) describes the importance of state government records, the need for strong programs to ensure their adequate and systematic management, and the essential elements of a nationwide agenda to strengthen those programs. The four-page paper defines general objectives and expectations, provides a basis for interstate cooperation, and is expected to stimulate further discussion with and action by organizations concerned with state government records management. For information on its availability, write Bruce W. Dearstyne, N.Y. State Archives and Records Administration, 10A46 Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY 12230.

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*Developing a Premier National Institution: A Report from the User Community to the National Archives*, by Page Putnam Miller, represents the views of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, a consortium of over fifty historical, archival, political science, library, and genealogical organizations. Based on research over a ten-month period and interviews with over 200 users and archivists, the report conveys the NCC's concerns about the National Archives and is intended to

increase "informed and constructive communication between the users and supporters of the National Archives, the management of the National Archives, and the congressional committees and to promote . . . joint endeavors for determining future directions for the National Archives." For information on the report, write Dr. Miller, NCC, 400 A St., SE, Washington, DC 20003.

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The winter 1990 issue of *For the Record*, the newsletter of the New York State Archives and Records Administration (SARA), is devoted to the annual report of the Documentary Heritage Program (DHP). Under DHP, aid is made available to the Reference and Research Library Resources Systems to provide advisory services to historical records programs in their regions. Because of limited first-year funding, aid was provided to three systems, Western New York, South Central, and METRO (New York City and Westchester County). METRO has issued *Our Past Before Us: A Five-Year Regional Plan for METRO's Archives and Historical Records Program*, by Phyllis A. Klein. *Strengthening New York's Historical Records Programs: A Self-Study Guide* is designed to be used by governing boards, directors, staff members (paid and unpaid), and supporters of the state's historical records programs. *Basic Elements of Historical Records Programs* is an eight-page brochure that summarizes the guidelines

and canons of good practice for the sound administration of a historical records program, dividing the basic elements into administrative and operational categories. Information on all the above publications is available from SARA, 10A46 Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY 12230.