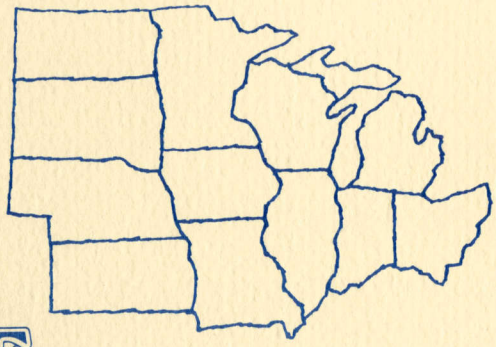
KRAFT, INC.
DEC 18 1980
CORPORATE LIBRARY



THE MIDWESTERN ARCHIVIST

VOLUME V, NUMBER 1, 1980

VOLUME V, NUMBER 1, 1980

THE MIDWESTERN ARCHIVIST

CONTENTS

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Midwestern Archivist, a semi-annual journal published by the Midwest Archives Conference, is concerned with the issues and problems confronting the contemporary archivist. Articles relating to archival theory and current practice are solicited. Diversity among topics and points of view is encouraged, and material in a wide range of formats—including articles and essays, proceedings of seminars and workshops, review essays, and progress reports on special archival projects—will be considered for publication. Ideas and opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Midwest Archives Conference or its Editorial Board.

Manuscripts should be sent to Lydia Lucas, Minnesota Historical Society, 1500 Mississippi Street, St. Paul, MN 55101. Decisions on manuscripts will be rendered within ten weeks of submission. Offers to review books or suggested books to review should be sent to Warner Pflug, Book Review Editor, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202.

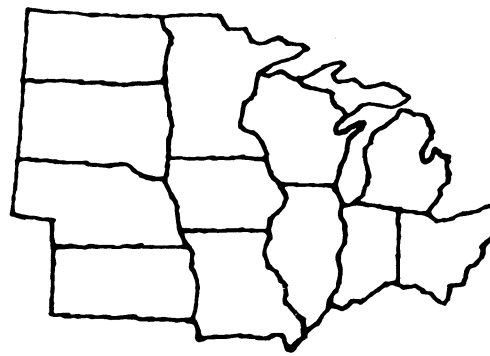
MAC members receive *The Midwestern Archivist* and the MAC *Newsletter* upon payment of annual dues of $7.50; institutional memberships are $15.00. Single copies of the journal are available at $3.50 plus fifty cents for postage and handling. Inquiries regarding membership or purchase of the journal should be directed to James E. Fogerty, MAC Secretary-Treasurer, Minnesota Historical Society, 1500 Mississippi Street, St. Paul, MN 55101. *The Midwestern Archivist* is also available in microform from University Microfilms International.

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life.*

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Lydia Lucas, chairperson (1978–81) Minnesota Historical Society
Anne P. Diffendal (1980–83) Nebraska State Historical Society
Charles B. Elston (1979–81) Marquette University
Toby Fishbein (1979–82) Iowa State University
Warner Pflug (1979–82) Wayne State University
Patrick M. Quinn (1980–83) Northwestern University

The Midwest Archives Conference



© The Midwest Archives Conference, 1980

Cover Design by Paul Hass

UNDERSTANDING AND USING EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY ACCOUNT BOOKS

CHRISTOPHER DENSMORE

Because of the renewed interest in local and community studies, archivists and manuscript curators are reassessing the informational value of business and institutional records. Account books and other business records, originally preserved because of their association with an individual or the early years of a community, or as documentation of economic history, are often the most significant surviving records of the early years of a community. Frequently, they constitute the only non-governmental record of the lives of many ordinary people. In the early nineteenth century, account books were kept by farmers, artisans, and laborers, as well as by merchants and manufacturers. While not as readily intelligible as diaries, letters, newspapers, and other forms of prose documentation, account books kept by individuals and small businesses may be easily interpreted once their basic format is understood.

Account books are primarily records of financial obligations. Many persons who neither wrote letters nor kept diaries had to keep their accounts in a reasonably accurate and systematic manner. As records of debts payable and receivable, account books were saved when other paper records were used to light fires or to insulate the attic. Even after the death of its original creator, an account book was often preserved to settle the estate.

It is difficult to estimate the percentage of the population that kept account books, but the number of surviving examples in manuscript collections suggests that such records were common. Given the prevalence of barter, particularly in the economy of rural America, it is hard to imagine how any farmer or artisan could have functioned without a bookkeeping system. Since instructions for bookkeeping were often included in arithmetic texts, a rudimentary knowledge of accounting methods was within the grasp of anyone with a common school education or an understanding of simple arithmetic.[1] Examples

of account books kept by persons who were barely literate attest to the importance of this form of record keeping.

The following description of bookeeping as practiced by individuals and small businesses is based on an examination of about thirty sets of account books used in western New York and southern Ontario from 1800 to 1850 and of arithmetic textbooks from the same period. These forms of keeping accounts are typical of those used in eighteenth century America, and they survived well past the 1850's, particularly in rural areas.

The system recommended to "the generality of Mechanics, Farmers, Retail Merchants, &c." was single entry bookkeeping.[2] Two books were required: a book of original entry called a "day book" in which transactions were entered in chronological order, and a "ledger" in which transactions were entered under individual accounts as debits ("Dr.") and credits ("Cr."). The terms "waste book," "day book," and "journal" were sometimes used interchangeably. A waste book is simply the rough form of the day book; "journal" usually refers to the book used in double entry bookkeeping to separate transactions into debits and credits.

The more elaborate method of keeping accounts by double entry is not likely to be encountered in the records of small businesses and will not be dealt with here.

The following examples of day book and ledger entries are taken from *Preston's Treatise on Bookkeeping* (1838):[3]

MECHANICS' AND RETAILERS' DAY-BOOK, OR JOURNAL.

Utica, April 1, 1831.

1	A. B. Johnson	Dr.	
	To 1 Mahogany Table	$18 50	
	„ 6 Fancy Chairs ..... at $1.50	9 00	
	„ 1 Common Cherry Table	7 75	35 25
	2d.		
2	T. M. Shapley	Cr.	
	By 5 lbs. Brown Sugar ..... at 12 cts.	$0 60	
	„ 4 „ Loaf do ..... „ 19 „	0 76	
	„ 1 „ Hyson Skin Tea	0 83	
	„ 1 „ Bohea „	0 62	2 81

6 MECHANICS' AND RETAILERS' DAY-BOOK, OR JOURNAL.

Utica, May 8, 1831.

2	T. M. Shapley Dr. To Cash *in full* (per Receipt)	2	81

1 LEGER.

Dr. A. B. JOHNSON. Cr.

Month	day.	Articles.	P.	$	cts.	Month	day.	Articles.	P.	$	cts.
1831											
Ap'l	1	To Sundries....	1	35	25						

LEGER. 2

Dr. T. M. SHAPLEY. Cr.

Month	day.	Articles.	P.	$	cts.	Month	day.	Articles.	P.	$	cts.
1831						1831					
May	8	To Cash.....	6	2	81	April	2	By Sundries...	1	2	81

On April 1, 1831, the merchant sells several pieces of furniture to A. B. Johnson. The entry in the day book is quite specific, giving the number, type, and price of each item sold. This detail is necessary because "if any dispute happens in trade, this book is produced as the principal voucher; every transaction recorded in it should be stated with care and accuracy."[4] The sum of $35.25 is posted to the left (debit) side of Johnson's account on page one of the ledger. Rather than repeat the information already recorded in the day book, the entire transaction is summarized by the word "sundries." The following day,

April 2, the merchant purchases $2.81 worth of tea and sugar from T. M. Shapley. The amount is posted to the right (credit) side of Shapley's account on page two of the ledger. On May 8, 1831, the merchant records a payment in cash in the amount of $2.81 to T. M. Shapley in the day book and posts the amount on the left (debit) side of Shapley's account. Since the debit and credit sides are equal, the account is settled, and two parallel lines are drawn below it to indicate that it has balanced. The Johnson account remains unbalanced.

Accounts were started in the ledger on the first available page. When there was no more room on a page to continue an account, the debit and credit sides were totalled and the sums posted to a new page. When there were no more available pages in a volume, a new volume was started. A single account might be carried through several ledgers—and many years—without being settled or balanced. Since ledger accounts were in no logical order, there was usually an alphabetical index with page references at the front or back of the volume.

Bookkeeping instructions usually recommended keeping both a day book and a ledger, but in practice the functions of the two books could be combined in a single volume. In this system transactions were entered directly under specific accounts, thereby eliminating the day book. This left no chronological record of overall activities, although the entries in each account were usually dated. Since the primary purpose of single entry bookkeeping was to record indebtedness, a chronological record was not essential. The form was well suited to farmers and small artisans, and was also used by some retail merchants.[5]

The primary purpose of the day book and ledger was to keep track of continuing financial obligations, money owed or due. A merchant might or might not also record his *cash* sales in the day book and ledger, depending on his individual preference or needs.

Cash books were kept by businesses in which it was important to know the amount of money on hand at any given time or in partnerships in which it was necessary to keep a record of the total assets of the firm. The example below comes from Roswell Smith's *Practical and Mental Arithmetic* (1845):[6]

Dr.		CASH.				Cr.	
1827.		$	c.	1827.		$	c.
Jan. 1.	To Cash on hand,	637	50	Jan. 2.	By rent of Store for one quarter, paid Thomas Taylor,	62	50
2.	" J. Thompson,	37	91				
2.	" J. Hart, paid ac't,	65	43				
3.	" H. Palmer on note	127	83	4.	" Paid note to R. Thatcher,	127	83
4.	" S. Snowdon,	84	73				
5.	" J. Mervin on ac't,	17	90	5.	" Family expenses,	27	61
6.	" S. Crane,	100	90	6.	" Misc. bought of T. Thamor,	614	27
6.	Sales of Mdse.,	311	18		Cash on hand,	550	65
		1382	86			1382	86
8.	Cash on hand,	550	65				

Cash on hand and cash received is entered on the debit (Dr.) side, cash paid out is entered on the credit (Cr.) side.

Records of cash receipts and expenditures were occasionally kept by individuals who were careful enough or curious enough to keep track of their personal finances. The example below comes from the back pages of a ledger book kept by John Anderson, a farmer from Pompey, New York.[7]

1842 an account of money paid out

Dec. 26	Paid the taxes twelve dollars & ninty one cents	$12.91
Jan. 29	Paid walter pease one hundred dollars in cash on note that he held against the estate	$100.00
Feb. 10	Paid (name unclear) two dollars and seventy cents for dressing cloath	
Feb. 14	and carding wool	$2.70
Feb. 15	Paid thirty five cents too hanible case for donation	35
Feb. 19	Paid fifteen cents for some pie and chease	15
Feb. 20	Paid melia brattle one shilling for cutting a dress for mary	12
March 9	Paid ten shillings for pulling teeth	1.25
March 16	Paid one shilling for waying hay	12
March 16	Paid five cents gatage	5

The account reads somewhat like a diary. Between December 26 and March 16 Anderson paid out $112.91 on his estate, but only $4.74 for other cash purchases. The small number of cash purchases does not mean that Anderson was impoverished, but that he probably paid for

most goods and services by bartering with his neighbors and with the local merchant rather than by paying cash.

The following examples of single entry bookkeeping are taken from an account book found in central New York which contains entries dating from 1828 to 1845, with a few later notations to 1866.[8] The book is typical of the early nineteenth century: mottled pasteboard covers, a leather spine with a label reading "LEGER" (sic), and the pages ruled for accounts. Inscribed on the inside front cover and the back pages are memoranda in the owner's idiosyncratic but serviceable spelling:

> "The Dol Mair went to Hors the 14th of the 6th Mo. 1843 the 25th of the 7th Mo went to Hors again"
>
> "To one quart of Alchall 1/4 of gum myrrh and 1/2 ounce of African caen (cayenne?) or an ounce of the common"

Unfortunately the owner did not include his name and address on the first page as recommended by most texts on bookkeeping. Some of the accounts dated 1837 to 1845 refer to people and places in Wayne County, New York.

The first thirty-seven pages, which cover 1828 to 1835, contain ledger entries. The existence of a corresponding day book, now lost, may be inferred by the page references in the entries for "5Mo 18" (May 18) and "12Mo" (December) and by the fact that sums rather than details of the transactions appear in the entries.

P. 6		William Howard		
1828			1828	
5Mo18	P. 35	0.16.0	12Mo15 32/	1.12.0
10Mo		0. 3.6	By Cash in Full	0.15.6
12Mo	P. 59	1. 8.0		
		2. 7.6		2. 7.6

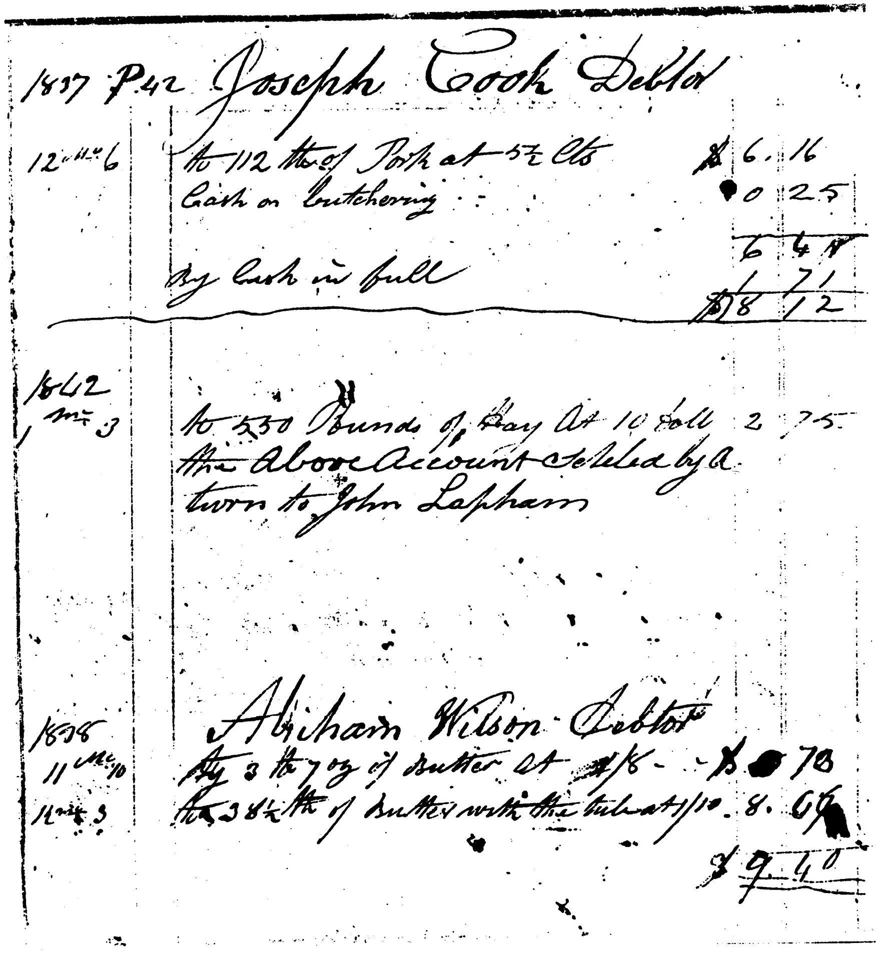
In this case, the ledger is little more than a list of names of persons with whom the owner of the account book did business. We know that William Howard owed two pounds, seven shillings and six pence—about six dollars—and paid his debt in cash, but without the corresponding day book we do not know what goods or services were sold.

All but four of the earlier accounts were settled in 1834 or 1835 by cash in full or a "du bil" (due bill); there are no further entries until 1837. Since none of the names that appear in the earlier accounts are found in the 1837-1845 accounts, it can be assumed that between 1835 and 1837 the owner of the account book moved to Wayne County, New York. Although it would not be unusual to find that the account book had passed into the hands of another person (usually an heir or business partner),in this case the handwriting remains the same for both sets of entries.

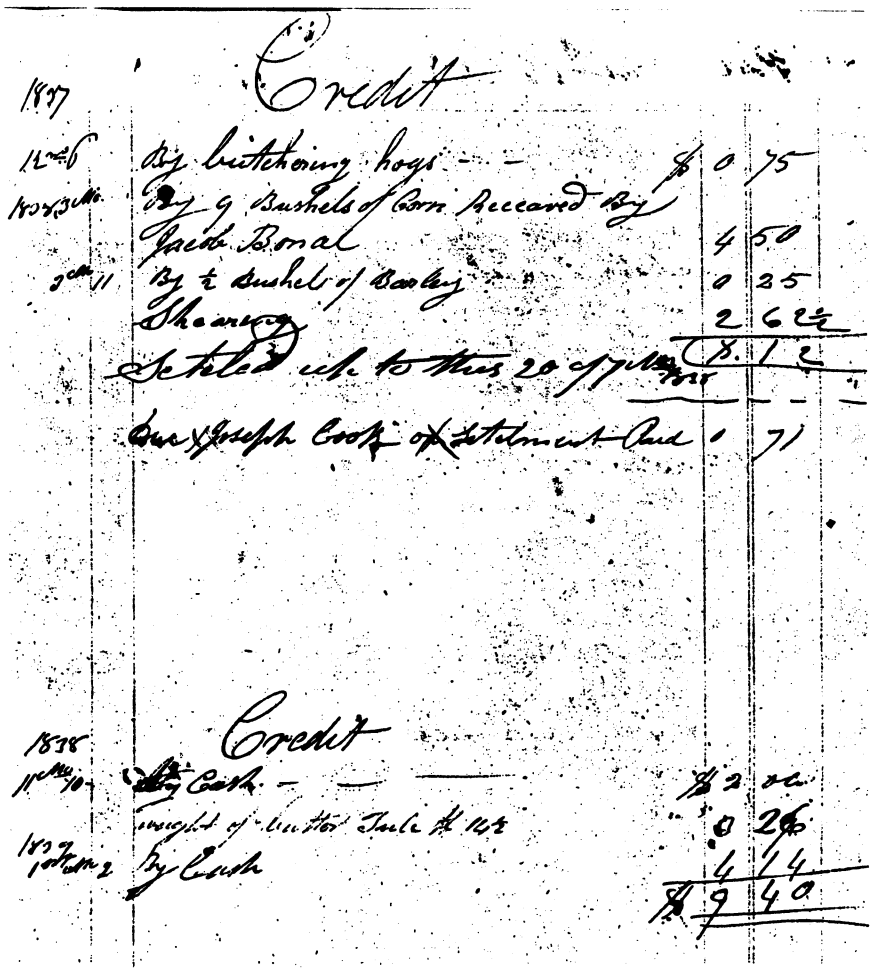
The accounts for 1837 to 1845 are also kept in ledger format, but there is no evidence of a corresponding day book. Since the information that would normally have been recorded in the day book is recorded in the ledger entry, these entries provide a much more detailed picture of the activities of the owner of the account book than the earlier entries.

P. 39	Joseph Cook Debitor			Credit	
1837	To 5 bushels Wheat	$7.50	1837	By 2 Bushels Buckwheat at 6/	1.50
				By Cash in Full	6.00
					7.50
9Mo.	To 2 Bushels wheat lent		1838 12Mo5	By Butchering hogs	1.00
	To 1 tun of Hay at $7.00	7.00		Wheat 2 Bushels returned	
			1839 6Mo18	By Shearing sheap 4½ days	6.00
	Settled this 4th of 8Mo. 1839				$7.00

P. 42	Joseph Cook Debitor			Credit	
1837 12Mo6	To 112 lbs Pork at 5½	$6.16	1837 12Mo6	By butchering hogs	0.75
	Cash on butchering	0.25	1838		
		6.41	3Mo.	By 9 Bushels corn recieved by Jacob Bonal	4.50
	Cash in full	1.71	3Mo11	By ½ Bushel barley	0.25
		$8.12		Shearing	2.62
				Settled up to this 20th of 7 Mo. 1838	8.12


1837 P.42 Joseph Cook Debtor
12 mo 6 To 112 lbs of Pork at 5½ Cts $ 6.16
Cash on butchering 0 25
6 41
By Cash in full 1 71
$ 8 12
1842
1 mo 3 To 530 Pounds of Hay At 10 Doll 2 75
the above Account settled by a
turn to John Lapham
1838 Abraham Wilson Debtor
11 mo 10 By 3 lb 7 oz of butter At 1/8 $ 70
11 mo 3 To 38½ lb of butter with the tub at 1/10 8. 0[illegible]
$ 9.40

Account with Joseph Cook, 1837–1838, page 42 of the Wayne County, New York, account book.



Account with Joseph Cook, 1837–1838, page 42 of the Wayne County, New York, account book.

The first transaction, entered on page thirty nine, is for the sale of five bushels of wheat to Joseph Cook which he paid for with buckwheat and cash. In a second transaction, also on page thirty-nine, a ton of hay is traded to Cook in exchange for his services in butchering hogs and shearing sheep. Also included is the loan and return of two bushels of wheat, price unspecified.

A third set of transactions, entered on page forty-two, begins on "12th month 6th, (December 6), 1837. The book's owner owes Joseph Cook 75 cents for butchering, and Cook owes him the value of 112 pounds of pork at 5-1/2 cents a pound, as well as 25 cents in cash. Next March (3Mo), Cook is credited for $4.50, this time for wheat delivered to a third party, Jacob Bonal, and another 25 cents for barley. Later Cook shears sheep for $2.62 and switches from being a debtor to a creditor. The book's owner settles the account on July 20 by paying Cook $1.71 in cash.

Cook and the owner of the account book have bartered goods, services, and cash. The total amount put up on each side is $22.62; a combined total of $45.24 changes hands. Adding the cost of the borrowed wheat, estimated at $1.50 per bushel, another $3.00 is added to each side for a grand total of $51.24 exchanged. Of the total amount, only $7.96 is in cash (about 15%); the remainder is comprised of bartered goods and services.

W. T. Baxter, professor of accounting at the London School of Economics, made an extensive investigation of eighteenth century American accounts in connection with his study of business careers of the Hancock family of Massachusetts. This led him to describe the system illustrated in the Cook account as "bookkeeping barter." This form of trade survived in America long after its demise in Europe but was ultimately replaced by "one way flow," in which paper and metallic currency were readily available and payment in kind was no longer necessary. Under the system of bookkeeping barter." a merchant could not easily distinguish his customers from his suppliers. The same person who purchased his manufactured goods provided him with commodities for resale to his suppliers.[9]

In bookkeeping barter, foods function as "commodity money." They have an agreed upon value, usually related to their market price. In the account book discussed above, wheat has the value of $1.50 per bushel, buckwheat is $0.75, and barley is $0.50. The price of hay, on the other hand, tended to be seasonal, running from $5.00 per ton in the

early fall to $7.50 per ton in the late winter. Although some of the grain traded in the Cook account may have been consumed at home, most was probably traded or sold to a local merchant who shipped it to the flour mills in Rochester, New York.

The earlier accounts, 1828 to 1835, were kept mainly in pounds, shillings and pence, with only a few scattered items priced in dollars and cents. In the later accounts, 1837 to 1845, the totals are generally, but not always, in dollars and cents, but the cost per item is often expressed in shillings and pence. The use of shillings and pence persisted in some western New York account books through the 1850's, though the system of decimal currency had replaced state currencies in the 1790s. Arithmetic texts published prior to 1850 often included tables and instructions for converting the various state currencies to "Federal money" and *vice versa*.[10]

Account books kept by single entry are not difficult to identify and understand. However, it may require a page-by-page examination of each volume to determine how the book was used and whether it is complete in itself or part of a larger set. A single volume may have been used by more than one generation of a family, at more than one location, and for more than one business. Some account books were used to record any significant information not entered in the family Bible, as illustrated by the following description of a volume in the Cornell Department of Manuscripts and University Archives:

> BADGER FAMILY. Record Book, 1843-1883. 1 vol. Includes legal, farm, and household accounts; daily weather records; inventory of farm property; directions for making medical and household preparations and treating animal and human diseases. Painted Post, Steuben County.[11]

Private account books may also include "public" records. The account book of James W. Stevens, now in the collections of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, is a case in point. In addition to Stevens' personal accounts, the book includes his accounts as the county clerk of Genesee County (which at that time included all of New York west of the Genesee River) from the formation of the county in 1802 until 1810.[12]

Sets of volumes must be examined to determine the relationship among the different volumes. If the entries in a volume are in

chronological order, it is probably a day book or a cash book; if the debit and credit columns are totalled periodically or at the foot of each page, it is probably a cash book. A day book should have a corresponding ledger. One must check the day book for marks which indicate that the entries were posted to the ledger: "x" marks, two short parallel lines, or a page reference. One must also check the day book to determine whether it includes both cash and credit transactions. An account book that is arranged in ledger format with complete entries, no use of the word "sundries," and no page references to the day book may be complete in itself. However, since one could refer to the day book by the date of the ledger entries, page references were not essential and their absence does not exclude the possibility that a day book may have existed. Occasionally a single volume will be found with day book entries in the front half and ledger entries in the back.

Double entry bookkeeping is recognizable by the fact that each transaction is entered at least twice as equal debit and credit entries and by the use of various "real" accounts (e.g. property, merchandise, etc.) and "imaginary" accounts (e.g. stock, profit and loss, interest, commission, exchange, etc.), while single entry bookkeeping generally uses only personal (name) and cash accounts. Although it requires some time to learn double entry bookkeeping, it is not particularly difficult to recognize its forms.

While a complete set of account books is most valuable, fragmentary sets or single volumes may also have considerable research value, depending on format and on the nature of the business. In cases in which the day book survives but the ledger does not, it is still possible to reconstruct key accounts with some accuracy. In researching the activities of a craftsman or the life of a farmer, detail and a chronological approach are most important, and the absence of a ledger is not critical. In researching the operations of retail merchants or larger manufacturers, summary information about the total scope of the enterprise is more important, and the value of the ledger is much greater. The ledger facilitates research about those with whom the creator of the records did business. One might not be particularly interested in the goods sold by merchant Smith, for example, but one might be interested in the type of goods and services bartered to merchant Smith by his many customers.[13]

The importance of the ledger without the related day books depends on its content. Earlier ledgers tend to have detailed entries, often as

complete as those in the day book. However, where the ledger entries are merely summarized, or where the only information brought over from the day book is the page number of the original entry and the sum involved, the ledger constitutes little more than a list of people with whom a particular firm or individual did business, and its research value is minimal without other supporting documentation.

The amount of detail necessary to catalog an account book will vary according to the repository's needs and resources, but even basic information—name of owner, dates, location, and type of business—cannot be accepted as accurate until the entire volume has been checked. Books clearly labelled on the spine or on the front page for one purpose may have actually been used for quite another. Account books need to be described with the same care used for letters or diaries, for a researcher is unlikely to look through a pile of unidentified volumes.

No record is useful unless it is understandable. While modern financial records require an understanding of sophisticated accounting methods, most nineteenth century account books kept by individuals or small businesses can be read by anyone who studies the simple instructions for single entry bookkeeping found in many contemporary arithmetic texts. It would be helpful for repositories that collect early nineteenth century records to have such a text available. Arithmetic texts are also useful for explaining the reduction of currencies and problems of measurement no longer taught in schools.

Account books document the lives of common people. Of the fifty names represented in the 1838 to 1845 accounts of the farmer from Wayne county, it is very unlikely that more than a small fraction are represented by surviving manuscripts. Supporting information is more likely to be gathered from public records—census, land, and probate records, tax lists, and poll lists.

In addition to documenting the widespread practice of bookkeeping barter, account books have considerable information value. From them can be derived biographies and autobiographies of individuals who were involved in a complex economic and social relationship. They provide information about the production and sale of farm products and manufactured goods, the availability and cost of manufactured goods, the rates and wages of labor, as well as seasonal and yearly price changes. A study of names often reveals patterns of

ethnic and/or religious business relationships. Although account book entries that detail everyday economic activities are prosaic in form, they often describe the daily existence of the common people more graphically and fully than do letters, diaries, or newspapers. When their format and meaning is fully understood, account books are rich documentary sources.

FOOTNOTES

1. At least twenty-five arithmetic textbooks by American authors published before 1850 included instructions for bookkeeping; see Harry C. Bentley and Ruth S. Leonard, *Bibliography of Works on Accounting by American Authors* (Boston: H. C. Bentley, 1934), pp. iv–v.
2. Nicholas Pike, *A New and Complete System of Arithmetic,* 5th ed., rev. by Chester Dewey (Troy, New York: William S. Parker and Sons, 1832), p. 484.
3. Lyman Preston, *Preston's Treatise on Book-keeping* (New York: Robinson, Pratt and Co., 1838), pp. 19–21, 29.
4. William Kinne, *A Short System of Practical Arithmetic*, 2nd ed. (Hallowell, Maine: Ezekiel Goodale, 1809), 137.
5. For mention of this form being used by merchants of the Midwest, see Lewis E. Atherton, "The Cataloging and Use of Western Mercantile Records," *Library Quarterly* 8 (1938): 194. The format is recommended in Pike, *A New and Complete System of Arithmetic*, 5th ed., p. 505, and in *Preston's Treatise,* p. 5.
6. Roswell C. Smith, *Practical and Mental Arithmetic* (Auburn, New York: H. and J. C. Ivison, 1845), p. 280.
7. Account book of John Anderson, Pompey, New York, 1836-1849, Special Collections, University of Rochester.
8. Account Book, Macedon Center (?), Wayne County, New York, 1828–1845, in possession of author.
9. William T. Baxter, *House of Hancock* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1945), pp. 17-24; idem, "Credit, Bills and Bookkeeping in a Simple Economy," in William T. Baxter, ed., *Studies in Accounting* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1950), pp. 31-48.
10. In New York currency, 8 shillings (8/) equalled one dollar in "Federal money." There were twelve pence in a shilling and twenty shillings in a pound.
11. *Collection of Regional History and the University Archives: Report of the Curator and Archivist*, 1958–1962 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1962), p.27.
12. Account Book of James W. Stevens, Genesee County, New York, 1802–1828, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society; the problem of public records in private account books is mentioned in Thronton W. Mitchell, ed., *Norton on Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archival and Records Management* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), p. 35.

13. For examples of studies using account books to document craftsmen and their products, see Charles F. Hummell, *With Hammer in Hand: The Dominy Craftsmen of East Hampton, New York* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1968), pp. 215–243, 351–406, and Margaret Berwind Schiffer, *Furniture and Its Makers of Chester County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966), pp. 63-68, 185-188, 224–226, 232–235. Other examples of studies that relied heavily on information from early account books include: Paul D. Converse, "How a Family Lived in the 1830's," *Current Economic Comment* (February 1950): 3–11; John Peter DeYoe, "From Yankee Cobbler to Middlebury Bookseller: Jonathan Hagar's Middle Years, 1799–1820," *Vermont History* 37 (1969): 13–29; David E. Schob, *Hired Hands and Plow Boys: Farm Labor in the Midwest, 1815–1860* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1975): and Pearl Wilson, "Consumer Buying in Upper Canada, 1791–1840," *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records* 36 (1944): 33-40. See also: A. C. Littleton and B. S. Yamey, eds., *Studies in the History of Accounting* (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, 1956); Francis X. Blouin, Jr., "A New Perspective on the Appraisal of Business Records: A Review," *American Archivist* 42 (1979): 312–320; Arthur H. Cole, "Business Manuscripts: Collection, Handling, and Cataloging," *Library Quarterly* 8 (1938): 93–114; James M. McCabe, "Early Ledgers and Account Books: A Source for Local Vermont History," *Vermont History* 37 (1969): 5–12; and Arthur J. Ray, "The Early Hudson's Bay Company Account Books as Sources for Research: An Analysis and Assessment," *Archivaria* 1 (1975–76): 3–38.

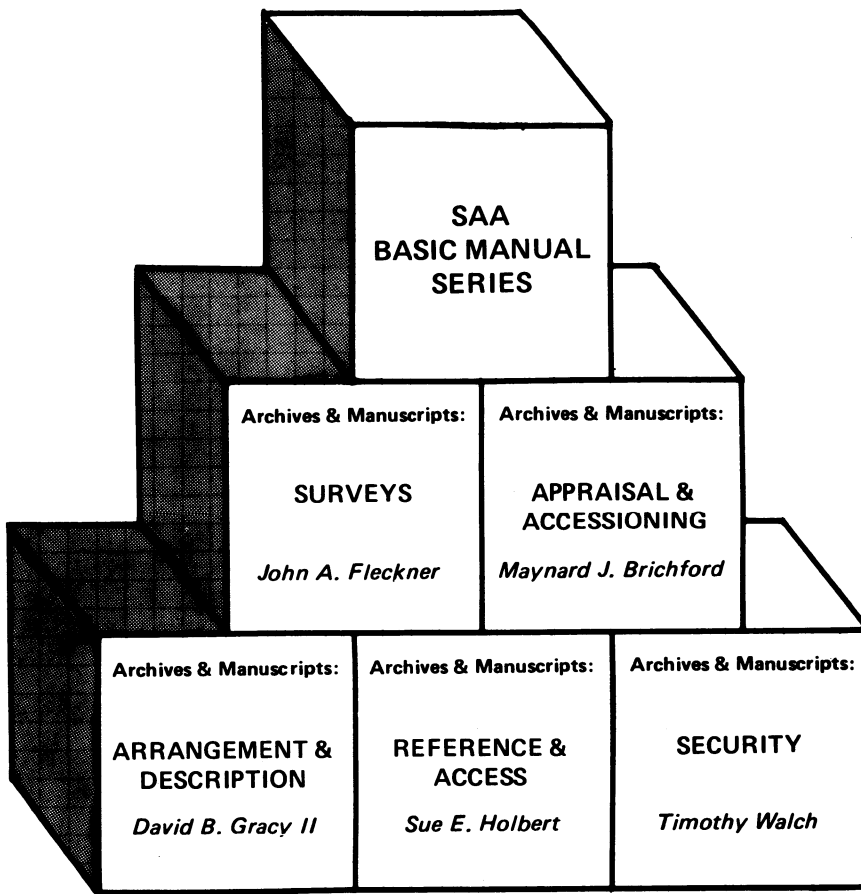
ARTICLE REPRINT SERVICE
University Microfilms International

☐YES! I would like to know more about the Article Reprint Service. Please send me full details on how I can order.
☐Please include catalogue of available titles.

Name _____ Title _____
Institution/Company _____
Department _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: University Microfilms International
Article Reprint Service
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION IN THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS ADMINISTRATION



Set of 5 manuals: $16.00 for SAA members, $20.00 for others; Individual manuals: $4.00 for SAA members, $5.00 for others. To order, write the Society of American Archivists, 330 S. Wells Street, Suite 810, Chicago, Illinois 60606, $1.00 postage and handling charge on orders under $20.00 which are not prepaid.

STARTING A RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION ARCHIVES: ADMINISTRATIVE FORMULAS FOR BETTER OR WORSE

SISTER JO ANN EUPER, OSF

In the past five years or so, there has been a great increase in the number of religious congregation archives and archivists in the United States. Though this is a laudable development in itself, it has not been without serious problems which, if they are not solved soon, may eventually undermine the movement. One obvious sign of difficulty is the presence of different archivists from the same congregation year after year at professional meetings. The high rate of turnover and the constant starting over from scratch are surface indicators of deeper problems that demand attention.

It should be noted at the outset that what follows is partly autobiographical, but not entirely. The text draws also on the experiences of other religious archivists in the hope that this collective experience will help others to identify some of the landmarks and pitfalls along the way through what for many is still a *terra incognita.* In addition, these remarks are offered to help cultivate some patience on the part of those who are desperate to use religious archives and cannot understand the disarray.

Most congregations developed with their eyes on the present. The future was deemed unplannable and the past was relegated to the farthest corners of the attic. Now that we are finally concerned with our past, nobody remembers which corner of the attic conceals the records we need. Thus, in recent years many congregations have been plunged into the current of events that lead to creation of an archives as administrators speak of "doing something about" the records. The result in many cases has been a headlong and often haphazard dash into an archives project, with varied outcomes.

The word "archives" comes easily to the religious mind because most religious constitutions stated that the administrative secretary was to be in charge of the archives. However, this meant only the current files in most cases, and they were usually kept securely locked. Thus, "archives" became synonymous with "vault," that *terra sancta* in or near the major superior's office. Holy poverty kept most of us from giving space to useless old papers, so the good secretary was the one who kept outdated material from cluttering up the vault. Hence, boxes accumulated in the attic. But, being in the attic, they were not considered part of the archives (the vault), and they were forgotten as one secretary replaced another. Because the archives was traditionally the secretary's domain, it is not surprising that the first person now collared for the archivist's job is usually an administrative secretary, who is then sent off to an archives workshop (if she is lucky; some are not). It is at this stage that Murphy's Law often goes into effect, and everything that can go wrong does.

The scenario is familiar to many. The secretary goes to her workshop, only to find that she cannot be secretary and archivist at the same time, and most seem to remain secretaries. So the superiors begin the search for an archivist, on a path strewn with bogs and pitfalls. For example, few seem to see the archivist's job as a permanent one; rather, they think she only needs to put the attic in order and that will be that. Neither does it seem to be a full time job; often the overburdened secretary, a librarian, or a bookkeeper will be asked to "do the archives" on a time available basis. A third problem is that superiors are loathe to ask a young religious to trade the missions for boxes of old papers in the attic, and the young seem equally reluctant. Besides, it seems appropriate that the archivist should be someone who has lived through the community's history and knows it by experience. Thus, after the secretary has given up, the next recruits tapped are the retired. Occasionally the retired recruit turns out to be perfect for the job, but not because she is elderly and has lived the community's history. In less fortunate congregations, the search for an archivist may take several years of trial and error, and the attrition rate is dreadful.

At this point, let us consider Euper's Law, Section 1:

> The congregation's archives will make better progress if the superiors are the *first* to take the archives workshop, and that workshop should be aimed at superiors rather than at archivists.

If Euper's Law had been enacted years ago, many of today's archives-related problems in religious congregations would have been prevented. Some congregations might have hired a professional archivist, rather than have tried to retread a sister. Some might have contracted with an existing archives rather than go to the expense of establishing their own. The rest might have selected a good candidate for the job at the outset and had her properly trained. All of them would have known what they were getting into when they said, "We need to do something about our records." But, since Euper's Law was not enacted years ago, let us review the consequences.

Once the archivist has been found, she must receive training, and this seems to be one of the most severe problems religious archivists face today. Perhaps because of our long tradition of sending untrained postulants out to work in the confidence that God would provide, some still think they should be able to launch into any new project with nothing but trust in the Lord. Whatever the reason, a disproportionate number of religious archivists seem to be needlessly struggling along like pioneers through an uncharted wilderness, unaware that standard procedures exist and that training resources are available.

Two areas are essential to the training of the religious archivist. The first involves practices common to all archival work: appraisal, arrangement and description, finding aids, preservation, and reference service. There is no subsitute for simply going to an established archives and learning the job by working under the supervision of a professional archivist for a substantial period of time. Questions that never come to mind during a panel discussion will emerge in droves as one tackles a pile of papers, and those questions can be asked and answered on the spot.

The second area of required training may be unique to religious archivists. It is the skill demanded when the new archivist must begin to administer large doses of reality therapy, which can be painful for all concerned. She has learned, and will have to break the news, that the archives cannot remain in the attic and vault, that many old record-handling practices should be changed, that the archives will need space and money, and that the job will last forever. To the authorities, all of this comes as a severe shock. As they see major plans unfolding, they hint that what they really had in mind was someone to see if there was anything important in the attic. They tremble to see this simple notion getting out of hand, and the archivist may find herself having to sell her

bosses on the very job they hired her to undertake. Most lay archivists probably look for jobs where they exist and do not try to justify archives to those who do not want them. Particularly if people have taken a vow of poverty, it is hard to ask for acid-free boxes for old papers when every active sister is trying to support herself and two aged infirm ones on a nun's stipend. Particularly if people have a commitment of service to the poor, it is hard to commit a full-time position to caring for old papers when we are daily reminded that millions of people are starving or oppressed and the missions seem the proper place to be. A number of other religious particulars have made it very difficult for many of us to apply our training. We tend to return from workshops as "born-again archivists" to a land of archival agnostics, and we have to quote a lot of chapters and verses to get our projects off the ground. It is at the specifically religious archives workshop that the archivist is most likely to learn how to convert her superiors. It is at these workshops that religious archivists can share strategies and make valuable contacts for the future.

Although it is ideal to have both kinds of preparation, most religious archivists get only a workshop or two before heading for the attic, so they are not fully equipped to deal with the major areas of concern that await them. Few sisters know how to prevent a return of the box-in-the-attic syndrome in the future. A brief meditation on these boxes should convince the archivist that if she addresses herself only to them, by the time she finishes there will be a vast new supply of boxes in the attic, and the congregation's successive archivists will perpetually be eons behind in their work. Further, the records that accumulate will be spotty (because people keep throwing things away), disordered (because people re-use the file folders and send the papers to the archives loose), and falling apart (from poor quality materials and poor environment). The papers now in the attic may be fifty years old and yellow, but fifty years from now today's papers may be nothing but dust. It is important, then, to plan the future of today's records by means of records scheduling.

Basically, archival records scheduling involves inventorying the records to find out what materials are created, which ones should eventually go to the archives, and when they can be transferred there. Orthodox records managers have devised some standard records inventory forms that theoretically should be a boon to the institutional archivist. In fact, though, the typical form is a nightmare of pernicious

minutiae for which nobody in the congregation has time. The archivist can devise a very simple form that supplies the basic information of series identification, how long a set of files is considered active, whether the material is sensitive, and when it can be transferred. The new religious archivist should learn about scheduling, and should be prepared to deal with the numerous difficulties involved in what amounts to a whole new way of life for the records-makers in their offices. It will take time to establish the system—not because of anyone's ill will, but because it is so new to many of the people who are accustomed to simply throwing things away when they need more space. However, patience is rewarded. The archives will grow by design, not chance, and the archivist will have a documented basis to plan for future needs in supplies, equipment, space, and personnel. Scheduling may cause a lot of headaches at the start, but it is necessary, even for a small provincial or institutional archives. No matter how small the system is, personnel face the problem of deciding what to do with paper when they no longer need it, and often it goes straight into the incinerator. Without a controlled accessioning system, the archives will forever be at the mercy of each individual's idea of what should be preserved. The archivist will receive loads of sentimental souvenirs and casual comments like "We just cleaned out the files last week; boy, what a bonfire!"

The scheduling job and the boxes in the attic can take a lot of time, but the religious archivist must recognize that not all archival materials are in the attic and the offices. Treasures may be scattered all over the congregation, in convent attics and sister's trunks. The buckshot approach, letting the sisters know that the archives is collecting historical materials, may be most effective here. An article in the congregation's newsletter and visits to the houses help. The buckshot approach is bound to draw a tremendous catch of junk, but nearly every batch of junk contains something valuable. Regardless of its value, every contribution should be acknowledged by a personal thank-you note with a little fervorino about the importance of preserving our heritage. Invariably, the thank-you note will draw more contributions, and they improve as time goes by. The congregation should establish a policy which stipulates that when a sister dies, any papers found in her possession will be sent to the archives. There are always some nonarchival items to hand out as mementi, but the archivist should have first choice.

Once the archivist has collected records, implemented scheduling procedures, and involved the congregation in her work, she must confront the records that have accumulated. Although processing is included in archival training, many religious archivists seem to learn little about conservation techniques. While the rest of the congregation imagines her as a sort of office clerk surrounded by file cabinets, the archivist soon realizes that the archives really is more like a hospital, where she must administer therapeutic baths and medicated vapors, mend lacerations, purge parasites, do reconstructive surgery, and devise orthotic appliances in the hope of saving the poor stragglers that arrived in critical condition. Sometimes earlier treatment efforts were botched, and the archivist must treat the results of someone else's malpractice. These things do not wait until the new archivist has learned all about her job; they emerge the minute she opens the first box in the attic. Let us return, then, to Euper's Law, Section 2:

> The chances of success increase and the experiences of catastrophic frustration decrease in direct proportion to the amount of training the new archivist has in "the techniques that every archivist should know."

These techniques have been identified by conservator George M. Cunha as cleaning, deacidifying, mending, and reinforcement.[1] An initial archives workshop may have touched on conservation, but that was just a beginning. The archivist should plan to read a lot of books and attend many workshops where conservation and restoration are discussed, because it does little good to have the records on hand if they are in unusable condition, or soon will be. The corollary to Euper's Law, Section 2, is equally important:

> The archivist should educate her congregation in good records care practices in order to reduce the unintentional damage done to the records before they are are sent to the archives.

A newsletter and educational slide program are helpful in this regard.

There is, of course, one primary purpose for all this activity: service. A religious archivist who, like myself, was a retread and had to make up for decades of her community's neglect of records, admonished several years ago that the archives should be kept strictly closed until all records were in order. This may have worked in her situation, but it

probably does not have much of a chance in most congregations. The minute the word of the archives goes out, the questions begin to roll in. Inquirers need the history of their parish for the jubilee book, a pithy quotation from the foundress for a brochure, and pounds of data for a new project, and they think the archivist's job is to do their research. Then, confusing the archivist with the computer, they request the current job descriptions of all the sisters west of the Kittatinnies. Four agencies decide that this is the time to survey women's or religious records, and the archivist is on the mailing list of everyone who is doing a comprehensive guide and wants a copy of hers before she even has one. Countless individuals are doing their family tree and had a relative in the congregation. If she is really typical, all of this is happening in the centennial year and she is expected to produce the history of the congregation, a photo exhibit, and a museum of artifacts used by the foundresses. And there she stands in her attic. Even the appropriate requests bring their share of frustration when all the information is needed yesterday. Most people can sympathize with one who is struggling to catch up after a vacation, but hardly anyone can understand that the archivist is already 102 years behind in her work the day she starts.

The beginning archivist, then, must deal not only with the records, but also with educating the congregation about archival services. It simply is not possible to tell everyone the archives is closed until all records are organized. If she considers today's records as tomorrow's archival accessions, the archives will never be finished. Service is part of the act from the start. On the other hand, the archivist cannot let herself become so involved in service that she has no time to advance the archives. In the early stages, service may have to be limited, with guidelines defining what can and cannot be done for people. To this end, a policy manual should be written that outlines the collecting policy, services provided, and any conditions or limitations that must be imposed. It is better to set everyone straight at the outset than to set bad precedents that will have to be reversed later.

The mere mention of the word "personnel' can easily precipitate a case of schizophrenia. When the religious archivist discovers what is in the attic, she comes to realize that she alone will be the curator of archives, manuscripts, photographs, bound volumes, sound recordings, motion pictures, business records, micrographics, ephemera, and the museum, and that she will be the assistant,

cataloguer, typist, conservator, and housekeeping staff as well. The religious archivist usually must become knowledgeable in all the areas in which the pros in large shops can specialize. For any job that does not require specialized training (and some that do), volunteers are a necessity. They can do all kinds of time-consuming chores and most of the typing, sparing the archivist for more demanding work. However, the archivist still must be familiar with all areas in order to train and supervise the volunteers.

Of course, the most important member of the archives staff is the archivist herself. If she has learned her job well, she knows it is a specialized field with its own body of knowledge and skills. Yet in some congregations the archivist is just one more member of the general labor pool. After several years of experience and training, she may be transferred to teach third grade in Succasunna. This brings us to Euper's Law, Section 3:

Thou shalt not lightly transfer thy archivist.

This brings us more or less full circle. We began with the problem of finding an archivist and end with the problem of keeping her. Doubtless there are many other issues that arise to challenge the modern religious congregation that is struggling to maintain its present works and is ambivalent at best about the archives. One can only hope that the experience of today's religious archivists may be helpful in this time of growing awareness that we cannot afford to forget who we are and where we came from, and that to remember requires a full-time, fully committed effort.

FOOTNOTE

1. George M. Cunha, "Where to Do it? A Panel Discussion on Regional, State, and In-House Conservation Centers," comments presented at a symposium on "Preserving Your Historical Records," Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, October 21, 1978.

SCIENTIFIC RECORDS IN A "GENERAL" REPOSITORY

MARY E. JANZEN

Since the end of World War II, the exponential growth of scientific research and development in universities, industry, and government contract laboratories has had a tremendous impact on American life. Yet only a small fraction of the records of this activity has come under archival control.Contributing to the failure to adequately document a major phenomenon of our time has been a tendency of scientists to regard their correspondence files, laboratory notes, and manuscripts as personal property to be disposed of once its immediate purpose has been served.

Recognizing that substantial amounts of valuable material were thus being destroyed, the Society of American Archivists Committee on the Archives of Science and Technology conducted a survey between 1976 and 1979, asking members of the National Academy of Sciences about their plans for the disposition of their papers. One goal of this survey was to foster among scientists who have been nationally recognized for their achievements the awareness that their papers could provide evidence for the history of their respective disciplines and of the scientific enterprise as a whole. Each Academy member was sent a brochure on the preservation of scientific source materials prepared specifically for scientists by the American Institute of Physics' Center for History of Physics.[1]

In the course of this survey, the Committee came in contact with several scientists who were inclined to donate their papers, but had been unable to find a repository that would accept them. Their frustration underscores the point that efforts to preserve scientific records cannot succeed unless there is an increase in the number of repositories willing to acquire such records. Scientists are not the only ones who need to be convinced of the historical value of scientific records. Some of our own colleagues in the archival profession need convincing as well.

The limited resources of specialized repositories already collecting in the sciences cannot adequately carry out a task of this magnitude. General repositories—particularly university archives and manuscript repositories, but including business archives as well—must do their part to preserve scientific records if any significant body of documentation is to survive. This article will address practical ways to come to grips with some of the problems posed for the general repository by the acquisition of scientific records.

It may be that historians of science increasingly will have some training in the sciences, but archivists with such a background will probably always be rare. One of the barriers archivists face in dealing with scientific records is the idea that their appraisal, arrangement, and description requires technical knowledge that most archivists do not possess. In his article, "The Archivist: Link Between Scientist and Historian," J. Frank Cook exhorted the profession to overcome this inhibition:

> The archivist has most likely not been as energetic in accessioning, processing, and encouraging the use of scientific archives as he has been of some of his other record groups. In his defense the archivist may argue that his training did not prepare him to handle adequately the manuscripts and archives produced by the sciences. The argument has validity, but in my opinion, it will have to be overcome in the years ahead. For I believe one of the most important functions the archivist will have in the future will be to serve as a bridge between the scientist and the historian.[2]

Unfortunately the only concrete example Cook offered of how an archivist might handle scientific records, while perhaps ideal, is beyond the means of most general repositories. To process the records of the University of Wisconsin's Limnology Laboratory, the University Archives hired a professional limnologist who collaborated with an historically-trained archivist to identify the data and place it in an historical context. Since the mid-1970s, however, budgetary constraints have limited the general repository's ability to hire processors with special expertise. In the past, the specialized processor has usually been a graduate student in an appropriate discipline. The size of most archival staffs has tended to stabilize over the past decade, with some graduate students who had originally been hired for a specific project becoming members of the permanent staff. Money for

new personnel has tightened considerably. Repositories are being asked to do more with less. In the case of scientific records, it means that archivists without special expertise in science will have to appraise and process them.

Appraising and processing scientific records may require extensive self-education on the part of an archivist, but the results can be successful. Three things a generalist must bring to the task are: 1) a sense of the place of scientific records in the collecting program of a general repository, 2) knowledge of where to look for expert assistance and how to use it in appraising and processing scientific records, and 3) confidence that basic archival principles and practices can be applied to collections that include technical materials.

There are two types of scientists whose papers could be sought by a general repository. The first may seem obvious: the "stars" in the field–Nobel laureates and members of the National Academy of Sciences. These are men and women with national and international reputations. No special expertise is required to realize that virtually all of the surviving evidence related to the career of an Albert Einstein, an Enrico Fermi, or a Julian Huxley is worth preserving. Yet the SAA survey of NAS members revealed that archivists have not yet solicited the papers of many very prominent scientists.

The second type of scientist is one whose career is of importance primarily to the history of a particular institution. University archivists, for instance, should seek out the papers of science faculty members who established departments or programs or who played a significant role in university affairs through service on important committees. An example of this second type is provided by James W. Neckers, one of the founders of the department of chemistry at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, and co-author with Abbott and Van Lente of a standard textbook, *Experimental General Chemistry*. The archival value of Neckers' papers for the history of his university is obvious.

A general repository could consider collecting a third type of scientific personal papers: those of scientists not affiliated with the institution, but whose work is related to a particular subject area in which the institution collects actively. Industrial scientists are one group whose papers often have no natural home, and general repositories could help rectify this situation. For example, a university library may be interested in building a broadly based research

collection on coal technology, and may already have some manuscript collections on coal mining. A natural extension of this collecting field would be to seek the papers of industrial chemists who have made important contributions to the advancement of coal research.

In looking for help in processing scientific records that have been collected, it is important for the archivist in a general repository to consider a wide range of possibilities. The most obvious source of help—scientists—has equally obvious limitations. Most scientists do not seem to be familiar with the kind of history of science that is currently being written, in which the social context of scientific work is emphasized as well as the history of ideas. Consequently, they lack the perspective that would enable them to appraise their papers for materials of possible long-term interest to historians. They cannot be expected to realize that their false starts and typical routines may someday prove important parts of a larger historical picture. Scientists also tend to be too preoccupied with their ongoing research to have time to interpret technical materials for archivists, even if they are interested in a particular processing project.

Archivists will also find that historians of science will not be able to help appraise scientific records outside their particular specialties. Maynard J. Brichford, in his *Scientific and Technological Documentation,* stated the problem as he saw it in 1969: "Until we have a significant research production in the history of recent science and technology, we will have problems in the archival evaluation of source material."[3] Eleven years later, the problems of evaluation of scientific records are still unsolved. The archivist's task is to preserve sources for future studies in the history of science. Archivists are likely to find that many of the present practitioners of this discipline tend, like scientists, to be too preoccupied with their current research to lend much practical assistance.

Archivists with experience in the area of scientific research can provide excellent advice. They are at present so few in number, however, that most archivists in general repositories will have limited opportunities to consult their most knowledgeable colleagues. Since 1978, a number of archivists have been active in a Joint Committee comprised of representatives of the Society of American Archivists, the History of Science Society, and the Society for the History of Technology. This committee was specifically established to study problems posed by contemporary scientific records. Reports and

guidelines emanating from it promise to be especially useful.[4]

Until such guidelines appear, university archivists in particular should not overlook one category of experts close to home: science librarians and bibliographers. In their efforts to distinguish their profession from that of librarians, archivists do not always think of the latter as potential collaborators. Good science librarians are accustomed to dealing with all levels of research questions, and have the mental flexibility and attitude of service that enable them to respond to archivists' requests for information. Science librarians may be aware of social and political issues in various scientific disciplines which are likely to prove of historical interest. They may also know which members of the science faculty are doing the most productive research, and whose papers should be solicited for the university archives. Some are able to provide specific assistance in unexpected ways, such as translating a scientific quotation from a foreign language into English for use in an exhibit.

There is one category of expert whose services an archivist may be able to engage for processing scientific records. While fewer graduate students are available than in the past, a large pool of undergraduate students, including those majoring in various scientific disciplines, can be tapped through federal work-study funds. This resource is most readily available to university repositories, but business archives might also consider recruiting student assistants for part-time summer positions.

A final source of expertise that should be considered by the archivists is retired scientists, although experience with this group can be mixed. Some are invaluable advisors and informants, but others may prove difficult to work with or even obstructionist.

Brichford summarized the limitations of expert advice nicely:

> Consultations with specialists in subject fields have been advocated as the best means of evaluating scientic documentation. On the whole, such consultations are overrated. It is difficult to find a specialist with a- a comprehensive knowledge of the material, b- the perspective of the intellectual historian or the historian of science, and c- the archivist's knowledge of the problems involved in segregation, description, preservation and use of the materials.[5]

The situation in each general repository is, of course, different. Which category of expert will be most useful to the archivist in meeting his or

her responsibility towards scientific documentation depends on personality and other contextual variables.

While expert advice can be helpful, the ultimate responsibility for evaluation and interpretation of archival collections in the sciences will remain the archivist's. It is the archivist's own attitude which is of primary importance in dealing with scientific materials. A combination of common sense and sound archival practice will be most helpful if the archivist is willing to become engaged with the subject matter and is confident of his or her ability to do so. As with any other archival records, the best source of information on the subject they document is likely to be the scientific records and papers themselves. Particular attention should be paid to anniversary and birthday memoirs, after-dinner speeches, and obituary notices in which a scientist's colleagues may discuss scientific achievements in terms the non-specialist can understand.

To make the most of this kind of information, the archivist must make an effort to learn the common terminology of the relevant scientific discipline. There are, to be sure, formidable conceptual barriers to the non-specialist's understanding of modern science, but part of the problem is simply a matter of vocabulary. Scientific terminology is like any other language: it can be learned.

A scientist's disordered notes and drafts, just like the papers of a novelist or philosopher, can be presorted according to papers, ink, pagination, and format (holograph or typescript) and then identified by comparison with bibliographies or lists of publications. Up to 80 per cent of such materials can sometimes be identified through physical evidence alone without any knowledge of the subject matter.

Even if expert assistance is available, it is important for the archivist not to be mystified by the expert. For example, the scientifically trained processor cannot necessarily be relied on to achieve the right level of exposition in the scope and content notes that interpret a body of papers to researchers. It may, in fact, work better for the archivist to draft such notes and let the expert correct errors, rather than to edit technical descriptions to make them suit archival purposes. There is also danger in having a scientist too closely involved in processing his or her own papers. One prominent scientist who insisted that his longtime research assistant sort and identify his papers instead of the university archivist only succeeded in delaying the completion of the task.

Many of the series in a scientist's personal papers are familiar to archivists. Correspondence, administrative memoranda, notebooks, and procedures manuals pose no special problems. Currently this is the portion of a scientist's papers that is most likely to be used by historians of science. To give but one example, the unprocessed papers of physicist James Franck originally included eight boxes of unsorted notes and drafts, which Franck had apparently intended to discard. Of the twenty-four researchers who consulted the Franck papers at the University of Chicago Library between December 1974 and July 1979, only two examined the lab notebooks and drafts of scientific publications. For the majority of this collection's users, all those laboriously sorted and carefully identified drafts and notes might as well have been discarded or left in their original chaos.

Although the discipline of the history of science may evolve to utilize more technical documentation eventually, this type of evidence is not used by its current practitioners to any great extent.[6] This suggests that the archivist in the general repository, where scientific records compete for shelf space with other more traditional records and papers, must carefully consider the research potential of these types of records before deciding to retain them. In doing this, it is most productive to compare scientific records with other research files, for the desirability of preserving raw data is a question that arises in regard to the papers of researchers in all fields.

Some scholarly research files are relatively easy to appraise. For example, the field notes taken by University of Chicago anthropologist Robert Redfield on trips to Morelos, Mexico in the late 1920's and to Yucatan and Guatemala in the 1930s most likely will be used extensively. Since the societies he studied have disappeared, his notes have become primary evidence. Moreover, an increasing number of anthropologists are turning to topics that are based on library research rather than on field work as the "primitive" cultures, which formerly were their traditional objects of study, vanish. An equally clear example of discardable research notes are forty-four boxes of reading notes for books written by an historian, since his sources could be adequately determined from his footnotes.

Archivists should take the same approach to laboratory notes and other scientific data. One must ask: what kind of information is represented by the data? If the experiments or observations are readily repeatable, the "materials and methods" section of the resulting

publication will enable others to verify results. The original data will be of no further use to scientists. There are other scientific activities, however, that do produce data bases of continuing interest to scientists. Such data are in most cases retained by the research facilities which produced them. The University of Chicago's Yerkes Observatory, for example, maintains files of thousands of photographs that document stellar and planetary observations since the early years of this century. The scientific data which reaches an archival repository is most likely to be that for which working scientists have no further use. University archivists should, however, be alert to the possibility that a research facility which is scheduled for shut-down may require a repository for "reusable" data.

Data which has no current scientific interest may provide other kinds of information to historians. Manuscript drafts may document the stages of a scientist's work toward the solution of a problem. Personality and work habits can be reflected in laboratory notebooks. For example, Enrico Fermi was extremely meticulous in recording and analyzing data, as his "automatic memory" system of notebooks shows. Doodles in a 1912 laboratory notebook reveal the whimsical humor of Gustav Hertz, a German scientist, who with James Franck produced the first experimental evidence supporting the Bohr model of the atom.

The more prominent the scientist, the more likely such personal traits reflected in notebooks and drafts are going to interest scholars. The archivist can probably take a selective approach toward the lab notebooks, computer printouts, key punch cards, magnetic tapes, and lab apparatus which come with a more typical scientist's papers, for future historians of science will in most cases be interested in the interpretation of such raw data rather than in the data itself.

Modern science has created what Brichford described as a "huge volume of documentation, from which archivists must evaluate and select the small portion which will be prepared for the researchers."[7] Archivists in general repositories will have to engage in that task along with their more specialized colleagues.

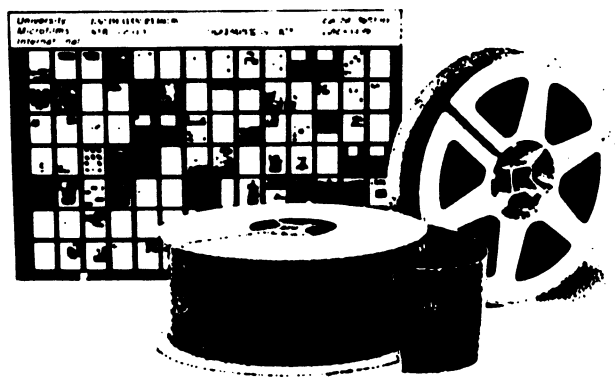
Scholars sometimes imply that they would like every scrap of evidence to be saved. Archivists, however, are all familiar with the desperation of a researcher confronted with more material than can be covered in the number of days he or she has scheduled for a particular repository. The hard-pressed researcher wants well-organized

collections that make it possible to find what is of interest with little waste of time. Holding technical material in an unprocessed state so that some research scholar might sift through it at a later date is not practical. Archivists in general repositories must deal with all the records they select for preservation. They are never going to be relieved of their responsibility to select, arrange, and describe collections by scientists, historians, or any other experts. Fortunately, half the battle involves demystifying the unknown and the other half requires the application of commonly accepted archival practices. The administration of scientific collections in a general repository, like the handling of other sorts of collections, necessarily entails a mediation between what *should* be done and what *can* be done.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Scientific Source Materials: A Note on Their Preservation* (New York: American Institute of Physics, 1977). This brochure and further information on the survey of NAS members may be obtained by writing to Joan N. Warnow, Associate Director, Center for History of Physics, American Institute of Physics, 335 East 45th Street, New York, New York, 10017.
2. J. Frank Cook, "The Archivist: Link Between Scientist and Historian," *American Archivist* 34 (October 1971): 377.
3. Maynard J. Brichford, *Scientific and Technological Documentation: Archival Evaluation and Processing of University Records Relating to Science and Technology* (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), p. 5.
4. Present membership of the Joint Committee consists of David Bearman (Survey of Sources/History of Biochemistry), Clark Elliott (Harvard University), Sharon Gibbs (National Archives and Records Service), Maynard Brichford (University of Illinois), Helen Slotkin (MIT), Joan Warnow (American Institute of Physics), Robert Friedel (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers), Richard Lytle (Smithsonian Institution), and Richmond Williams (Hagley Foundation-Eleutherian Mills).
5. Brichford, *Scientific and Technological Documentation,* p. 5.
6. Clark Elliott, "A Look at Appraisal Through Citations in the Literature." Unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, Chicago, September 28, 1979.
7. Brichford, *Scientific and Technological Documentation,* p. 1.

this publication is available in microform



Please send me additional information.

University Microfilms International

300 North Zeeb Road
Dept. P.R.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
U.S.A.

18 Bedford Row
Dept. P.R.
London, WC1R 4EJ
England

Name _____

Institution _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

BOOK REVIEWS

The Merchant of Manchac; The Letterbooks of John Fitzpatrick, 1768–1790. Edited by Margaret Fisher Dalrymple. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978. 451 pp. Appendices, bibliography, and index. Cloth. $30.00.

When I first thumbed through this volume and discovered that the List of Maps really follows page 196 instead of page 164 as stated in the table of contents, I mentally prepared myself for a disaster. But that was the only printing error that I encountered; the material is informative and interesting, the editing well done, and reading the volume turned out to be an enjoyable experience.

Born about 1737 in Waterford, Ireland, Roman Catholic John Fitzpatrick joined the British army and fought in the French and Indian War alongside the famous colonial ranger, Robert Rogers. Trading in Illinois in 1762 and 1763, Fitzpatrick was captured by Indians but escaped. He then traded between Illinois, West Florida, Montreal, and Michilimackinac during 1764 and 1765 before appearing in New Orleans in 1768. From that time until his death in Manchac, near Baton Rouge, in 1791, he pursued trade and planting.

This is an admirable work. It begins with an introduction that places Fitzpatrick in his historical context and evaluates the significance of his letterbooks. For those interested in pursuing that context, Dalrymple provides a seven-page bibliography of primary and secondary sources. She also provides two appendices: a probate inventory of Fitzpatrick's estate at his death, and a glossary of business terms used by traders and consumers at the time of the American Revolution. I found the latter more useful than the former.

The letterbooks themselves are arranged in four chronological parts. Part one embraces Fitzpatrick's first year-and-a-half in New Orleans, 1768–1769; part two covers his first five years in Manchac,

1770–1775. (Eventually washed away by the Mississippi River, Manchac was situated at the mouth of Bayou Manchac, or the Iberville River as the British called it, just south of Baton Rouge and on the same side of the river.) Part three covers Fitzpatrick's most intensive letter writing period, 1776–1778, and part four the remainder of his business career through 1790. Part one runs 46 pages; part two 118 pages; part three 110 pages; and part four 115 pages. Abundant marginal notations define, explain, identify, and provide additional references to primary and secondary sources. If these are not sufficiently useful, I found the index to be comprehensive and seemingly complete.

Anyone interested in the southwestern frontier at this time will appreciate these letters. They reveal what trade was really like. The constant scarcity of money forced merchants to invent schemes of payment combining money, credit, and barter. The American Revolution touched the region in a unique way: patriot Americans in British West Florida found the Spanish governors of Louisiana sympathetic to their activities and willing to shelter them. For British subjects like Fitzpatrick who wished no part of the war but who were caught up in it—first when the Americans invaded the area in 1778 and then when Spain declared war against Great Britain in 1779—the best recourse was to become a Spanish citizen. Insofar as these letters reveal how and why Fitzpatrick did so, they constitute first rate history, and thanks to Dalrymple we have them.

Gary L. Browne
University of Maryland Baltimore County

Autographs and Manuscripts: A Collector's Manual. Edited by Edmund Berkeley, Jr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978. 565 pp. Cloth. $24.95.

Never underestimate the collector.

Motivated by an insatiable interest in a particular area, the collector accumulates a fund of knowledge about that area that is seldom matched by the professional archivist or curator who often must divide his attention among a wide variety of materials, some of which hold

little appeal for him or her. The collector leaves his work and goes home to relax with his treasures; thoughts of a recently acquired prize or dreams of anticipated acquisitions are seldom absent from his mind.

The Manuscript Society is an organization that draws its membership chiefly from dedicated collectors, although it also includes a substantial representation of dealers and of professional manuscripts curators. It publishes an interesting quarterly journal and holds its annual meetings in various cities, arranging for visits to the area's principal manuscript repositories where exhibitions of exceptionally prized materials are usually prepared. A convivial group, the members spend a good deal of their time sitting around and discussing their collections.

It was at one of these meetings that the idea was conceived for a co-operative project to publish a comprehensive manual for collectors. A long list of subjects to be covered was drawn up, and the task of writing chapters on them was assigned to recognized experts in the field.

Among the contributors are collectors who are also experts in law, medicine, music, and other areas. Leading dealers in manuscripts discuss problems of forgery, identification of signatures, and other intricacies of the trade. Also represented are manuscripts curators from institutions with notable collections.

This plan of composition results in a rather uneven product. Some chapters are carefully organized and are instructive, while others are rather sketchy and ephemeral. Robert C. Wiest, manager of the Graphic Conservation Department at the R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company of Chicago, presents a concise, competent summary of preservation problems and methods. An equally instructive overview of tax and legal problems with manuscripts is presented by Leslie J. Schreyer, an attorney specializing in tax and estate planning. The last part of the book deals with collecting areas and opportunities for acquiring manuscripts. Here the collectors do what they do best, sharing their interests and enthusiasm.

Autographs and Manuscripts: A Collector's Manual will serve as an indispensable aid for the collector, particularly for the novice. The advanced collector or the professional who has done his homework will find little that is new in the book. They will, however, find enjoyment in sharing the opinions, judgments, and experiences of kindred souls in the collecting arena. The chief value of the book rests upon the commendable feat of presenting under one cover the

multitude of problems and opportunities with which the collector will be confronted.

John Cumming
Clarke Historical Library
Central Michigan University

Conference on the Research Use and Disposition of Senators' Papers. *Proceedings.* Edited by Richard A. Baker. Washington, D. C.: United States Senate Historical Office (1979). 186 pp. Appendices, bibliography, and index. Paper. Free from the Senate Historical Office, Washington, D. C., 20510.

Few problems today confront archivists with more urgency than does the sheer size of modern manuscript collections, and few of those collections present the problems more clearly than do the papers of today's United States senators and congressmen. In September, 1978, more than two hundred historians, archivists and Senate staff members gathered in Washington, D. C. at the invitation of the Senate and its historian, Richard Baker, to exchange views on this and other concerns pertaining to the acquisition, processing, and use of senators' papers. Termed a "Conference on the Research Use and Disposition of Senator's Papers," the proceedings included morning and afternoon sessions on September 14 and a morning session on September 15. The conference began with welcoming remarks by Baker, Secretary of the Senate J. Stanley Kimitt, Senate Majority Leader Robert C. Byrd, and Senate Minority Leader Howard H. Baker, Jr. Keynote addresses were delivered by historians Robert Griffith and William E. Leuchtenburg, archivist Lynn Gentzler, and John Sobotka, staff assistant to Senator James O. Eastland. These were followed by working sessions structured around three panels, one of historians, chaired by Gilbert Fite, a second composed of archivists, chaired by Robert Warner, and a third consisting of Senate staffers, chaired by Jim Shoalmire.

The volume of *Proceedings* of the conference is as important for its contents as it is difficult to review as a publication. Archivists who may be contemplating the acquisition of senatorial papers will find the

book especially useful as an introduction to both the problems and the value of such holdings. It is not, however, a manual on the treatment of these materials, but rather expert testimony concerning the experience of those who have been involved in the creation, processing, and research use of senatorial collections.

The substance of the conference is contained in the presentations actually delivered during the panel sessions and in the more detailed papers submitted by participants found in the appendices at the end of the volume. In addition, the transcript includes questions raised by members of the audience and responses to those questions. Both those who were present as well as readers of the *Proceedings* may remember the anecdotes concerning lost collections, inadequate storage facilities, and the habits of individual senators long after they have forgotten which speakers argued for precisely which approach to senators' papers. Still, participants touched upon the full range of issues associated with senators' papers, including the relative importance of particular records series, their research use in the past, their potential for future scholarship, and the application of microfilming and automated retrieval systems. There were also comments concerning possible grants from Congress to assist institutions in handling congressional collections and some provocative suggestions by archivist Frank Mackaman for cooperative ventures among archival agencies. As might be expected, some areas of disagreement surfaced during the sessions: historians were less enthusiastic than were archivists, for example, about converting documents to microfilm or discarding large bodies of constituent correspondence or even duplicate materials.

Although no detailed program for action emerged from the deliberations, the consensus of those present seemed to be that the sessions had been highly productive as a forum for the exchange of views. One has the impression, however, that little of lasting benefit will have been achieved in the absence of an additional and co-ordinated effort on the part of the Senate and of the historical and archival professions at large. Raising the consciousness of those who were assembled in Washington will not in itself secure the support required for lasting solutions to the problems outlined. Hence the importance of the resolution, offered by Robert Warner and adopted at the close of the proceedings, calling for "further systematic study" by a group composed of representatives from the Senate Historical

Office, the Society of American Archivists, and the Organization of American Historians.

Richard M. Doolen
University of Michigan

College and University Archives: Selected Readings. By the Society of American Archivists. Chicago, 1979. 232 pp. Appendices, bibliography, and index. Paper. $8.00 members; $11.00 non-members.

Collections of writings are terribly difficult to assemble. The editor must decide not only what should be included on a many faceted topic, but also how articles that were written by different authors for independent publications should be woven into a single text. As any archivist who has ever attended an SAA meeting can attest, matters are further complicated by the fact that the profession does not always speak with one voice. Thus, the editor—a committee in this case—must steer between the Scylla of articles belaboring the obvious and the Charybdis of those disagreeing with each other and ultimately baffling the novice for whom this book is intended. On the whole, *College and University Archives: Selected Readings* maintains a successful and informative course.

No one can question the usefulness of this publication. It brings together articles from diverse periodicals, complete runs of which may not be available to the beginning archivist. Included are writings from the *Pennsylvania Library Association Bulletin, Illinois Libraries, Harvard Library Bulletin,* and *College and Research Libraries,* as well as *The American Archivist, Archivaria, The Midwestern Archivist,* and Rolland Steven's *University Archives.* Among the authors are such prominent archivists as Maynard Brichford, Nicholas Burckel, and Clifford K. Shipton. Readers will also be pleased to find valuable appendices consisting of the SAA's "Resolution on Theses and Dissertations" and "The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Research Use of Student Records;" "The College and University Records Retention and Disposition Schedule," by the North Carolina Division of Archives and History; a filing system recommended by the Wayne State University Archives; and the

influential "Core Mission and Minimum Standards for University Archives" of the University of Wisconsin System Archives Council.

Topics discussed are numerous: starting an archives; case studies of functioning archives (University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, Harvard, the American University); projects for the established archives; archival vs. library methods; archives in the library vs. archives in the administration; archivists as faculty; the researcher in the archives; university archives in Canada; records management; privacy legislation and student records; and filing systems. A concluding bibliography refers to literature on subjects not covered—automation, subject indexing, and disaster planning—and to the comprehensive *Modern Archives and Manuscripts: A Select Bibliography,* by Frank Evans. In short, buy this book.

Of the seventeen articles, this reviewer had four favorites. Maynard Brichford's "The Illiarch" (*Illinois Libraries*) is a stimulating analysis of the University of Illinois Archives that focuses on the history and theory of what an archives should do, including a discussion of setting a collecting objective to complement institutional records. Thought provoking, too, is Nicholas Burckel's "The Expanding Role of a College and University Archives" (*The Midwestern Archivist*). His recommendations for the established archives include undertaking oral history, collecting the papers of trustees, and serving on commemorative committees. Concluding paragraphs, however, warn that "no single institution has the staff or budget to undertake all these projects."

Entertaining as well as informative is Clifford K. Shipton's "The Reference Use of Archives" (Rolland Stevens, ed., *University Archives*). Instead of portraying researchers as briefcase-toting visitors from Mount Olympus who must be coddled and catered to, Shipton discusses the day-to-day problems of dealing with diverse researchers who range from the grade school "Please mail me all you have on the history of your university" and the graduate student fumbling with an uncertain topic to the professor and the administrator who want materials yesterday.

Ian E. Wilson's "Canadian University Archives" (*Archivaria*) is a misnomer. Rather than being simply an overview of archives in Canada it is a well-stated argument against the inclusion of archives in libraries. The most telling points are: competition for funds with librarians who are strongly biased toward the printed word;

competition with library books for stack space; rivalry with rare books and special collections that are more glamorous than institutional records. Not all college and university archivists, the majority of whom report to librarians, will agree with this viewpoint, but it is well presented.

Aside from these articles, *College and University Archives* does have some weaknesses. The articles follow each other in alphabetical order by the name of the author; in this way articles that deal principally with one topic—reference, records management, or establishing an archives—are scattered throughout the volume. A subject index does compensate somewhat, but readers, in this reviewer's opinion, would have preferred a topical progression in the book. There would then have been no need to relegate valuable information to a series of appendices separate from the articles dealing with the same topic.

Helpful, too, would have been bibliographical references to several works not cited. No one should begin a records management program without knowing of the Federal Register's annual *Guide to Records Retention Requirements* or William E. Mitchell's *Records Retention,* the book most widely used by records managers in business. Nor should anyone do anything with photographs without consulting Robert A. Weinstein and Larry Booth's *The Collection, Care and Use of Historical Photographs* or the many publications available from Kodak. The reader will also look in vain for the addresses of the National Micrographics Association and the Association of Records Managers and Administrators, both of which issue many useful publications. Let us not, as archivists, erect fences between neighboring professions.

Nevertheless, *College and University Archives* is a valuable addition to the literature of the profession and to the publications of the Society of American Archivists. It is hoped that in the future the Committee on College and University Archives will consider the publishing of a collection of processing manuals and the publishing of an SAA approved records retention manual. These, too, would help the beginning as well as the veteran archivist.

Raimund E. Goerler
The Ohio State University Archives

A Guide to Labor Papers in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Compiled and edited by F. Gerald Ham and Margaret Hedstrom. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1978. 125 pp. Index. Paper.

Guide to the Manuscript Collection of the Tamiment Library. Compiled by the staff of the Tamiment Collection, Dorothy Swanson, Librarian. Garland Reference Library, Vol. 49. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977. 74 pp. Index. Cloth. $12.00.

The publication of the guides to labor papers from the Tamiment Collection, New York University, and at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin have increased significantly the availability of knowledge regarding research resources in American labor history. The compilers of these guides, Dorothy Swanson and other staff members of the Tamiment Collection, and F. Gerald Ham and Margaret Hedstrom of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, join Warner W. Pflug of the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, in contributing to a better understanding among archivists and researchers alike of the material held by three of the leading labor collections in the nation.

The volumes describing the Tamiment and Wisconsin holdings differ from the earlier volume from Wayne State at the outset. The editors of both works begin with prefaces detailing the early development of their collections. In both cases those collections were initially developed under the leadership of individuals from near by or related institutions: the Rand School for Social Science in the case of the Tamiment Collection, and John Commons and his American Bureau of Industrial Research at the University of Wisconsin. The long and complicated evolution of the Tamiment and Wisconsin collections thus made necessary the more extensive prefatory material.

A comparison of the table of contents and a glance through entries in the Swanson and the Ham and Hedstrom works reveal quickly that Wisconsin includes a much larger number of individual collections than does Tamiment. The institutional records and personal papers held by Wisconsin are most often those of trade unions and their leaders, from the national to the local level, the latter being mainly from Wisconsin and the upper midwestern United States. The Tamiment Collection, like the Rand School where it began, emphasizes the activities of socialists and their organizations, with a

geographical concentration in New York and the notheastern United States.

The two newest guides to labor collections, like the Wayne State guide, contain an adequate amount of information regarding individual collections. The individual entries in the Tamiment guide, though fewer in number, tend to be somewhat more extensive and complete than those in the Wisconsin work. In this respect the work of Ham and Hedstrom also diverges from the earlier guide to the collection at Wayne State, particularly with respect to the fact that Ham and Hedstrom are less likely than Pflug to include information regarding major correspondents contained in individual collections, a helpful feature. Ham and Hedstrom might also have published their guide in a more durable form, as have Pflug and Swanson.

Both the Swanson and the Ham and Hedstrom works depart from the example set by Pflug by including illustrations. The Tamiment guide is particularly rich visually, with an entire section of the book devoted to photographs and reproductions of manuscripts from the Tamiment Collection. Unfortunately, the index to the volume does not include references to the illustrations.

The form and style of these works could be contrasted further, but clearly they share the most important characteristic of an archival guide, a faithful description of the contents of a collection of major research interest. Archivists and their users have two new meritorious expressions of faithful description.

Leslie S. Hough
Southern Labor Archives
Georgia State University

SPINDEX Users Conference: Proceedings of a Meeting Held at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, March 31 and April 1, 1978. Edited by H. Thomas Hickerson. Ithaca, New York: Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, Cornell University Libraries, 1979. 125 pp. Appendices. Paper.

Within the body of literature pertaining to computer applications in archives, SPINDEX (standing for Selective Permutation Indexing) stands out as one of the most discussed subjects in this increasingly

important subfield of the archival profession. Currently in its third version, SPINDEX has prospered through the continued support of the National Archives and Records Service and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. And indeed, as a computer software package designed to interface with more traditional archival procedures for the purposes of enhanced information indexing and retrieval, and of flexible finding aid generation, SPINDEX has much to recommend it. Its success is demonstrated by its effective use in a wide range of applications at such diverse institutions as Cornell University, the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, the International Nickel Company, and the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints.

More recently this prestigious group of SPINDEX adherents have joined together to form the SPINDEX Users Network (SUN). Prior to the formal establishment of SUN, SPINDEX users met at Cornell University to discuss matters of common concern. The conference and its subsequently published *Proceedings* (both underwritten by the NHPRC in cooperation with Cornell University) further demonstrate the continuing commitment of those involved with SPINDEX, as well as the ability of SUN members to produce documents of didactic value to the archival profession. As the editor, Tom Hickerson, indicates in his introduction, the contents of this volume are "diverse, ranging from the general to the specific. The First session is broad in scope, describing the role of (SPINDEX) automation in various archival repositories. Other sessions concern data base design, data entry methods, finding aid production, technical aspects system use, and current and future system maintainance and development"(p. vi).

The reader will find that this published set of proceedings closely follows the course of the original meeting. The opening session on SPINDEX applications includes work currently in progress at the LDS Church, Pacific Northwest Public Power Records Survey, Cornell University, International Nickel Company, South Carolina Archives, and NARS. Some of these papers have already reached print in other formats, either as articles in the *American Archivist* or as separate monographs. All are tantalizingly short, bereft of either explanatory footnotes or bibliographies. While, for example, the promotors of SPINDEX have repeatedly cited International Nickel's use of the package as an illustration of its many applications, the session paper provides little detail and few concrete examples.

Admittedly, conference participants may not have required such information since they are already conversant in the operation of INCO's SPINDEX programs. But in editing the *Proceedings* for publication, those who prepared this volume should have demonstrated greater concern for the needs and interests of the layman anxious to learn more about archival automation but less schooled in this subject than SUN members. This first set of essays will nevertheless prove informative to those interested in the ways in which one might employ SPINDEX in an archival setting.

The remaining sections of the *Proceedings* are of a more technical nature; panel discussions and briefer papers with audience comments serve as the dominant modes of communication. These sessions include discussions of: designing tag structures for inputing data into the computer for manipulation by SPINDEX, data entry and computer-generated results, SPINDEX III and its improvements over SPINDEX II, and modifications in software design. The final session is devoted to a more general consideration of the future of SPINDEX. Overall, the final two-thirds of the book have little to offer the non-user of SPINDEX. Discussions are technical, with no explanatory notes by the editor. To be fair, it must be recognized that as a conference proceedings, this book was never meant to be a primer on SPINDEX nor meant to be offered to an audience of potential SPINDEX users. But in failing to address the needs of the great majority of the archival profession to learn more on an elementary level about SPINDEX and its applications, the sponsors of this publication cannot hope to win many converts to their cause.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this book is what it does not say, or rather what it says only indirectly. Will SPINDEX serve United States archives as the basis for an on-line information network? After reading these *Proceedings,* one must sadly conclude that SPINDEX will never do so. Innovations, such as Version III, will make SPINDEX more flexible in coping with problems of intellectual control *within* individual shops, but it does not presently have nor does it appear likely to have searching and interactive capabilities. It is an expensive system to implement, though perhaps less so than would be the creation of an independent package that operates along similar lines and produces comparable products. In short, this set of *Proceedings* confirms the views previously put forward in this journal and elsewhere in the professional literature that an automated system

for the indexing and retrieval of archival materials is still somewhere down the road. Tom Hickerson and his colleagues ought to be commended for their noble efforts in promoting the use of computers in archives. But alas, for all its attractiveness SPINDEX does not appear to be the answer to our quest for a fully automated information retrieval system.

Richard M. Kesner
Archives of Appalachia
East Tennessee State University

Local History Collections: A Manual for Librarians. By Enid T. Thompson. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1978. 99 pp. Appendix, bibliography, and index. Paper. $5.75.

Librarians often tend to think only in terms of books. When faced with a local history collection consisting of many types of print material, they may not know what to do with it or how to arrange it. This excellent manual by Enid T. Thompson will calm the fears of librarians who are beginning a local history collection and will answer most of their questions regarding administration, processing, and arrangement of the materials found in such collections.

This manual is the result of Thompson's work as a consultant for the Englewood, Colorado, Public Library in 1976 when they began to set up a local history collection as a Bicentennial project.

Thompson begins by listing the different types of non-book materials that comprise a local history collection. These include newspapers, pamphlets, photographs and prints, tapes, clippings, manuscripts, maps, and memorabilia. She then describes each type and gives recommendations on arrangement, including examples of various types of catalog and subject indexing systems. The proper storage of each type of material is discussed, with particular attention being given to the best storage conditions for long term conservation.

Legal considerations, especially ownership and deeds of gift, are generally unfamiliar to librarians, but Thompson describes the basic premise of ownership of material and encourages the use of deeds of

gift to confirm ownership. The question of appraisals is clearly answered: *"The accepting institution does not make evaluations or appraisals"* (Thompson's italics).

There is a very good chapter on basic conservation with an excellent appendix giving addresses of relevant organizations, suppliers, and publications. Other addresses are given throughout the manual.

Volunteers are a major part of the work force of many local history collections; having worked with volunteers for many years I can say they are a very hard working, enthusiastic, and dedicated group. Ms. Thompson has recognized this also, and included a very good chapter on the recruiting, training, and best use of volunteers in a local history collection.

The manual concludes with a very good bibliography, including both library and archival sources, and a subject index.

This is an excellent manual for librarians just beginning a local history collection. It gives them an overview of what a local history collection may consist of and how to handle materials they are generally not familiar with. Librarians and archivists of well-established local history collections could also benefit from this manual, for in describing the basics of such a collection it may encourage them to review their own policies and procedures.

Joseph Oldenburg
Burton Historical Collection
Detroit Public Library

Manuscript Solicitation for Libraries, Special Collections, Museums, and Archives. By Edward C. Kemp. Littleton, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1978. 204 pp. Appendices, bibliography, and index. Cloth. $18.50 U.S. and Canada; $21 elsewhere.

Those librarians, archivists, and museum curators who have spent any time at all stalking the elusive manuscript collection in its natural habitat will recognize in this perceptive book the authentic voice of a seasoned fellow hunter. In twenty years of collecting manuscripts and books for the University of Oregon, special collections librarian Edward Kemp estimates that he has met nearly ten thousand potential donors. From this multiplicity of encounters, Kemp has derived a

wealth of practical observations for the benefit of those who would build collecting programs for their own institutions.

Kemp advocates cautious entrance into active solicitation, as well as careful organization to insure the success of the collecting program at every stage. He believes in starting small, tailoring efforts to budgetary realities, and building upon existing strengths of the institution. Most libraries and archives, he believes, should begin with local solicitation of materials on local history, or with particular aspects of local and regional history, such as music and childrens' literature—two types of research collections that he himself helped to build at Oregon. "Working locally and quietly," he advises, "the librarian can make the mistakes which are part of learning. . . ." (p. 17). Later, the program can be expanded as needs and available resources grow, and as the program becomes more widely known.

A valuable feature of Kemp's presentation is his insistence upon the close relationship between manuscript and book collecting. A manuscript collection, he feels, "is of little use without supporting books, journals, periodicals, and pamphlets already properly cataloged" (p. 14). From the printed sources, the librarian can obtain leads to manuscript collections that may exist in a given subject area, collections that will serve ultimately to supplement and enhance the research value of the printed word. From book dealers and private owners of book collections can come further leads to manuscript or book collections in areas of interest to the institution. Archivists and librarians who are professionally prone to divorce manuscript from book collecting would do well to heed Kemp's admonition that "the librarian does not deliberate when the donor is in a giving frame of mind; the librarian acts" (p. 55).

Concerning donor relations, Kemp stresses the importance of an orderly, informed approach, which will convey to the prospective donor the sense that his or her collection will be appropriately placed and duly appreciated by the institution. A spur-of-the-moment phone call may be as counter-productive as an impersonal blanket appeal. Of much more value is a carefully framed initial letter, followed up by another letter or a telephone call if necessary. Because the librarian will often personify the institution in the eyes of the donor, the quality of the librarian's contacts is all the more important. The care which the librarian devotes to evaluating a collection and packing it properly for transfer is often the best and in some cases the only manifestation to

the donor of the care which it will receive once it passes through the institution's portals.

Somewhat less convincing is Kemp's treatment of what should be done with a collection once it has been gathered within the institutional fold. Few working archivists would quarrel with his observation that "unfortunately, most creative people do not maintain organized files. The librarian must bring order to chaos" (p. 63). Many might differ with him, however, over his recommendation that outgoing correspondence be arranged chronologically and incoming correspondence be arranged alphabetically (p. 63), or that a musical performer's papers be arranged "according to the content and research value, from most to least important" (p. 103). Others might question his endorsement of an institution's paying professional appraisal fees (p. 67). In these matters, readers would be well advised to consult the appropriate volumes in the basic manual series recently released by the Society of American Archivists, rather than rely solely upon Kemp's recommendations.

Kemp reveals his share of tricks of the collectors' trade, as revealed by his story of driving around town and visiting houses that appeared from the outside to have large attics. More important, however, is his generally successful attempt to apply the proven techniques of library science to the often unscientific area of manuscripts solicitation. In so doing, he goes far toward meeting his stated intention of redressing the balance in such accounts from the approach of the inspired bibliophile, autograph collector, and dealer, to that of the professional librarian or manuscripts curator.

Douglas W. Tanner
Manuscripts Department
University of Virginia Library

National Board YWCA, Inventory to the Records Files Collection. By Louisa Bowen. New York: National Board YWCA, 1978. 327 pp. Index. Loose-leaf. $12.50.

This work should be subtitled, "Guide to the Microfilm Edition," since it is an inventory of material on 277 reels of microfilm held at the

Young Women's Christian Association National Headquarters in New York. The microfilm for the first set of records, 1876–1950, was completed in 1964 and the film for the 1950–1962 material in 1968. The microfilm represents the only complete set of records for the YWCA, since some of the original records were subsequently destroyed.

While the overall quality of the inventory is quite good, the compiler has had to overcome the fact that the records were filmed as a space-saving measure long before any archival finding aid had been envisaged Although the basic arrangement of the inventory is in four series, this has required the grouping of broken sets of microfilm. The series are (1) Records of the YWCA National Board Predecessors, 1876–1906, mainly conference proceedings of the Woman's Christian Association and Young Women's Christian Association; (2) Minutes of Meetings and Reports of Committees, 1884–1962; (3) Subject Files, 1899–1960; and (4) Local Association Files, 1906–1960.

Entry into the records is aided by a name and subject index to materials in the first three series. Series four is arranged alphabetically by state and city, which assists researchers in finding material of local interest. The index is taken directly from the terms found in the inventory itself. This is unfortunate, since many of the proper names are not complete, and many of the persons indicated as major correspondents in the introduction are not listed in the index.

Although each individual file or group of papers has been given a numerical reference number within each reel of film, the researcher will still encounter some problems in moving from the inventory to the microfilm. The main reasons for this are that sometimes material is filmed in chronological order and at other times in reverse order, while the material within each reference number varies considerably in quantity. An index by frame number would have been a decided advantage.

The records themselves are an important source for social historians and for the history of women. Subjects include: assistance to urban working women, women in rural areas, aid to immigrants, youth work, overseas YWCA programs, programs for Black and Native American women, YWCA activities during World Wars I and II, and women's health and recreation, as well as the administrative history of the YWCA.

The guide was partially funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities grant. It contains an introductory history of the YWCA,

and the scope and content notes are quite useful. While the microfilm itself is not available for purchase or loan, the YWCA is to be congratulated for making information about its collection more generally available through this guide.

Thomas Wilsted
The Salvation Army Archives
and Research Center

CONTRIBUTORS

Christopher Densmore is associate archivist at the University Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo. He was a member of the SAA Finding Aids Committee, 1975–1979, and is currently a member of the Steering Committee of its successor, the Professional Affinity Group on Description. This paper arose out of his interest in the use of business and institutional records for social history, and from a concern for the way in which they are identified and described.

Sister Jo Ann Euper, OSF, a former music therapist with degrees from Michigan State University and the University of Kansas, is in her fifth year as archivist of her religious congregation, the School Sisters of St. Francis of Milwaukee. Her archival training has consisted of an internship at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and various workshops and seminars.

Mary E. Janzen is currently a manuscripts assistant at the Chicago Historical Society; previous professional positions have been with Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and the University of Chicago Library. Her article, revised from a paper given at the fall, 1979, meeting of the Society of American Archivists, is based primarily on experience she gained in processing the papers of Nobel Prize-winning physicist James Franck (1882–1964) at the University of Chicago.