

*Final Acts: A Guide to Preserving the Records of Truth Commissions.* By Trudy Huskamp Peterson. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005. \$30.00. \$23.00 to SAA members. 110 pp. Soft cover.

Although this guide to preserving the records of truth commissions, which investigate and report on the abuses of deposed regimes, is only just over one hundred pages, it carries a big wallop because of its sensitive, analytical, and practical nature. Written by consulting archivist and public policy scholar Trudy Huskamp Peterson and funded by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, *Final Acts* is a guide for commissioners and senior staff members who seek to address the issues of records disposition. Faced with the huge task of how to handle all of the documentation that is the by-product of the work of truth commissions (20 of which have been established so far in Central and South America and Africa), Peterson offers answers to questions about access and preservation, as well as about law and politics, concerning historical materials of all media types created and received by such commissions.

As one would expect from Peterson, she succinctly explains why societies must save evidence beyond the annual report and advances a practical step-by-step approach to direct this important work. She is interested not only in the wider context of the materials but also in ensuring that all record types (administrative, program, and investigative) are professionally preserved and managed into perpetuity. She argues that it is vital that “amnesia does not prevail” and that the integrity and legitimacy of what a truth commission does is maintained. According to Peterson, “preservation completes the commission’s work.”

The volume is divided into four chapters. In chapter 1, Peterson offers an overview of the subject matter and identifies existing truth commissions and the diversity manifested in their design and by their work. Chapter 2 provides a list of questions dealing with the context of collected materials: archival, legal, and political, while chapter 3 contains a full discussion of the questions provided in chapter 2. The final chapter presents a sample of country reports, which Peterson draws on to describe the practices of the commissions. She also provides appropriate information on each country and details for those seeking further information.

*Final Acts* makes it clear that senior staff members serving on a truth commission must be mindful of the final disposition of the records used to carry out the commission’s work, since those records are government property and laws exist to ensure that “citizens have the right to demand preservation of and access to this government property.” The volume also contains three useful appendices—“Criteria for Distinguishing Commission Records from Personal Property,” “Access Criteria,” and “Physical Storage Criteria.”

Overall, Peterson has produced a model practical guide written in clear, straightforward prose. For years to come it will be essential reading for practitioners seeking

to preserve the records of truth commissions (or other organizations) in a professional manner.

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*Privacy and Confidentiality Perspectives: Archivists and Archival Records*. Ed. Menzi L. Behrnd-Klodt and Peter J. Wosh. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005. \$56.00. \$40.00 to SAA members. 400 pp. Appendices. Soft cover.

A quick review of programs from recent archival conferences reveals at least one session per conference on privacy issues. A review of the literature will show a similar trend. Privacy and confidentiality in archival collections remains a widespread topic for discussion and debate as archivists are increasingly faced with privacy issues. And, since there are no easy answers or set standards to follow, these discussions are likely to continue. It is important for archivists to be familiar with the law and the literature, so that we can do our jobs efficiently, effectively, and with credibility.

This four-hundred-page reader covers the legal, ethical, administrative, and institutional aspects of privacy issues, with an introductory essay summarizing the articles in the individual sections. In order to place the issue into historical context, the book begins with two influential works on the subject, "The Right to Privacy," by Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis (1890), and William Prosser's "Privacy" (1960). The rest of the essays are contemporary; each is authored by a practicing archivist or group of archivists employed in different types of archives, such as religious, medical, corporate, academic and government institutions, as well as manuscript repositories.

These essays have been thoughtfully written and well researched, and were chosen carefully to fit into the overall themes. The value of the book is broadened by the wide variety of institutions represented. One of the most profound elements of the book is Paul C. Lasewicz's fascinating article, in which he addresses privacy issues in the world of corporate archives and the shifting attitudes of corporate archivists based on technological advances, society's changing expectations of privacy rights, and public access to information.

Editor Menzi Behrnd-Klodt's chapter, "The Tort Right of Privacy," puts archivists' fears regarding liability to rest through a cogent explanation of statutes of limitations, consent to disclosure laws, and other defenses against lawsuits. She also warns archivists not to assume a higher legal obligation than necessary by making promises to donors that can lead to errors in judgment—a valuable piece of advice to be sure.

Also included is Elena Danielson's award-winning piece on the takeover and eventual liberation of the East German Stasi's surveillance archives. In this article, she describes the difficult privacy issues that followed and the collective sense of confidence in the democratic process that can result when the records of a repressive (or any) regime are opened to legitimate scrutiny.

The essay by L. Dale Patterson demonstrates how the unique position of religious institutions straddles the public and private sectors by describing the efforts of the United Methodist Church to create an open records policy for its archives. It is a good companion piece to that of Mark Duffy and Christine Taylor, in which they describe how the distinct role of archivists in religious institutions can be viewed as one of fiduciary agent, given the high value placed on trust in those institutions. The authors point out how these same issues can be applied to the archives of other institutions as well.

This book is not only an educational tool, but it is also a call to action for archivists. In the essay on FERPA by Mark Greene and Christine Weideman, the call is laid out

clearly in a section called “What archivists should do.” In Heather MacNeil’s provocative piece, the call is more subtle—posed almost as a challenge, which I found intriguing. Judith Schwarz’s call is a more practical one, urging archivists to avoid the pitfalls of historical censorship by ensuring lesbian collections are fully processed and indexed using appropriate and accurate search terms.

With more than 75 pages of notes, this book is very well documented. Appendices include selected U.S. constitutional amendments that apply to citizens’ rights to privacy, federal statutes concerning privacy, legislative amendments and judicial interpretations of FERPA, and medical records privacy laws in the U.S. and Canada compared with the European Data Privacy Model.

The editors concede that “this book reflects privacy perspectives at one specific moment in American cultural history. ...” Because a single standard or even a set of standards cannot easily be applied to individual cases, there is not likely to be one good, thorough, definitive source for privacy and confidentiality standards, but works such as *Privacy and Confidentiality Perspectives* provide an unremitting fountain of literature to further educate and inform us. Most archivists at some point will be forced to deal with privacy issues, and it helps to know we are not alone.

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*Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*. Archival Fundamentals Series II. By Frank Boles. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005. \$49.00. \$35.00 to SAA members. 214 pp. Appendices and bibliography. Soft cover.

In the introduction of this addition to the Archival and Fundamental Series II, Frank Boles makes a case for use of the term “selection” rather than that of “appraisal” in reference to archival work. “Selection,” Boles notes, is a more transparent word to describe the function wherein archivists make decisions that essentially shape collections to be saved. Selection is not something that should happen by accident, but rather through deliberate and thoughtful action by archivists. The practicality of this activity is a theme carried throughout the book.

The question of why archivists select—or *if* they select at all—is discussed in the first section of this book. It is Boles’ contention that archivists today remain reluctant to make the tough decisions involved in selecting materials for archives, which leads to full shelves of unprocessed collections. Archivists have not yet come to a consensus on whether they are merely “keepers,” as put forth by Jenkinson, or are actively involved in the appraisal process, as proffered by Schellenberg.<sup>1</sup> Boles responds by presenting a succinct and clear outline of the variety of appraisal strategies that have developed over the twentieth century, including the New Paradigm, the risk management strategy, the Minnesota method, and functional analysis. Ultimately, Boles admits that life has become more complicated than it was in the days when Schellenberg had all the answers, and he asserts that no single theory can address all situations in today’s world. He then notes his own basic criteria for selection: (1) the reasons behind selection serve a variety of goals, (2) selection occurs at different points in the records cycle, and (3) context and content both matter.

After discussing these approaches, Boles draws back to take a look at the larger context. He explains the selection process as it relates to broader archival policies, including those of collection development, functional analysis records management, and archival mission. Boles also provides the foundation for the taxonomies used in making immediate appraisal decisions when faced with a room full of filing cabinets. He expands these into more general principles in the following chapter.

In chapter 5, Boles pulls the various theories together in order to develop a selection model. He proposes a six-step process that begins with the definition of archival goals. This is followed by an analysis of the documentary records, prioritization, definition of functions, actual selection of the records, and periodic updating. To illustrate use of his model, he applies the example of two fictional collections, the counseling records of the Wellville Community College and those of local political activist Joe Schmo.

In the final chapter, Boles makes the case that selection decisions should be made with consideration for, but not absolute reliance on, the media type. While a record may be either “paper or plastic” it still contains archival information and has associated preservation costs—and all records will eventually deteriorate. He argues against the “ghettoization” of nontextual records, which have been historically underrepresented in basic archival manuals. Boles also points out the distinct advantage that magnetic and digital media archival records have over paper.

The appendices provide additional valuable information. The first, a reprint of chapter 9 of the 1993 version of *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*, by F. Gerald Ham, details the physical and legal processes involved with the related practice of accessioning records. The second appendix deals with the issue of sampling—an issue Boles believes may be less necessary in an era of shrinking electronic storage. The final appendix contains a detailed bibliography of further resources on the topic of appraisal.

Written by one of the foremost proponents of appraisal theory of the past 25 years, Boles' work provides an insightful and analytical look into a number of ideas with which he does not agree. If the reader is curious enough to delve deeper into a particular theory, the bibliography provides that opportunity. This book does not, however, limit itself to theory alone, but instead places those theories into the context of working institutions. Additionally, this manual provides practical suggestions that can be adapted by archivists at all types of repositories. Perhaps the best feature of the book is the writing style of its author. Boles makes the subject matter not only readable, but he gives an extremely entertaining look at a topic that easily could have been tedious or overly complex.

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## NOTES

1. For further information see in the SAA Archival Classics Series Theodore Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003), and Terence Eastwood et al., *Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003).

*A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*. Archival Fundamentals Series II. By Richard Pearce-Moses. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005. \$49.00. \$35.00 to SAA members. 472 pp. Bibliography. Soft cover.

*A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, an Archival Fundamentals Series II book, is an updated version of the 1992 edition of *A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers* by Lewis and Lynn Lady Bellardo. The new edition is more expansive than the old, having grown from just 40 pages to 413 pages of terms. The new edition describes the “ways terms are used inside and outside the profession.” The glossary is based on words author Richard Pearce-Moses found in archival literature of the United States and Canada. He writes that the volume is intended for use by anyone who works with records, whether or not they have the title of “Archivist.”

The book contains a preface by Richard Cox, a section entitled “The Archival Lexicon,” an introduction to using the book, the glossary itself, and a bibliography. In the Archival Lexicon, Pearce-Moses mentions how the terminology of the profession is changing to be more like language previously associated only with electronic records. Some examples from the glossary are “extensible markup language,” “jpeg,” and “preservation of the integrity of electronic records.” He also laments that words and their meanings can be hard to pin down. The introduction describes how to use the entries, which include the heading, the part of speech designation, variants, and the definition; the term’s syndetic structure, which includes broader, related, and narrower terms; notes about the word; and citations.

The glossary contains a wide variety of terms related to processing, supplies, film, photographs, electronic records, and types of records. Pearce-Moses also includes acronyms for some professional organizations as well as URLs for their Web sites. The reader will also find other acronyms for government agencies, relevant projects, standards, and computer terms. The acronyms are incorporated into the glossary with a “see also” pointer to the spelled-out version. A few of the more common abbreviations for terms are included as well. Some entries give further notes about the term or passages from the literature. The bibliography at the end of the book provides documentation for the passages cited.

On the whole, the glossary includes a wide variety of definitions with a good mix of basic and more complicated archival terms. The entries about electronic records and computer terms are extremely useful. The book is straightforward and easy to use, and the definitions easy to understand.

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*Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*. Archival Fundamentals Series II. By Kathleen D. Roe. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005. \$49.00. \$35.00 to SAA members. 180 pp. Index, black-and-white illustrations, and appendices. Soft cover.

In his admiring comments on the book's back cover, Steven Hensen refers to *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* by Kathleen Roe as the "definitive basic manual for the archival profession," and Kris Kiesling echoes him by flatly declaring "it's all here." Really, I thought. That is quite an accomplishment for such a thin and pithy volume about an archival subject as intense and challenging as arrangement and description. Having cut my archival teeth on Fredric Miller's more formidable publication of the same title,<sup>1</sup> I approached Roe with a skeptical eye and frankly asked why I needed to buy her book. To answer myself, I compared Roe to Miller and asked two fundamental questions: (1) for veteran archivists (like me), does Roe offer substantially new and better content, and (2) will new and inexperienced archivists find Roe's treatment of core archival concepts and practices easier to read and understand?

Roe's overriding emphasis is to firmly establish arrangement and description within the broader context of archival management and to demonstrate the methodology's essential relationship to other core functions. The introduction sets the stage by outlining the book's general goals and specific objectives. Roe wastes no time in stating simply that her book will present readers with the "necessary theoretical and practical framework" for understanding arrangement and description. In order to accomplish this goal, she organized the book around four sections. The first is a general overview that nicely explains arrangement and description within the context of other archival functions, and demonstrates the methodology's relationship to repositories and users. The second section defines core principles, compares them to library and museum methodologies, and discusses how description relates to institutional mission. The third section considers American, Canadian, and international developments in arrangement and description, with a focus on automated access. Finally, the last section examines the actual mechanics of arrangement and description.

So, does Roe offer experienced archival professionals new and better content than Miller? I believe the answer is no. Overall, Roe covers the same content and offers the same basic examples as Miller.

This assessment is especially true in Roe's treatment of arrangement. Whereas she faithfully discusses the core principles, Roe completely avoids the problem and challenge of electronic records—a methodological area that has had a profound impact on the profession since Miller. In one brief paragraph, she does recognize that traditional arrangement practice cannot be applied in the digital realm, but she fails to offer alternatives or to direct the reader to additional readings and resources on the subject. Given that the predicament of electronic records management threatens to make the traditional role of the archivist irrelevant, one would think that the topic warrants more attention in a basic manual.

Similarly, Roe fails to address the unique arrangement and processing challenges offered by other record formats, such as audiovisual materials. As with electronic records, she mentions these formats almost as an aside and cautions that "particular

care should be taken with housing provided for special format materials.” Even as a veteran archivist, I struggle daily with the singular demands of old reel-to-reel audio tapes, phonographic records, tintype photographs, and smelly architectural blueprints. Shouldn’t a basic manual on arrangement provide up-to-date guidance on how to address these pervasive formats, or at the very least direct me to additional resources?

Roe does a much better job for veteran archivists in the area of description. While covering the basics very well (core components of a standard inventory, catalogs, guides, the development of MARC, etc.), she also provides important new information for those of us who have not kept up with the significant strides made in the area of standardization. In particular, Roe introduces *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* and the *Canadian Rules for Archival Description*, second edition (RAD2), and she correctly advises that archivists should use both “for specifics of implementation” in descriptive programs. I was particularly pleased with Roe’s attention to recent developments in Canadian Rules for Archival Description; something American archivists would do well to notice. As a proponent of education as the best means for the profession to achieve universal standardization in description, I greatly appreciated Roe’s introduction of these two manuals and her discussion of their importance.

I was disappointed, however, by Roe’s brief and cursory reference to Encoded Archival Description (EAD). Ever since EAD’s birth in 1994, a raging debate has stormed through the profession as to the necessity and efficacy of Document Type Definition (DTD) to users, particularly in relation to MARC or basic HTML standard inventories on the Internet. Indeed, anyone unfamiliar with the EAD controversy would read Roe and conclude that the DTD has been met with universal acclaim among archivists. On the contrary! Only a small percentage of all archival institutions has accepted and implemented EAD, and proponents have failed to prove that it is “user friendly.” In fact, no credible user study has ever been done. I found Roe’s failure to even mention this debate peculiar and appalling, especially given its implication for archival descriptive practices. At the very least, a more detailed review of the EAD controversy would have added richness and depth to her treatment of the development of standardization in descriptive practice.

I may find Roe lacking in usefulness to the more advanced archivist, but there is no debate in my mind as to the book’s value for the novice stepping into his or her first job or starting a graduate program in archival management. For this audience, Roe’s *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* is far better than Miller’s, with the differences between them mainly being in style, format, and presentation of the information.

Roe’s prose is crisp, concise, and exceptionally clear. Indeed, I have never encountered an easier read in archival literature. At the same time, her tone is moderate and not the least bit condescending or intimidating. Roe’s discussion of core principles is well laid out and succinct without leaving out important details. Moreover, she does not rely on complex or obscure case studies to make a point or illustrate a process. Take, for example, the important concepts of context and content. Roe clearly defines both early in her discussion and then deftly weaves them in and out of the narrative as she proceeds from provenance, through original order, and into levels of description, all the while demonstrating the interrelationships. In the end, the reader is left with

a true understanding of how context and content dictate everything in arrangement and description.

Roe strengthens this understanding with her skillful use of informational sidebars and examples. As she notes in the introduction, Roe created three “hypothetical core examples” and used them adeptly throughout the book to demonstrate different ideas, principles, and practices. The Charles E. Williams papers, for example, start out as disparate files in a home office and finish the book as a processed collection with a standard inventory finding aid in the appendix. This consistency makes the learning process much easier. Similarly, Roe uses informational sidebars to highlight and emphasize the definition of key concepts and principles in a way that facilitates the reader’s progress through the book. Finally, in appendix E Roe offers a selection of finding aids that she believes are a representative sample of descriptive practice. What makes this offering unique is her use of editorial sidebars linked to specific elements in each finding aid. I found this technique a particularly useful departure from the standard practice of simply providing examples without reflection or comment.

Although a student or beginning archivist might find Roe’s *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* useful, the seasoned archivist will not. Richard Cox, SAA publications editor, admits as much when he notes in the preface that the new editions to the Archival Fundamentals Series arrive within “the broader and deeper context of archival publishing” today and alerts readers to SAA’s forthcoming specialized manuals. Indeed, readers of the new Fundamentals Series will likely be left with their appetites whetted and their wallets open, waiting to buy those specialized manuals.

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## NOTES

1. Fredric M. Miller, *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 1990).

*Creating EAD-Compatible Finding Guides on Paper*. Elizabeth H. Dow. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2005. \$40.00. 153 pp. Glossary, bibliography, and index. Soft cover.

Archivists are aware that there is a call to make our collections more accessible by putting finding aids and other types of archival description on the Internet.<sup>1</sup> In her book, *Creating EAD-Compatible Finding Guides on Paper*, Elizabeth H. Dow explains how archivists can prepare finding aids to be converted to EAD, even if they currently lack the means to do so. This book focuses on what information to collect, where to place fields in relation to one another, and the standards that come into play. There is no in-depth analysis of arrangement included in this volume, rather it is designed to be a practical guide for preparing finding aids to be encoded.

The early chapters provide background information that explain descriptive standards and how they arose. The first chapter discusses the different types of inventories produced by repositories and clarifies the use of terms in this book. The second chapter reviews the development of descriptive standards ISAD(G) (General International Standard Archival Description) and DACS (*Describing Archives: A Content Standard*). The third chapter explains what XML is and how EAD is structured. These chapters are easy to read and would be a good introduction to the topic for students learning about EAD and descriptive standards.

Chapter 4 relates descriptive standards to your repository's finding aids. Dow lists each data element and tells whether ISAD(G), DACS, and RLG requires or recommends this element. Additionally, she provides the EAD element for each data element. While each standard is slightly different, several of the key data elements overlap. Though Dow compiled all of this information for the reader, this chapter, and the book overall, is well footnoted, so any archivist who wishes to learn more about any one of these standards should be able to find the reference easily.

Chapter 5 discusses formatting paper inventories, and the reader receives useful advice about designing finding aids to be compatible with EAD. We are reminded that computers do not process information in the same way people do, and certain habits that can be useful while typing up a finding aid, i.e. abbreviations, do not necessarily work once that finding aid is online. This chapter also reminds archivists that if you combine data elements into long, winding narratives, your future conversion will be more complicated, slower, and more costly.

Chapter 6 focuses on controlled vocabularies and their importance for intellectual access and information retrieval. Alternate spellings, name changes, and different types of names can make it difficult to search by computer, but are easily addressed on paper. In this chapter, Dow describes the provisions EAD makes to allow better access to name and subject searches.

Chapter 7 reviews many of the questions that need to be addressed before any decisions can be made about converting finding aids to EAD. Before beginning, repositories need to consider who the decision maker will be, who will do the encoding, which finding aids to encode, and examine numerous other questions. This chapter does not provide answers; those are up to each individual repository to determine for itself.

What this chapter does is prepare the reader for the questions that need to be asked before starting the conversion process.

Examples are used heavily throughout the book to illustrate the text. They do an excellent job of clarifying, but the middle chapters are so laden with examples that it does become difficult to read. This book could have used a little more editing as there are a few typing errors scattered throughout. Ultimately, this book is readable, with a good deal of practical information that should help a repository begin to prepare its finding aids in EAD, even if it is just on paper.

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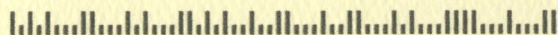
## NOTES

1. One such call was made at the Association of Research Libraries conference, Exposing Hidden Collections, held on September 8–9, 2003, at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. This meeting addressed the challenges of providing access to uncataloged and unprocessed archival, manuscript, and rare book materials.



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