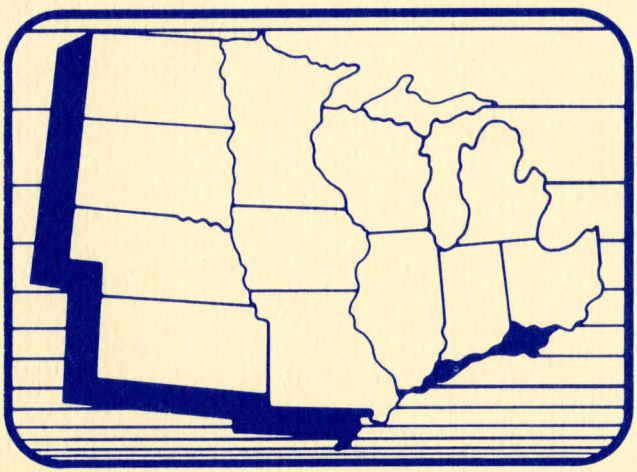
The Midwestern Archivist



Volume XIV Number 2, 1989

MAC
MIDWEST ARCHIVES CONFERENCE

ISSN 0363-888x

The Midwestern Archivist

Volume XIV Number 2, 1989

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

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. Submissions relating to archival theory and current practice are solicited. Diversity among topics and points of view is encouraged. Ideas and opinions expressed by the contributors are not necessarily those of the Midwest Archives Conference or its Editorial Board.

Material in a wide range of formats—including articles, review essays, proceedings of seminars, and case studies of specific archival projects or functions—will be considered for publication. Guidelines for authors of articles and case studies are available upon request from the editorial board chair.

Manuscripts should be sent to the board chair, Frank Boles, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, 1150 Beal Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109. The editorial board uses the current edition of *Chicago Manual of Style* as the standard for style, including footnote format. Decisions on manuscripts will be rendered within ten weeks of submission. Offers to review books or suggestions of books to review should be sent to the book review editor, Tim Ericson, Milwaukee Urban Archives, Golda Meir Library-UWM, 2311 East Hartford, Milwaukee, WI 53201.

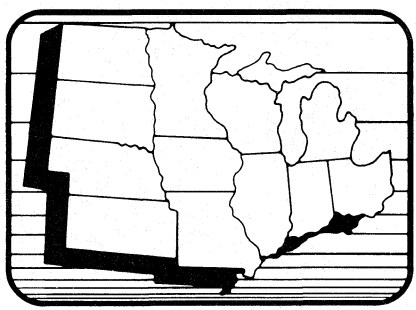
MAC members receive *The Midwestern Archivist* and the MAC *Newsletter* upon payment of annual dues of $12; institutional memberships are $20. Single issues of the journal are available at $3.50 plus fifty cents for postage and handling. An index to Vols. 1-8 (1976-83) is available at the single-issue price. Inquiries regarding membership or purchase of journal copies should be directed to Kevin Leonard, MAC Secretary-Treasurer, University Archives, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL 60208-2300. *The Midwestern Archivist* is also available in microform from University Microfilms International.

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

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

MAC

MIDWEST ARCHIVES CONFERENCE



INTRODUCTION

In 1981 the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) offered an initial $600,000 in grants to historical records agencies in each state for studies of the condition of their public and private historical records and archival programs. At this writing in the fall of 1989, forty-six states, the District of Columbia, the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands have published their reports, and Maine has just been awarded assessment funds.

Are these state reports obsolete—or "history" as the word is used today by sports broadcasters? The answer to this question was unclear on 15 October 1987 when Nicholas C. Burckel, F. Gerald Ham, and Gerald Newborg spoke to the Midwest Archives Conference fall meeting in Columbia, Missouri. The three archivists analyzed the individual state reports and *Documenting America,* the published proceedings from an NHPRC and NASARA (National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators) conference that attempted to sum up the twenty-seven reports that had been completed by June 1983. Although all three authors pointed to significant weaknesses of the state reports, they emphasized the importance of these studies as "benchmarks" for future planning activities for archival records programs at state, regional, and national levels.

Their comments are even more timely today than when originally presented. Richard A. Cameron, who chaired the Columbia session while field director for the Minnesota Historical Society, has since joined the NHPRC staff. In April 1989, as assistant director for state programs in the Records Program of the NHPRC, has was responsible for preparing a summary of the state reports, published here as an introduction to the critical assessments by Burckel, Ham, and Newborg.

The Midwestern Archivist presents this special issue to encourage the development of the kinds of planning documents and activities that will effectively strengthen historical records preservation programs in the United States. The state assessments reports, for all their inadequacies, serve as landmarks along the way.

Mary E. Janzen
Editorial Board, *The Midwestern Archivist*

STATE ASSESSMENT REPORTS FACT SHEET[1]

NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS COMMISSION

Purpose

Since 1981 the National Historical Publications and Records Commission has funded the most comprehensive assessment ever undertaken of historical records conditions and needs in the states. The commission has supported state assessment projects in forty-eight states and territories, and the District of Columbia, by making grants to the state historical records advisory boards, gubernatorially appointed boards that coordinate and plan statewide archival programs and review records grant proposals submitted to the commission from their states. The projects have examined historical records conditions and needs, prepared recommendations to meet these needs, and published their findings and recommendations. The attached list of final reports gives information on their availability and to whom requests should be addressed.

In 1983 the commission sponsored a conference to analyze and review the assessment report projects completed in its first round of grants and, under the auspices of the National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators (NASARA), issued a summary report, *Documenting America. Assessing the Condition of Historical Records in the States.* (Loan copies are available from the NAGARA office, Council of State Governments, P.O. Box 11910, Lexington, KY 40578.) Both *Documenting America* and the individual state reports are strongly critical of the care and preservation of America's documentary heritage.

The state reports provide an agenda for change, but, as both the contributors to *Documenting America* and its critical reviewers suggested, the reports are not detailed plans for action. Setting priorities for action, implementing the recommendations in the reports, adapting the findings to changing conditions, and monitoring progress are crucial factors in determining the success and effectiveness of the reports. The state historical records advisory boards, the state historical records coordinators, committed professionals, government officials, and concerned citizens all have important contributions to make in assuring that the assessment reports lead to improved preservation of important historical records.

Content

Most state assessment reports dealt exclusively with the four topics proposed by NHPRC in its guidelines for the assessment projects: (1) state government

records, (2) local government records, (3) historical records repositories, and (4) statewide services and functions. A few states discussed statewide computer databases and college and university archives as separate issues or areas of concern.

In studying state government records programs the reports examined state laws and codes that govern archives and records management issues, security, physical conditions of repositories, relationships with other state agencies and institutions, staff requirements, backlogs of unarranged documents, reference issues, and outreach programs.

Many of the problems identified under the state government records section also were pertinent to local government records. Areas of concern included inadequate records programs, poor storage and accessibility, lack of training, conservation problems, lack of standards for microphotography programs, and the poor relationship between state and local government agencies.

Although different methods were used by each state to identify historical records repositories, most states relied exclusively on questionnaires to obtain their information. Overall the questionnaires focused on size of holdings, physical condition of repository, use of collections, arrangement and description methods, staff size and archival training, annual budget, conservation problems, and hours of operation. The general consensus revealed a need for more educational opportunities and better communication and cooperation among institutions, but few well-defined courses of action were proposed.

In analyzing statewide functions and services, most states discussed education and training, conservation, statewide directories and database networks, and better communication and dissemination of information among repositories. Some of the later reports recommended strengthening the role of the state historical records advisory board either through state legislation, state funding, or through increased NHPRC support.

Methodology

The state historical records advisory boards employed one of several different approaches to conduct the assessment studies. Some state boards hired outside consultants to produce the major portions of the report, to address a specific area of concern (e.g., machine-readable records), or to comment on the project findings. Where the consultants did not write the final report, their reports are frequently included as appendices. Other boards hired full-time assessment project archivists, who were responsible for conducting the project under the supervision of the state coordinator. Still others used staff from state and private institutions along with local archivists, historians, and historical records advisory board members to compile the report, sometimes forming task forces to study specific areas of concern. Finally, some state coordinators assigned the assessment report project to one or two of their own staff members, who consulted with the board and the coordinator, but administered the project.

Costs

To date NHPRC has issued 49 grants totaling $1,113,828. The average NHPRC grant amounted to $23,000; the average cost sharing amount was $23,000.

Results

As the commission reaches the goal of an assessment report for every state and territory, it is important for the commission, the states, and the archival profession to determine how well the reports have served as catalysts for improving the preservation of America's historical records. Although no comprehensive review of the assessment reports has been conducted since *Documenting America* was issued, the reports continue to be important reference points for archival programs in the states and for the archival profession. Evaluations of the projects' usefulness and reviews of the progress made in implementing the assessment reports' recommendations have been featured on the programs of regional and state archival associations. State coordinators from sixteen states have completed some review of the recommendations in their states, with most of these noting significant progress in addressing the recommendations. A recent report of the SAA Committee on Goals and Priorities recommended a new round of assessment reports focusing on the quality of the archival documentation in the states. Many state coordinators have expressed an interest in updating or revising their assessment reports. For information on the status of the reports in individual states, contact the state coordinators or the persons on the attached list.

April 1989

Availability of State Assessment Reports, October 1989

ALABAMA. *Assessing Alabama's Archives: A Plan for the Preservation of the State's Historical Records,* 1985. Copies no longer available.

ALASKA. *Needs and Resources of Historical Records Repositories in Alaska,* 1984. Copies available from Virginia Newton, State Archivist, Alaska State Archives, 141 Willoughby Ave., Juneau, AK 99801.

AMERICAN SAMOA. *Historical Records and Records Services in American Samoa: A Plan for the Preservation of American Samoa's Historical Records Heritage,* 1986. Copies no longer available.

ARIZONA. *Preserving Arizona's Historical Records: The Final Report of the Arizona Historical Records Needs and Assessment Project,* 1983. Limited number of copies available from David Hoober, State Archivist, Department of Library, Archives and Public Records, State Capitol, 1700 W. Washington, Phoenix, AZ 85007.

ARKANSAS. *The Historical Records of Arkansas,* 1985. Limited number of copies available from John L. Ferguson, Director and State Historian, Arkansas History Commission, One Capital Mall, Little Rock, AR 72201.

CALIFORNIA. *Final Report of the California Sate Archives Assessment Project,* 1983. Copies available from Laren Metzer, California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, 1020 O Street, Room 130, Sacramento, CA 95814.

COLORADO. *Colorado Historical Records Assessment and Reporting Project,* 1982. Copies available from Terry Ketelsen, State Archivist, Division

of Archives and Public Records, 1313 Sherman St., Room 1B-20, Denver, CO 80203.

CONNECTICUT. *The Connecticut Historical Records Assessment Project: 1982-1983,* 1983. Copies available from Mark Jones, State Archivist, Connecticut State Library, 231 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT 06106.

DELAWARE. *Delaware's Documentary Heritage: The Future of Historical Records in the First State,* 1986. Copies available from Daniel Griffith, Acting Director, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs, Hall of Records, Dover, DE 19901.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. *Public Records and Private Papers in the District of Columbia,* 1985. Copies available from Lawrence Baume, Training and Publications Officer, Office of Public Records, 515 D Street, N.W., Room 307, Washington, D.C. 20001.

FLORIDA. *Florida Historical Records Needs Assessment Report,* 1988. Copies available from Jim Berberich, Chief, Bureau of State Archives and Records Administration, Department of State, The Capitol, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0252.

GEORGIA. *State Assessment and Reporting Grant,* 1983. Copies available from Edward Weldon, Director, Department of Archives and History, 330 Capitol Ave., S.E., Atlanta, GA 30334.

HAWAII. *Hawaii's Historical Records Repositories Survey: Assessment and Recommendations for NHPRC,* 1982. Available from Jolyn Tamura, State Archivist, State Archives, Iolani Palace Grounds, Honolulu, HI 96813.

IDAHO. *Idaho's Documentary Heritage/A Report to the Government and People of Idaho,* 1989. Copies available from M. Gary Bettis, Records Coordinator, Idaho State Historical Society, 610 North Julia Davis Drive, Boise, ID 83702-7695.

ILLINOIS. *State-wide Historical Records Needs Survey and Assessment Project,* 1982. Limited number of copies available from John Daly, Director of Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Archives Building, Springfield, IL 62756.

INDIANA. *Indiana's Documentary Heritage: Planning for the Future,* 1989. Copies available from Pamela Bennett, Director, Indiana Historical Bureau, Room 408, 140 North Senate, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2296.

IOWA. *Iowa's Historical Records,* 1984. Copies available from Gordon Hendrickson, State Archivist, State Historical Society of Iowa, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, IA 50319.

KANSAS. *Needs Assessment and Reporting Grant: #81-116,* 1982. Copies available from Ramon S. Powers, Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society, 120 West 10th Street, Topeka, KS 66612.

KENTUCKY. *Historical Records Needs Assessment: Final Report,* 1983. Copies available from Richard Belding, State Archivist, Public Records Division, Department for Libraries & Archives, P.O. Box 537, Frankfort, KY 40602-0537.

LOUISIANA. *Louisiana Historical Records Assessment Project,* 1986. Copies available from Donald Lemieux, State Archivist, Box 44125, Capitol Station, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9125.

MASSACHUSETTS. *Historical Records in Massachusetts: Prospects, Programs and Plans,* 1983. Limited number of copies available from Albert Whitaker, Archivist of the Commonwealth, Massachusetts Archives at Columbia Point, 220 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125.

MICHIGAN. *Achievements of Michigan: The Challenge of Preserving the Historical Records of a Great State,* 1986. Copies available from David Johnson, State Archivist, Bureau of History, Michigan Department of State, Lansing, MI 48918.

MINNESOTA. *Historical Records in Minnesota,* 1983. Limited number of copies available from Nina M. Archabal, Director, Minnesota Historical Society, 690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55101.

MISSISSIPPI. *The Management and Preservation of Mississippi's Historical Records: Problems and Potential,* 2 vols., 1982. Copies available from Elbert Hilliard, Director, Department of Archives & History, P.O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205.

MISSOURI. *A Future for the Past: An Assessment of Missouri's Historical Records Program,* 1988. Copies available from Gary R. Kremer, Director, Missouri State Archives, P.O. Box 778, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

MONTANA. *Montana Historical Records Assessment Project,* 1982. Copies available on interlibrary loan from Montana Historical Society, 225 North Roberts Street, Helena, MT 59620.

NEBRASKA. *Needs Assessment and Reporting Grant,* 1982. Copies no longer available.

NEVADA. *Preserving Nevada's Documentary Heritage,* 1985. Copies no longer available.

NEW HAMPSHIRE. *New Hampshire Historical Records Assessment and Reporting Project,* 1984. Copies no longer available.

NEW JERSEY. *New Jersey Statewide Records Assessment and Reporting Project,* 1983. Copies available from Caesar Iacovone, Director, Division of Archives & Records Management, Department of State, CN 307, 2300 Stuyvesant Ave., Trenton, NJ 08625.

NEW YORK. *Toward a Usable Past: Historical Records in the Empire State,* 1984. Copies available from Larry Hackman, State Archivist, Rm. 10A46, Cultural Education Center, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12230.

NORTH CAROLINA. *Archives and Records Programs and Historical Records Repositories in North Carolina: An Analysis of Present Problems and Future Needs,* 1983. Copies available from David Olson, Section Head, Division of Archives & History, Department of Cultural Resources, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27611.

NORTH DAKOTA. *North Dakota's Forgotten Heritage: Public and Private Records as Historical Documents,* 1983. Copies available from James Sperry, Superintendent, State Historical Society of North Dakota, North Dakota Heritage Center, Bismarck, ND 58505-0179.

OHIO. *Preserving Ohio's Heritage: An Assessment of Archives and Manuscripts Programs,* 1983. Copies available from Gary Ness, Director, Ohio Historical Society, 1985 Velma Ave., Columbus, OH 43211.

OKLAHOMA. *Preserving Today's Records for Tomorrow's Use: A Mandate for Action,* 1985. Copies available from Howard Lowell, Archivist, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, 200 N.E. 18th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

OREGON. *Oregon's Archival Heritage: Assessing the Condition of Historical Records,* 1985. Copies available from Margaret Haines, Oregon Historical Society, 1230 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205.

PENNSYLVANIA. *Historical Records in Pennsylvania,* 1983. Limited number of copies available from Harry E. Whipkey, Director, Bureau of Archives and History, Pennsylvania Museum and Historical Commission, P.O. Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1026.

RHODE ISLAND. *The Preservation of Our Right to Information and the Documentation of Our Heritage: The Rhode Island Records Assessment Report, 1984-1985,* 1985. Copies available from Phyllis Silva, State Archivist, Rhode Island State Archives, Room 43, State House, Providence, RI 02903-1119.

SOUTH CAROLINA. *Preserve or Perish: On the Future of Historical Records in the Palmetto State,* 1988. Copies available from George L. Vogt, Director, South Carolina Department of Archives & History, P.O. Box 11669, Capitol Station, Columbia, SC 29211.

SOUTH DAKOTA. *Assessment and Planning for Archives and Historical Records in South Dakota,* 1983. Available from Linda Sommer, State Archivist, South Dakota Historical Society, 800 Governor's Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2294.

TEXAS. *Texas Historical Records Needs Survey and Assessment Project,* 1985. Copies no longer available.

UTAH. *Utah Records Needs Assessment Project: A Report to the People of Utah on the Management of Historical Records,* 1985. Copies available from Max Evans, Director, Division of State History, 300 Rio Grande, Salt Lake City, UT 84101.

VERMONT. *Historical Records in Vermont,* 1985. Copies available from Gregory Sanford, State Archivist, Secretary of State's Office, 26 Terrace St., Montpelier, VT 05602-2710.

VIRGINIA. *Public and Private Record Repositories in Virginia: A Needs Assessment Report,* 1983. Copies available from Louis Manarin, State Archivist, Virginia State Library & Archives, 11th at Capitol Square, Richmond, VA 23219-3491.

WASHINGTON. *Preserving Washington's Records: A Plan for the State's Second Century,* 1984. Summary available from Sidney McAlpin, State Archivist, Office of Secretary of State, P.O. Box 9000, Olympia, WA 98504.

WISCONSIN. *Planning to Preserve Wisconsin's History: The Archival Perspective,* 1983. Copies available from H. Nicholas Muller III, Director, The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706.

NOTES

1. A substantial portion of this fact sheet was also published in the *SAA Newsletter* (September 1989): 12.

THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS COMMISSION STATE ASSESSMENT REPORTS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

NICHOLAS C. BURCKEL

ABSTRACT: What has been the result of the tremendous expenditure of energy and tax dollars on the historical records assessment reports funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) since 1981? In his analysis of *Documenting America* and subsequent state reports, the author notes that little progress had been made in the twenty years since Ernst Posner published his observations in *American State Archives* in 1964. The author concludes that future assessment activities must involve a constituency broader than the archival profession if they are to make a difference.

What weighs more than forty pounds, stands nearly two feet high, runs to approximately 5,000 pages, and cost the taxpayers nearly a million dollars? The answer, as some archivists but virtually no one else will know, is the historical records assessment reports funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). Projects have now been conducted by more than forty states and the District of Columbia. What has been the result of this sizeable effort and expenditure? A depressing, if truthful, story, told in excruciating detail, of the sad state of America's documentary heritage.

NHPRC developed the idea for these reports in response to the Reagan administration's proposed elimination of the agency in its 1982 fiscal year budget proposal. For a time the demise of the tiny federal program appeared a very real possibility unless Congress rescued it. NHPRC, facing imminent extinction, allocated $600,000 of its remaining funds for a program designed to prepare states to continue active archival programs after NHPRC's demise. Slightly more than half the states applied for and received grants of approximately $22,000 each "to assess historical records conditions and needs in the state, to prepare recommendations to meet these needs, and to report the findings and recommendations to the interested public."[1] Resuscitated by Congressional appropriations, NHPRC subsequently funded a conference convened by the

National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators (since renamed the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators). The purpose of the conference, held in Atlanta in June 1983, was to analyze and evaluate results of the early assessment projects. Buoyed by the popularity of these grants and by its new lease on life, NHPRC awarded an additional sixteen grants, bringing the total to forty-three in 1983.[2]

Clearly the state assessment projects have been popular—virtually every state has now completed such a study. What is less clear is the value of these studies, other than as badly needed employment for archivists or as grist for the researcher's mill. Some assessments, most notably New York's, have quickened the pace of archival activity, raised the visibility of archivists and the problems they face, and generated support for a coordinated effort to preserve the state's documentary heritage. From an historical perspective, however, do the reports provide either the knowledgeable archivist or the interested lay reader with much that they did not already know or could not easily learn? If not, then one must look elsewhere for the value of these reports.

A review of earlier studies, reports, articles, and papers over the past twenty years reveals that the sorry state of America's historical records programs has been known for some time. Some may argue that, at least in an absolute sense, archivists have made significant progress during that period in protecting the historical record. At the same time, greater numbers of better-trained and better-educated archivists have come to expect and demand a greater share of society's resources to preserve records. New technologies promise both to solve many archival problems and to create new ones. Competition for declining state funds from those seeking social and environmental reforms makes historical records preservation more difficult to justify to a constituent-conscious legislature. In this climate of higher aspirations relative to the expectations of an earlier generation, archivists today are perhaps no better off.

Ernst Posner's classic study, *American State Archives,* written nearly twenty-five years ago, provides an important milestone from which to measure progress. With financial support from the Council on Library Resources, the Society of American Archivists hired Posner to examine state archival agencies and their programs. His state-by-state analysis revealed a wide range of programs, but his general conclusions painted a somber picture:

> In practically all states that have archival agencies worthy of the name, staffs are too small to carry out all essential archival functions. As a result, arrangement and description of holdings must be neglected and, because of lack of guides and other finding aids, reference services consume an unduly large amount of time—a vicious circle from which there is apparently no escape. Lack of staff also keeps archivists from productive participation in research activities....Unsatisfactory salary arrangements and lack of job security, too, contribute to deterring highly qualified persons from accepting archival posts and make it difficult to fill vacant positions.[3]

If the picture was and still is bleak for state archives, then what of local government record repositories? Apparently even worse. Historian Sam Bass Warner, addressing the subject at the 1971 annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, aptly titled his paper, published in *Midwestern Archivist,* "The Shame of the Cities: Public Records of the Metropolis." Warner observed

that we have been an urban nation since 1920, when the federal census for the first time showed more citizens living in urban than in rural areas. Even so, he continued, "save a few exceptions, the official records of our municipalities are ignored, neglected or systematically destroyed. Surely a civilized concern for informing the present with the experience of the past requires at the very least the ordering of these public records."[4]

In 1977, Patrick Quinn, Northwestern University archivist, described Chicago as "an archival wasteland" until the mid-1960s. Prior to that time only the Chicago Historical Society had a mandate to collect archives and manuscripts important in documenting the city's history. Quinn blamed the absence of a city archives on "a consistent lack of historical consciousness and concomitant lack of appreciation for the historical value of official records that has pervaded virtually every administration in the city's history."[5] Not until 1987 did the Illinois State Archives sign a contract with Northeastern Illinois University for establishment of an archival program for Chicago's records.

Chicago is hardly unique. In 1964 the SAA surveyed administrators of 130 of the country's largest cities. Of the two-thirds responding, only twenty indicated they had a municipal archives; only half of those were supervised by a professional archivist. Eleven years later, in 1975, a survey of the largest twenty-five cities revealed that, of the twenty respondents, only eleven claimed to have a municipal archives. Fewer than half of these were administered by a professional archivist. As might be expected, it appears there was a greater likelihood of a large city having an archives than newer or smaller cities having one. Even so, the statistics do not suggest much progress.[6]

In 1979, Richard Cox, then city archivist and records management officer of Baltimore, examined that city as a case study of the plight of American municipal archives. He identified a number of general causes for the inadequacy of urban archives, including: (1) municipal apathy, (2) archival emphasis on records at the state and national rather than local levels, (3) lack of strong support from historians and the historical community generally, (4) failure of records management programs, and (5) the lack of continuing public support. Prior to the American Revolution bicentennial celebrations in 1976, Cox reported, "there was a consistent pattern of apathy, broken by periodic waves of concern, on the part of historians, antiquarians, archivists, and the general public." Neither Baltimore's long history, the existence of the Maryland Historical Society and the Maryland Hall of Records, nor the historical research methodology pioneered in the United States by Johns Hopkins University generated support for a municipal archives in Baltimore.[7]

In 1980, North Carolina archivist and historian H.G. Jones undertook a study of 81,000 repositories of record and published his findings in *Local Government Records.* Although he had hoped to find that improved technology and recordkeeping systems had changed conditions for the better, he instead concluded that little progress had been made. His search for a program fit to be emulated by others had to be abandoned, "when it became evident that there exists in the country neither a model program nor an agreement on what should constitute a model program."[8] While he found this regrettable, he sympathized with harried public officials, past and present, who scarcely had time to administer their current records, much less those they inherited from their predecessors.

So much, then, for the observations of knowledgeable researchers and practitioners about the condition of state, municipal, and local government records. If state and municipal governments do not adequately care for their records, then perhaps the nation's colleges and universities have fared better as preservers of our cultural heritage. Their record, however, belies this assumption. A 1981 survey of higher education institutions in the United States that claimed to have an archives showed the "typical" college or university archives was relatively new and staffed by a single professional with some student assistants. The entire annual budget, including salaries, was about $23,000. Frequently the archivist also carried some records management responsibilities and collected nonuniversity records as well. If the university archivist collected beyond the campus, he or she usually collected manuscripts from the local community served by the campus.[9]

In concluding their analysis the authors of the survey quoted from a report on Canadian archival repositories that they felt described conditions similar if not identical to those of college and university archives in the United States:

> Archives do not appear to rank highly in the priorities of their sponsoring bodies....Few...have realized the significant cultural and administrative advantages of a fully functioning archival program. In Universities...archives are seldom seen as central to their operating objectives or to their efficient management.[10]

The Canadians go so far as to state that if cuts were made at many institutions, "some repositories would have no alternative but to close."[11] Programs were already so lean, there was no place to cut.

If the picture is bleak for state and municipal archives, marginally better for college and university archives, then what about the holdings of thousands of historical societies around the country? Charles Phillips and Patricia Hogan found that nearly forty percent of all historical agencies had no paid staff. In 1983 more than sixty percent of the institutions surveyed operated on a budget of less than $50,000; one-third had operating budgets of less than $10,000 a year. More than eighty percent of the historical societies had fewer than 500 members; nearly the same percent charged less than $10 per year for membership.[12]

In spite of these limited resources, three-fourths of the societies maintain an archives. Although they claimed to possess an archival collection, few budgeted any funds for acquisitions or upkeep. Another ten percent allocated less than $1,000 a year for archives. Thus, while historical agencies may play an important role in preserving local history and cultural heritage, "the majority are doing so without the money, people, and technical know-how they need. Because they lack adequate resources, the physical remains of America's past...are in peril." The authors conclude with the rhetorical question: "if the small, community-based historical organizations cannot care for an essential part of America's heritage, who will?"[13]

This, then, was the state of historical records programs on the eve of the assessment projects funded by NHPRC. Those projects analyzed archival conditions in four areas: (1) state government, (2) local government, (3) historical records repositories, and (4) statewide functions and services. Most of the assessment projects in the initial round were the subject of analysis for the 1983

Atlanta conference funded by NHPRC. Consultant reports examined the results of the completed assessments in each of the four areas noted above. Their findings and recommendations, published in *Documenting America: Assessing the Condition of Historical Records in the States,* complement more than they contrast with earlier reports. Assessments undertaken after the Atlanta conference simply confirm results found in other states. Even the recommendations found in later reports tend mainly to echo earlier reports, suggesting that the Atlanta conference did not have a significant impact on subsequent state assessments.

In his analysis of state records agencies, Alabama state archivist Edwin Bridges found that "agencies are in an impoverished condition and are currently unable to provide adequate care for their records."[14] State archives, he reported, lack program independence and they operate under "passive and permissive" laws and under a "hodgepodge of placement arrangements."[15] Further, most agencies "suffer from disinterest and lack of support" from state government departmental administrators and budget officials, Bridges concluded.[16] To solve these problems, most states advocated: (1) stronger statutory authority, (2) more integrated records management/archival programming efforts, and (3) more staff and resources.[17]

This same general pattern of findings and recommendations typified reports that were prepared after the Atlanta conference. Delaware, for instance, found that, "[d]espite a five-fold rise in public use, the State Archives staff has not increased in the past 20 years. As a result, eighty percent of holdings have not been processed for use."[18] The Delaware report further noted the inadequacy of state archival and records storage facilities and the need to do a better job of managing current records. Predictably, the report called for additional state and federal funding, expanded and upgraded storage facilities, and revision of the *Delaware Code* to give the archives greater statutory authority.[19]

The second major area examined by the consultants dealt with local government records. Consultant Richard Cox, then head of the Government Records Division of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, concluded "the worsening condition of these records is the predominant theme of the project findings....Few local governments have adequate records programs."[20] In particular, individual state assessments reported: (1) poor storage conditions, (2) the absence of local government personnel trained in records administration, (3) inadequate legislation regarding the care and disposition of records, and (4) poorly defined or insufficient state supervision and advisory service. As was the case at the state level, recommendations to address these problems included (1) more and better storage, (2) more staff, (3) more local government support, (4) improved state legislation, and (5) new or revitalized state government leadership to reverse the pattern of past neglect.[21]

Since Cox not only prepared the section of the report dealing with local government records, but also (with Bridges) shared major responsibility for the Alabama project, it is worth noting whether the Alabama report, completed after the Atlanta conference, pointed in a new direction. The findings are different more in degree than in substance from earlier reports. Many of Alabama's local government records, the report declares "are in deplorable condition—threatening the destruction of this element of the documentary heritage, limiting the use of their informational content for the administration of local government, and jeopardizing the rights of the state's citizenry—and there is no program at pre-

sent for rectifying this situation."[22] Recommendations tied to findings called for development of a statewide plan for administering the state's local records, strengthened records legislation, and a more active role for the state archives. The recommendations are not substantially different from those Cox found in the assessment reports that had been completed before the Atlanta conference.[23]

Historical records repositories formed the third major area addressed in the various state assessment studies. Consultant William Joyce, formerly assistant director for rare books and manuscripts at the New York Public Library, found the early reports "dreary if not depressing." Once again reports found many repositories with too few staff, poor storage conditions, and inadequate or nonexistent collecting policies. Joyce found a pattern of "underfunding of historical records repositories and underutilization of their holdings....The majority...are barely capable of providing even the most rudimentary and basic maintenance of their holdings."[24] Typical recommendations called for (1) training programs to develop professional skills, (2) technical assistance for repositories, (3) greater cooperation and coordination among repositories, (4) establishment of clear program standards, and (5) allocation of more resources.[25]

Utah, which undertook its study after the Atlanta conference, reflected similar concerns and recommendations. In particular, lack of a central archival/historical agency, undefined or poorly defined collecting policies, proliferation of historical records collecting without regard for the ability to care for and provide access to holdings, and the business community's ignorance of archival standards, have all contributed to a fragmented and incomplete approach to preserving the state's documentary heritage. To solve these problems, the Utah report calls for a central coordinating agency, more precisely defined collection development policies among major repositories, and a commitment "to conserve historical records collected in rural areas of the state by placing fragile original material where it will most likely be preserved."[26]

Finally, the fourth area of analysis for the assessment studies dealt with statewide functions and services. Consultant Margaret Child, assistant director of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, focused more on recommendations than on findings, and provided a critique of those recommendations. Common themes of state recommendations were the need for education and training, better information dissemination and communication links, conservation training and facilities, a statewide directory of repositories, and a guide to collections. In these recommendations Child saw a "go it alone" approach, reflecting ignorance of developments in library and information science and a tendency to want specialized manuals when generalized ones should suffice. She also noted that the single-state focus did not always provide the best solution to problems such as conservation and education.[27]

Vermont's 1985 study examined statewide functions and services and found:

> Because of the complex organization of government records agencies, the inexperience of many local officials and historical society groups in record preservation, the paucity of trained conservation personnel, and the lack of aggressive, broad public outreach programs, potential leadership in the archival and records fields appears immobilized.[28]

The Vermont report also noted the lack of formally trained archivists and cited conflicts within the state government archival community as a barrier to greater

cooperation and more rational coordination of efforts. To rectify these problems the assessment report called for: (1) a statewide board to provide overall leadership, (2) an archival network to facilitate communication and cooperation, and (3) a legislatively mandated study of relevant statutes, current practices, and facilities for housing the state's records.[29]

It appears from this survey of the status of archival repositories over the last quarter century that the concerns of professional archivists remain largely unchanged. They need larger staffs, better-paid and better-trained. Archivists want the public, and especially resource providers, to have a greater understanding of the important role of archives and archivists in society. Adequate space and proper storage conditions for historical records continue to be important issues. Enforceable statutory authority for the preservation of state and local public records remains an issue in many states. Better intellectual control over, and access to, archival holdings are necessary for better and more efficient patron service. Greater cooperation and less competition among historical and archival repositories should be encouraged.

Did archivists, historians, genealogists, government administrators, historical society directors, librarians, or records managers need these state assessment studies to tell them this? Probably not. Certainly the individual assessments provide more detail on specific conditions within the states in the form of information gathered largely through questionnaires. The reports not only documented their findings, but also provided recommendations for ameliorating the conditions they found. Those recommendations, however, were nearly as predictable as the findings.

In a review of *Documenting America* in 1985, I concluded:

> It is difficult to read about the sorry state of America's documentary heritage without becoming demoralized. The problems are so great and so obvious, the solutions so few and so difficult. For that reason alone this report should receive a wide reading. Because most of the state assessments and many of the consultants' recommendations are directed at archivists, this report will not likely reach a wider audience.[30]

Subsequent assessment reports have not altered my opinion. If, as George Santayana wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," then we should resolve to profit from our past experience. In future efforts archivists need to engage the attention of a broader and more influential constituency. Solid research and recommendations alone will not prompt change in a diverse and complex society of competing interest groups. Influential leaders outside the archival field and related professions must be involved in the assessment process from the outset. If they are not, then at a later point they are unlikely to be receptive to a lengthy list of recommendations that may, to the uneducated eye, appear self-serving. Such an approach will require patience, compromise, and accommodation, but it also may have a more important long-term impact than the growing number of state reports that denude our forests to print, document the obvious, overcrowd our shelves, and remind us only of opportunities lost.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Since January 1986, Nicholas C. Burckel has served at Washington University Libraries, St. Louis, first as director of public services and collection development and now as associate dean of collections and services. Formerly he was assistant vice chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

NOTES

1. Lisa B. Weber, ed., *Documenting America: Assessing the Condition of Historical Records in the States* (Albany, N.Y.: National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators, 1984), vii.
2. Copies of these reports are on file at the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. 20408.
3. Ernst Posner, *American State Archives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 316.
4. Sam Bass Warner, Jr., "The Shame of the Cities: Public Records of the Metropolis," *Midwestern Archivist* 2, no. 2 (1977):27.
5. Patrick M. Quinn, "Windy City Blues: An Archival Profile of Chicago," *Midwestern Archivist* 2, no. 2 (1977):3-13.
6. Quinn, 4-5.
7. Richard Cox, "The Plight of American Municipal Archives: Baltimore, 1729-1979," *American Archivist* 42 (July 1979):281-92.
8. H.G. Jones, *Local Government Records: An Introduction to Their Management, Preservation, and Use* (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1980), x.
9. Nicholas C. Burckel and J. Frank Cook, "A Profile of College and University Archives in the United States," *American Archivist* 45 (Fall 1982):426-28.
10. Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, *Canadian Archives: Report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada* (Ottawa: The Council, 1980), 58-59.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Charles Phillips and Patricia Hogan, *A Culture at Risk: Who Cares for America's Heritage?* (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1984), 35.
13. Phillips and Hogan, 82.
14. Weber, 1.
15. Weber, 2-3.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Weber, 9-10.
18. *Delaware's Documentary Heritage: The Future of Historical Records in the First State* (Dover, Del.: Delaware Historical Records Advisory Board, 1986), Summary brochure.
19. *Delaware's Documentary Heritage,* 4-7.
20. Weber, 20.
21. Weber, 20-24.
22. *Assessing Alabama's Archives: A Plan for the Preservation of the State's Historical Records* (Montgomery, Ala.: Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board, 1985), 134.
23. *Assessing Alabama's Archives,* 154-70.
24. Weber, 37-46.
25. Weber, 40-42.
26. *Utah Records Needs Assessment Project: A Report to the People of Utah on the Management of Historical Records* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Advisory Board, 1985), 17-21, 32.
27. Weber, 47-57.
28. *Historical Records in Vermont: An Assessment Report by the State Historical Records Advisory Board* (Montpelier, Vt.: State Historical Records Advisory Board, 1985), 27.
29. *Historical Records in Vermont,* 27-29.
30. *Library Quarterly* 55 (January 1985):113.

NORTH DAKOTA'S FORGOTTEN HERITAGE DIMLY REMEMBERED

GERALD G. NEWBORG

ABSTRACT: While the individual state assessment reports provided accurate descriptions of the conditions as they existed at that time, those conditions and needs continue to evolve. Using North Dakota's experience as an example, the author argues that the value of the state assessment reports lies in the fact that they can serve as benchmarks and as the basis for realistic planning documents. Follow-up studies are needed to continue the planning process and to interpret achievements and shortcomings.

Our view of a given situation is as much a perspective as it is a situation in itself. While I don't think I've ever been described as a Pollyanna, my own view of the state of American archives today—or at least the state of American state archives—is somewhat more upbeat than the picture painted by *Documenting America*. While the individual state reports give accurate descriptions of problems or shortcomings that need to be addressed, it is clearly not justified to conclude that these reports are no more than Posner revisited twenty years later, and that we need not have bothered because nothing has improved.[1] For example, Posner cited the Illinois State Archives as one of the outstanding state programs in the United States. Illinois has long had a comparatively strong program. But can anyone familiar with Illinois archives in 1963 view the situation today and not conclude that significant progress had been made, that the programs were better administered, facilities better equipped, records more accessible? Saying that does not excuse or ignore the tragic neglect of Chicago's records or other areas of need that were identified in Illinois' 1982 assessment report. It should be recognized, however, that a far different situation existed in 1982 and 1983 (when the first round of assessment reports was completed) than in 1963 in Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and practically every other state in the Midwest Archives Conference's twelve-state region.

I make this point because failing to recognize significant change ignores an important contribution of these assessment reports as realistic planning documents or as the basis for planning documents. The assessment reports forced many of us "to put it in writing," "it" being those goals and priorities that may exist in numerous budget documents or memos, "it" being the conclusion that

historical records repositories in a state have a community of interest and a need to cooperate, "it" being the recognition that our planning must actively involve a variety of individuals and interests.

Many of us could have and should have done more. Assessments of the assessment reports bring out the fact that some were confused about who the intended audience was or what type of action was required. I confess that I was a shortsighted and somewhat reluctant participant. The grant had been awarded before I became state archivist and as I looked at our programs I didn't think an elaborate study was required to identify our major problems and priorities. A week or so on the job had accomplished that. I look at our report now and see missed opportunities.

Our report, *North Dakota's Forgotten Heritage,*[2] was published in June 1983. The report contained fifty-seven specific recommendations, thirteen of which were identified as "key." Three years later I reviewed the status of those recommendations in a report to our historical records advisory board. The results were surprising even to me. Of the fifty-seven specific recommendations, thirty-seven were completed or in progress. Clearly, three years had made a difference in many concrete areas. Two questions arise: (1) did the report make any difference, or would these thirty-seven things have happened without an assessment report; and (2) is question number one relevant?

The answer to the first question—whether the report itself influenced activity—is mixed. It was clearly useful in a few areas, in others the work would have been done anyway. The report had the greatest impact on the state's records management program. Even prior to the issuance of the assessment report, the consultant's report was used in legislative committee to support the transfer of the records management function from the Secretary of State, where it had languished for twenty-two years, to the Office of Management and Budget. However, after the transfer was legally effected, budget office staff politely declined to discuss with me the organization of the records management function. They chose instead to visit "model programs" in two states. Unfortunately, neither program has been considered "model" by anyone else. But they did read *North Dakota's Forgotten Heritage* and they did incorporate some of its recommendations into their internal report. Four years later, twelve of the fifteen recommendations relating to records management that were made in the assessment report have been or are now being implemented. The records management program moved further in four years than it had moved in the preceding twenty-two with significant initiatives in records scheduling and disposal, forms design and control, microfilming, and microfilm quality control.

The progress in records management had a positive impact on state archives as well, particularly as improved retention schedules facilitated our appraisal process. Of the assessment report recommendations specific to state archives, six of ten are being implemented, including special efforts in arrangement and description and the production of general finding aids, informing agencies of the role of the archives, and a focused acquisition emphasis to acquire specific records. For local government records, six of nine assessment report recommendations are in various stages of implementation, with a county records project currently in progress which is a cooperative effort of the North Dakota Association of Counties, the state archives, and state records management, with funding assistance from NHPRC. For manuscripts repositories, progress was

recorded for five of seven recommendations, including published guides from two repositories, a workshop on conservation, and exchange of all inventories or registers among the three major repositories. One perhaps unsurprising lapse was in the recommended establishment of a coordinated collecting policy among the major repositories. For statewide services, nine of sixteen assessment report recommendations have been implemented, including promulgation of microfilm standards for the filming of all government records, expanded institutional loan of research materials, and microfilm projects to preserve newspapers and state government publications. All of this leads to one of two conclusions. Either we set a fairly light agenda for ourselves or we have made a lot of progress.

But it is also important to note what has not been implemented. A state records center has not been established and additional staff for the state archives has not been provided, two of the more significant and expensive assessment report recommendations. For the most part, any additional resources have come from grant-funded projects, not from substantially increased state funding, although there are some minor exceptions in the records management area. Within the state archives, state-supported staff levels have remained constant since 1981; and supplies, services, and equipment monies have actually been reduced, in some cases drastically.

Based on these diminishing budgets, it is clear that we failed to use the report—or failed in using the potential impact of the project—to convince resource allocators of the need for additional support for these programs. If the report had a *positive* impact I would hate to think what our position would have been without it. However, one must also reluctantly conclude that it is possible to have budget cuts and progress, too. I do not want to make that admission too loudly or too often but it is true that North Dakota's historical records are better cared for and more accessible today than they were four years ago. Of course all those records would be in much *better* care and would be much *more* accessible had staff and other funding increased significantly over that same time period. Two issues compound one another: do we have adequate resources and are the resources we have adequately or properly used?

So let me return to my questions at the beginning. The first question was: did the report make any difference or would these things have happened without an assessment report? The report did make some difference, but not enough to get excited about. Additional resources were not allocated, there was no ground swell of support for archives, and the ideas generated by the report were not new.

My second question was: is question number one relevant? I don't think so. Although the state reports were not consistent, and many of their goals were very general (and often unrealistic), the assessment projects themselves forced state boards and state archivists to put goals and priorities in writing, something long sought but rarely found. While Margaret Child's criticism is valid—she stated that the reports failed to look at areas of regional and national interest—at least they got as far as each state's borders.[3] They forced a certain amount of lip service to interinstitutional cooperation. They produced at least a minimum amount of program analysis in a public forum. And, often overlooked, they provided a benchmark for measuring future change. I think one of the reasons we have seen so little progress is that we have lacked basic planning documents. It

is not enough to set goals and objectives; we also need to assess results. Too often we measure activities without relating them to the objectives those activities are designed to meet. The assessment reports provided us with a series of benchmark studies that, to a large extent, contain sufficient analysis of the status quo and sufficiently measurable objectives to permit follow-up analysis. I think that is important in itself. Perhaps in reconsidering these reports we will discover what we have accomplished. Perhaps we will even be able to interpret our accomplishments rather than continue to flaunt our failures to the public or to those ubiquitous resource allocators. (Actually, rather than "ever-present," perhaps it should be "never-present" resource allocators.)

Now that we understand what we should have done, we should do it again. The first round of these reports is sufficiently obsolete that the reviews can stop and the assessment of the results can start. My fear is that we will not follow up, that we will not attempt to do it again. The nature of assessment and planning is that it must be repeated at regularly scheduled intervals. Had we met fifty-seven of the fifty-seven recommendations contained in our report, North Dakota's archival heritage might still be forgotten or just a dim memory. If we were to undertake this project today we might end up with fifty-seven, or seventy, or one hundred new recommendations, reflecting our current situation, rather than that of 1983, or of 1963. These assessment reports should be viewed as benchmarks by which to measure future progress rather than as stagnant pools reflecting our collective failures.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Gerald G. Newborg has been state archivist and director, State Archives and Historical Research Library, State Historical Society of North Dakota, since 1981. He began working as an archivist in 1968 at the Ohio Historical Society and served as Ohio state archivist for several years.

NOTES

1. Ernst Posner, *American State Archives* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1964). Comments on Illinois' program, pp. 98-105.
2. *North Dakota's Forgotten Heritage: Public and Private Records as Historical Documents* (Bismarck: State Historical Records Advisory Board, 1983).
3. Margaret Child, "Consultant Report: Statewide Functions and Services," in *Documenting America: Assessing the Condition of Historical Records in the States,* ed. Lisa B. Weber, (Albany, N.Y.: National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators, 1984), 51-52.

DOCUMENTING AMERICA: OBSERVATIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION

F. GERALD HAM

ABSTRACT: The author outlines how the NHPRC's state assessment reports might be transformed into planning documents with defined priorities, actors, objectives, and monitoring procedures. He critiques the most commonly recurring recommendations and establishes a three-level paradigm (state, regional, and national) to implement the best recommendations emerging from the state reports. He concludes that the state reports, if properly evaluated, could serve as building blocks for an integrated national records program.

The American taxpayer, through the largess of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), has made an investment of over $1,000,000 to examine the condition of historical records preservation activities in the states, and to suggest what can be done to improve this condition.[1] How can the taxpayer get a good return on this investment? More specifically, how can these reports be converted into planning documents? And further, how can many of their important recommendations be implemented, given the limited resources available?

In preparing these reports, the states were charged to analyze the condition of public records at both the state and local level, to examine the diverse world of historical records repositories, and to find ways to better integrate these separate areas of endeavor into a more coordinated whole. With state after state adhering to the NHPRC *Guidelines* and/or encountering many of the same problems and issues, it is not surprising that there is considerable replication of proposed remedies.

Most of these reports are comprehensive—sometimes global—in their prescriptions for rearranging the archival landscape. At least at a rhetorical level, coordination and cooperation are replacing isolation and competition. The reports are replete with recommendations for coordinated collecting programs, cooperative provision of archival services of all sorts, and unified access to information about archival holdings through common reporting programs and statewide databases. Indeed, coordinated action is a dominant theme.

But the recommendations, and there are many—Oregon leading the pack with eighty-five, while several others thought a dozen or so would suffice—do not really add up to a plan of action. Rather they represent a broad set of goals,

some of which are exceedingly general. For instance, one of the Texas board's recommendations reads: "Cooperation among manuscript repositories on a statewide basis should be encouraged especially on a regional basis."[2]

In general the reports prescribe specific remedies for public archives and records programs, but offer vaguer and more generalized suggestions for implementing statewide programs, reflecting a lack of experience with the requirements of coordinated undertakings, and with the mechanisms to put plans into action.

Some states have developed both short term and long term objectives; some reports state priorities within assessment areas; but none has developed an overall priority listing of task-specific activities.

The first job facing the state boards, in my opinion, is to transform these litanies of woe, compendiums of data (useful and otherwise), and proposals for a new archival order within the states into strategic plans of action with operational consequences.

With the wealth of raw material at hand, the boards need to go back and make some planning decisions:

1. They need to set priorities, not only within assessment sections, but for the state program as a whole.
2. They need to determine who will take responsibility for initiating action, and who will provide leadership: the board, major archival institutions, networks, or others.
3. They need to determine what objectives can be achieved with existing resources, what tasks will require additional resources and where they can expect to obtain these resources, and where resources should be reallocated from programs of lesser priority to programs of greater priority.
4. They need to make planning a continuing and evolving process by monitoring and modifying the plan at frequent intervals as circumstances dictate.

Though lack of resources, facilities, or trained personnel are impediments to "documenting America," the greatest obstacle (usually unstated but implied in many of these reports) is the dearth of statewide archival leadership. And with the heavy emphasis on coordinated and cooperative approaches to archival problems, statewide leadership is critical.

One source of leadership is the state historical records advisory boards. In 1979 I noted, optimistically, that the boards offered "the opportunity for people of diverse archival and historical interests to work together to identify major weaknesses in overall state archival programs and agree on principles and programs to correct those weaknesses."[3]

Many reports expect statewide leadership to come from the boards, particularly in planning and coordinating statewide programs. Some boards would take on consultative, clearinghouse, and educational and advocacy functions. More radically, New York, Oklahoma, Utah, Vermont, and Wisconsin would transform the board's advisory role to one of executive leadership. Wisconsin, for example, proposed that the board—in addition to monitoring the present plan and issuing revisions at two- to three-year intervals—undertake statewide projects such as a a grants-in-aid program, report annually to the governor, secure state funding to support permanent staff, and adopt a new title to reflect "its enlarged and more dynamic function."[4] Vermont's board would also "propose strategies that will ease tensions within the archival community."[5]

Yet the evidence to date suggests that, with the possible exception of New York where the board has provided notable leadership, state boards, at best, can do little more than carry out a limited role in planning and reassessment. Most state boards probably will remain "advisory" in the most elementary sense. Washington, one of the few states that has actually developed an operational plan, candidly wrote that the board "has acted only in a limited capacity as a coordinating agency and that its future status must be clarified." This board boldly—and perhaps naively—listed specific activities, actors, and time frames. But the lack of implementation, according to the state archivist, has vitiated the whole program.[6] Most boards would be well-advised to stick to the limited but crucial role of planning, and in some instances, resource development and advocacy. Program implementation in many states, particularly those with strong institutions, is best left to the professional staff of those institutions.

Many of the state reports assign leadership in program implementation to a major historical agency in the state, but emphasize that such leadership depends upon the agency's ability to modify its current roles and to adopt new ones.

According to one of the Atlanta conference recommendations in *Documenting America,* a major new role—that of resource provider—would have such institutions "emphasize the provision of coordination, technical assistance and other services throughout the state."[7] The New York State Archives, for example, plans to offer a wide range of "advisory services to historical records programs on a regional basis."[8] The departments of library and archives in Kentucky and Oklahoma want to create an extension or a field service to provide technical assistance.[9] Other state historical agencies ambitiously propose to take on leadership in implementing a coordinated statewide accessions program, to provide program and technical assistance to institutional archives programs and to smaller repositories, or to develop a statewide automated archival information network. A review of these reports makes clear that when major repositories are called on for leadership, that leadership is limited to providing coordination and services. Implied is an unwillingness on the part of these institutions to confront the issue of strong overall program leadership. This unwillingness undoubtedly reflects an awareness of political realities ("pussy footin'"). Nevertheless only the major historical agencies have the pool of personnel and other resources to devote to the direction and achievement of programs goals.

Several states—particularly where there is no single dominant institutional actor—propose program implementation through networking. The Texas Archival Network is an example. Among other things, it would create and maintain a state database of program and record information, provide advocacy and support for a statewide records program, and set up mechanisms for interinstitutional sharing of any material "in a reproducible medium."[10] As easily done as said, Louisiana proposed a formal network, which, among other things, would develop an outreach program that, "for the cost of postage and staff time...would offer referral to appropriate literature on archival procedures."[11]

The archival networks can provide an important mechanism for cooperation and resource sharing but for the most part they are untested. Most of what we now call networks are nothing but a string of regional depositories for the storage of little-used records. With one or two exceptions, networks of any sort have not prospered.

In these reports, cooperation is the cement that is supposed to bind most of these programs together but, unfortunately, it is a goal much easier to articulate than to achieve. The reports say nothing about how to translate rhetoric into action. States proposing networks must take a much more analytical look at the network concept and let the potential participants know the costs as well as the benefits. This is something none of them has done. A rigorous market survey and cost analysis, for example, may tell them that a statewide conservation center is not an economically viable program.

While cooperation may be a better way to preserve records, it has its cost. Once archivists recognize this fact, they can move on to the more fundamental planning element of program support. For the most part, archivists need to start with some of the simpler forms of cooperation; for example, many states suggested the cooperative purchase of supplies. Archivists need to share what they can. The interinstitutional loan of microforms—recommended by a few states—is a simple, but extremely useful, example with a nicely balanced *quid pro quo*. Or perhaps a major repository will provide security storage for master negative microforms, if the depositing institutions will allow researchers access to user copies. In short, archivists must plan for coordinated activities—setting priorities, assigning responsibilities, identifying funding sources—in the same way they plan for acquisition work or processing.

Implementation requires not only planning and leadership but also program support. The Louisiana suggestion that coordination can be had for the price of staff time and postage, both ignores and highlights the importance of program resources in implementing remedies. Indeed, most states (my own state of Wisconsin included) side-stepped any discussion of the fiscal implications of their many recommendations. Probably for good reason. Archives historically have not been very successful in the intramural competition for resources. Neither have they been effective advocates, skilled at marshalling constituencies in support of historical records preservation or in educating or influencing their sponsors to provide increased program resources.

When the reports did talk about funding it was primarily a suggestion that institutions return to the traditional wells—the NHPRC or National Endowment for the Humanities—or that the board set up a grant-in-aid program. For the grant-in-aid program, only Massachusetts suggested a source: corporate philanthropy. New Hampshire proposed that repositories "create more endowments by increased fund-raising activities." The Pennsylvania board planned to assist in drafting legislation to provide for facilities and program grants similar to those available to libraries through state and federal programs.[12]

Important as collateral sources of funding may be, the most significant funding sources are program sponsors. Almost no reports considered this source. Yet the major problem most administrators of archival programs face in funding is that the historical records activity usually is deeply imbedded in some larger program—a multi-faceted historical society, a state library, a department of special collections, or a state department of administration and finance. In this situation archivists must contend for scarce resources, an activity that requires a more effective job than they have done to date of influencing and educating sponsors—government officials, boards, librarians—to provide more adequate program support.

Many reports—New York is a good example—recommended programs of advocacy and public awareness, informing the citizenry of the cultural impor-

tance of historical records preservation through a variety of measures: newsletters, audio visual presentations, exhibits, and so on, all directed, of course, to influence those who control the purse. The "selling of the archives" may be a splendid notion but it has huge problems. An effective public relations program is not only very expensive, but it requires sophisticated professional staffing beyond the means and capabilities of most archives and state boards. For most states the initial drain of promotional activity on existing archival resources, even if archivists could pull it off, would leave most of them further in the archival red. Archivists do not need to reinvent the wheel or go it alone, but rather must work to get the state's larger cultural affairs apparatus to incorporate archival advocacy and public awareness as part of its program.

Finally, it should be obvious from an examination of recent budgets that archivists will have to explore ways to redeploy available resources. Indeed, in the area of program support, one goal of these self-assessments was to explore ways to accomplish program objectives with resources at hand; to make choices in the allocation of resources; to do more with less. Reallocating existing resources may be the most realistic and immediate option and, as such, demands much more attention. The persistent search for cooperative solutions is a recognition of this fact. Yet most state boards, like kids at Christmas, simply asked Santa to bring a pony.

Wise decision-making in the use of available resources can ameliorate to some degree the larger problem of program support. In many ways these reports would have the archival community bite off more than it can or, indeed, needs to chew. One dramatic case in point is the multitude of programs of technical and program assistance, workshops, and other training opportunities for the thousands of local historical repositories that, at best, are barely capable of providing even the most rudimentary maintenance of and access to their holdings. Is it not better to concentrate limited resources on the development and improvement of major repository programs than to concentrate resources on those small repositories some states refer to as the "have nots."

Many state boards think so. Arkansas urged "marginal repositories to consolidate or eliminate archival functions."[13] Nevada recommended that such repositories transfer their collections to local libraries, several of whom, according to the report, have already demonstrated "the effectiveness of this strategy."[14] Numerous states—Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Massachusetts and Delaware—concurred that if repositories cannot properly provide for the long-term preservation of material they should transfer their collections to institutions that can. This is a radical strategy fraught with social and political repercussions. In some ways it runs counter to the idea of building a broader constituency for archives. A parallel strategy might be to educate local groups as to what functions are appropriate to their resources. One objective that could be accomplished, with cost savings, is better preservation of materials through centralized storage and access.

In addition to more rigorously defining a workable program for the universe of repositories, boards need to identify unnecessary replication of programs, a point forcefully made by Margaret Child in *Documenting America*. Indeed, by mainly limiting the implementation of these reports to intrastate resources and mechanisms, the boards have imposed a burden upon themselves that they need not bear. Again they have bitten off more than they need to chew. It should be

obvious upon reflection that many proposed remedies are not really appropriate for implementation at the state level—indeed, that the state is not the natural arena for all archival activity. Many remedies are impeded by state boundaries and can only be effective when applied in a larger regional, national, or professional framework.[15]

The education recommendations provide an example. Most, if not all, reports recommended educational and training programs as a universal solvent for archival problems. Many reports called upon the state's higher education system to offer improved graduate training in archives in order to insure a sufficient pool of trained professionals. However, no report attempted to determine whether the current output of graduate archivists is sufficient. But the real point is that graduate education is not a problem every state has to solve. Part of the remedy is national—for the profession to set standards and to see that graduates meet those standards. For the states, the more appropriate remedy is to make sure employment requirements assure the hiring only of qualified archivists—a real problem in many states, though no report mentioned it.

Technical and program standards are another example of the limitations of the state context. One report called for the development of technical standards for microfilming; still another wanted institutional archival standards, akin to those developed by the museum profession. These and other standards already exist; the problem in many areas is not the development of standards, but rather their implementation within a given state through formal adoption and continued monitoring. Indeed, if all the state recommendations were carried out, we might easily have, in addition to some forty programs in graduate archival education, scores of unnecessary manuals on records management and conservation as well as audio-visual presentations on the value of our documentary heritage *ad nauseam*. What a horrendous waste of limited archival talent and resources.

Archivists can achieve some of the recommendations in these reports more easily if they work more effectively with allied professions. In addition to integrating advocacy and public awareness with larger cultural affairs efforts mentioned above, public records legislation offers another example where such cooperation might produce results. No fewer than twelve boards call for a revision of state statutes governing public records and the archives-records program. Here is a situation where the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators, the professional organization of state archivists, should be working with the influential Council of State Governments to develop model laws and should use the backing of the council to get them passed.

Some states propose common solutions with our close allies, librarians. Mississippi proposes that the state library association and the Society of Mississippi Archivists form a common clearinghouse on library-archives concerns while the Hawaii board looks to the state library association as the major vehicle for carrying out the board's limited programs.[16]

Similarly, archivists must make use of cooperative institutional arrangements. Illinois, for example, hopes archival repositories will soon be included in the library-based Illinois Cooperative Conservation Project. A few states—Nevada and Utah are two—suggest that archives in their states plug into existing bibliographic networks in order to exploit the advantages of a ready-made communications system.[17]

Finally, it is important that we use both institutional and professional structures in such developing areas as photographic film and magnetic tape conservation, the electronic storage of information, and bibliographic networking. This will allow archivists as a profession, as well as archival repositories, to be more informed of advances in information science and management and to work together with professionals in these fields to develop archival applications.

To repeat: boards need to identify more precisely those mechanisms, cooperative structures, institutional and professional arrangements, and geographic levels most appropriate for implementation. Some advisory boards need help in archival planning—help that should be provided by a planning consultancy within the NHPRC.

A planning consultant might recommend analysis of archival programs by the basic functions of acquisition, preservation, and use rather than, as in current reports, by provenance: state archives, local records, and historical records repositories. Such an examination, I believe, would give sharper focus to common program elements, needs, and solutions. For example, while most reports call for coordinated interinstitutional collecting to provide a more comprehensive record, no report considered the public record—state and local—in its universe. Yet the public record forms an essential part of the larger documentary record, and may document some activities so thoroughly that collecting similar information in the private sector would be redundant. This failure is evident in other areas. Mississippi, for example, wisely proposes the interinstitutional loan of microfilm copies of private records and papers. It also proposes a regional center for the storage of local government records on microfilm.[18] But the Mississippi report does not consider how simple it would be to connect the two systems. This type of functional integration within the reports should bring basic priorities into much sharper focus by making program interrelationships more obvious.

These reports are important also as components—building blocks—for a national records program. They identify key needs that can best be implemented within a larger regional or national framework. They underscore the fact that all planning does not proceed upward from the state level but takes place within a variety of contexts. These reports could be used concurrently at three different levels and directed therefore to different audiences, interests, and priorities.

The first level of use is within the state. Here programs should address the elemental needs expressed by many institutions such as public libraries, business corporations, and college archives. The major archival institutions in the state should take a leadership role, providing information, program and technical assistance, and, if possible, contract use of service center facilities. While the participating repositories, individually, might not have great immediate influence on a national records program, their cumulative effort, in time, would be enormous. Such a program would introduce isolated repositories to cooperation and lay the groundwork for further program integration. It would enable local repositories to buy into a larger program at a very basic and practical level.

The second level of this paradigm is regional. It would allow groups with common interests to confront problems too large, or complex, or otherwise inappropriate to be handled by individual repositories, especially where solutions should cross state boundaries. One such solution is cooperative conservation and the New England Documents Conservation Center is a superb

example of its application. But conservation is only one of many issues that need to be addressed, not necessarily on a profession-wide basis, by those to whom it is a priority.

At the third level of planning and implementation—national—we need to address issues and activities that are important to the entire archival enterprise. For example, while it is important, as many reports recommend, that states develop mechanisms for reporting repository accessions, the ultimate goal of such programs should be to make this information available nationally as well as statewide. Pennsylvania sees its database as "a node in a national information system for archival control."[19] Our goal should be a national database of information about holdings; not fifty separate state bibliographic databases. A landmark move in this direction is the increasing adoption of the USMARC format for archival and manuscripts control (AMC), a standard for the communication of information on archival holdings.

A similar process, based on the commonalties of needs and solutions recommended in these reports, should be repeated in several other areas, particularly in appraisal and collection development and sharing. New York, New Jersey, and Washington, for example, want to make microfilm copies and other easily reproducible formats available for interinstitutional loan within the state. It certainly cannot be a difficult step to form a consortium of such states and to make such material available nationally through a combined catalog.

Many remedies listed in the reports are the natural province of national organizations that sponsor meetings, seminars and workshops, and that publish professional literature. Others are the province of national grant-making agencies and private foundations that give fiscal encouragement for profession-wide planning and other program initiatives, or that fund experimental projects that have a potential impact upon the entire profession. At this level the profession sets standards, federal granting agencies and private foundations facilitate research and development, and the repositories make commitments and implement programs.

It is no accident that these reports place such great emphasis on various forms of communication. For example, the fifty-third of Utah's sixty recommendations notes: "There is a need for institutions to communicate with each other."[20] Implementation requires that archivists have ready access to information both for decision-making and for program and technical assistance. In many areas of archival endeavor there is no paucity of information: project reports on model programs, conservation guidelines and manuals, and records management procedures of all sorts. But there is a lack of awareness of this information, and it must be a major concern, for report after report calls for clearinghouses for everything from record disposal practices to archival thefts. Some states would give the boards a clearinghouse role—a poor idea; others would utilize the major state archival institution—a much better idea.

The real problem is the fragmented and unstructured ways archivists communicate information. One of the more important Atlanta conference recommendations was for a national clearinghouse "to identify, obtain and make available...materials of broad utility."[21] The need is still unmet. Yet too many people lack even basic research skills for locating the information sources they need. For them no number of newsletters, clearinghouses, abstracting programs, or central databases will solve the problem.

These reports, for all their many shortcomings and "canned" or derivative recommendations, are a quantum leap forward from the early 1970s "Statements of Needs and Preferred Approaches," which I characterized as "little more than archival laundry lists." The reports mark a real advance in the process of developing cooperative intrastate archival planning. They represent ore to be refined. They can be transformed into state, regional, and national plans if they are subjected to a critique beyond that contained in *Documenting America*. Archival leaders in each state must reexamine their own report within the broader context of these studies and identify which of their needs stem from common national and regional interests and should be solved jointly, and which stem from particular circumstances and demand a localized solution. Only then will they be able to better tailor their plan to their own conditions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: F. Gerald Ham retired in November 1989 from his position as state archivist at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. A former president of the Society of American Archivists and one of the leading archival educators in the United States, Ham is the author of many influential articles on archival theory and practice. He served as consultant to Kansas, North Dakota, and New York as part of their NHPRC-funded state historical records assessments.

NOTES

1. For a critical and more detailed examination of the assessment process and results in the Midwest see Virginia Stewart, "Archives in the Midwest: Assessments and Prospects," *Midwestern Archivist* 10, no. 1 (1985): 5-18. A major analysis of the program nationwide is provided by *Documenting America: Assessing the Condition of Historical Records in the States,* ed. Lisa B. Weber, (Albany, N.Y.: National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators, 1984).
2. *Texas Historical Records Needs Survey and Assessment Project. Final Report* (1985), 6.
3. F. Gerald Ham, "The NHPRC's Records Program and the Development of Statewide Archival Planning," *American Archivist* 43 (Winter 1980): 41.
4. *Planning to Preserve Wisconsin's History: The Archival Perspective* (1983), 27-28.
5. *Historical Records in Vermont: An Assessment Report* (1985), 27.
6. *Preserving Washington's Records: A Plan for the State's Second Century* (1984); telephone conversation with the author, 16 September 1986.
7. *Documenting America,* 66.
8. New York, *Towards A Useable Past: Historical Records in the Empire State* (1984).
9. Kentucky, *Historical Records Needs Assessment: Final Report* (1983), 52; *Preserving Today's Records for Tomorrow's Use: A Mandate for Action* (Oklahoma City, 1985), 12.
10. Texas, 7.
11. *Louisiana Historical Records Assessment Project: Final Report* ("near final draft," 1986), 80.
12. *Historical Records in Massachusetts: Prospects, Programs and Plans* (1983), 16ff.; *New Hampshire Historical Records Assessment and Reporting Project: Final Report* (1984), 79; *Historical Records in Pennsylvania: An Assessment Report* (1983), 236.
13. *Historical Records of Arkansas* (1984), 11.
14. *Preserving Nevada's Documentary Heritage* (1985), 8.
15. *Documenting America,* 51-52, 55.
16. *The Management and Preservation of Mississippi's Historical Records: Problems and Potential* (1982), vol. 1, 42; *Hawaii's Historical Records Repositories Survey, Assessment and Recommendations for NHPRC* (1982), 7, 49.

17. *Illinois Historical Records Advisory Board. State-Wide Historical Records Needs Survey and Assessment Project: Final Report, 1982,* 10; Nevada, 12; *Utah Records Needs Assessment Project* (1985), 27.
18. Mississippi, 42.
19. Pennsylvania, 240.
20. Utah, 33.
21. *Documenting America,* 60.
22. Ham, 41.

BOOK REVIEWS

Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States, second edition. National Historical Publications and Records Commission. New York: Oryx Press, 1988. 853 pp. Hardcover. $55.

In 1988, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) released a long-awaited revision of its 1978 *Directory.* The first edition was an ambitious compilation of information about U.S. repositories for researchers and archivists and filled an important need. The second edition updates or deletes some past entries and contains 1,400 new listings. Unfortunately, time has surpassed the information contained in the *Directory* and substantially reduced its usefulness.

NHPRC anticipated the first *Directory*'s obsolescence and embarked to produce a second edition in the 1980s, but production was hampered by a reduction of the directory staff in 1981 as part of overall federal budget cuts. The remaining staff reordered priorities, and emphasized "basic, accurate data." Staff recanvassed responding institutions in 1983. In early 1986, telephone numbers were updated and checked against other directories. Minor revisions sent in by repositories were ignored in order to get the *Directory* completed. Revision of the data was cumbersome because it relied on SPINDEX, which did not allow for interactive editing of entries.

Anyone attempting to produce a repository guide lives with the expectation that the usefulness of the guide will be greatly diminished within three years. Unfortunately, by the time the NHPRC *Directory* was released, it was at least two years out of date, and it shows. A sample of Minnesota repositories demonstrates how quickly even the archives business can change. The Southeast Minnesota Historical Center is no longer at St. Mary's College, and its records were transferred to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1987. All of the phone numbers for the repositories at the University of Minnesota have changed. The Iron Range Research Center, which received an NHPRC grant in 1984, is not listed, nor is the Charles Babbage Institute. Time, not the authors, is largely to be blamed for this misinformation . Although there are some oddities (such as the omission of the Federal Archives and Records Center in Suitland, Maryland), the accuracy of the *Directory* is good for the time in which it was compiled. Yet, the overall consequence for researchers is that the time-sensitive data in the *Directory* will be a source of frustration, not information.

The second edition follows nearly the same format of the first. The *Directory* is arranged alphabetically by state, then by city, and by repository. I find this arrangement awkward, although it does work moderately well for researchers interested in local history. However, it ignores important institutional connections. Archival repositories at the University of Minnesota happen to be located in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, and it is annoying to

check both entries. I prefer the institutional arrangement in works like the *Directory of Special Libraries & Information Centers*. A repository index is provided at the end of the volume for those who are more patient about the use of reference works. The index provides entries for repositories under their common names (e.g., Yerkes Observatory) as well as their hierarchical names (e.g., University of Chicago, Yerkes Observatory). This is a nice feature.

The subject index has grown in size from the first edition, but it has not grown in usefulness. Subject terms were adapted from the language of the entries, and the result is an extremely uneven treatment of subjects in the index. Users should not expect subject headings to include all repositories with significant collections for any one term. For example, the only Wisconsin repository listed under the term "peace" is Marquette University, which should come as a surprise to those who have used social action collections at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Moreover, there is no logic to the entries under many subject subdivisions. The Social Welfare History Archives is listed under "Social Welfare—Agencies" but not "Social Welfare—Organizations" or "Social Welfare." The Immigration History Research Center is listed only in subdivisions for Europe, Germany, and the Middle East under the heading "Immigration and Emigration." This is, at best, a misrepresentation of the collecting area of an important repository on immigration. Finally, some broad topics are rendered useless by the large number of entries listed under them. There are approximately nine hundred entries under the term "women." I would think that most users would pass over such broad terms and proceed directly to the subdivisions.

NHPRC had hoped that the *Directory* would not only be embraced by researchers, but by archivists and patrons as well. Archivists interested in becoming less isolationist might use the *Directory* to craft cooperative collecting projects or create reference ties with allied repositories. Donors might use the *Directory* to "determine which institutions are most appropriate to receive certain materials." With the idiosyncrasies of the subject index and the obsolete information, this work cannot reliably be used to any of those ends. The need is still there, but such a volume must be produced in a timely fashion with a first-rate index.

One method of avoiding the automatic obsolescence of repository information would be to compile the data in national networks. The Research Libraries Group has discussed including repository information in the RLIN databases, but no action has been taken to date. The beauty of this potential system is that each member repository could alter data as it was superseded. The disadvantage is that its greatest use will come from member archivists; it is not nearly as accessible as a published volume generally available to other archivists, researchers, and donors. But that could change, and NHPRC could effect the change. A 1979 review of the first *Directory* made the same point, noting that a commitment to a system (at that time, SPINDEX) that "prints guides, but cannot be searched on-line, is folly."

Bruce H. Bruemmer
Charles Babbage Institute

Strengthening New York's Historical Records Programs: A Self-Study Guide. New York State Archives and Records Administration, 1989. 157 pp. Glossary. Paper. Available from the State Archives and Records Administration, Cultural Education Center, Room 10A75, Albany, NY 12230.

Do not be misled by the title of this book. Although it was published by the New York State Archives and Records Administration specifically for use by historical records repositories in that state, there is much in the volume that repositories of all types, regardless of their location, will find useful. The *Guide* is designed to be used by records officers and administrators who seek ways to improve the management and administration of their holdings.

The publication is divided into six sections: Introduction, Essential Elements of Historical Records Repository Programs, Fund-Raising, Cooperative Approaches for Administering New York's Historical Records, Where to Turn for More Help, and a Glossary of Terms. The title of the volume bills it as a "Self-Study Guide," and it is just that. Sections two through four each are subdivided into relevant topical discussions followed by numerous self-study questions that allow readers to see how their programs measure up to an ideal (hypothetical) repository.

Section two, "Essential Elements of Historical Records Programs," is the longest and probably the most useful section of the *Guide*. Twenty-three essential elements have been identified as being "necessary for minimally acceptable historical records programs." (p. 3) These elements cover general administration of a repository as well as identifying and preserving historical records, making them accessible, and advocating a historical records program. The format of this section is particularly helpful. Each element is treated separately with a definition followed by the purpose of the element and its benefits. Most useful are "examples and explications" that accompany each element. For both nascent and well-established repositories the examples provide reassurance that there is a right way to do things and that other repositories are working to standardize various practices.

Section three of the *Guide* covers fundraising. Nothing particularly new is introduced here, though it should be noted that the emphasis is on raising money from private sources rather than the public agencies that usually come to mind. The self-study questions in this section are excellent; answering them provides a systematic approach to the enhancement of meager internal budgets from external sources.

The last of the three substantive self-study sections covers cooperation and how that factor in appraisal, preservation, reference, etc., will allow tight budgets to be stretched even further. Like the previous section, this one is useful because it provides an organizational framework that records officers can work with in order to encourage cooperation.

This volume is important on two levels. On the day-to-day level, the answers to these self-study questions provide archivists and other records administrators with a useful measure of their work. They will reveal the strengths and weaknesses in a given program and provide direction for the repository. On another level this guide could, and hopefully will, be illuminating to the administrators to whom records officers report. Many of those administrators have only the vaguest notion of what a records program is and what caretakers of those

records do. Perhaps this guide will be a useful way to inform them of the vital role played by historical records programs and the employees that make them work.

Richard Cox (now with the University of Pittsburgh School of Library and Information Science) wrote the majority of this book. A professional fundraiser, Judy Hohmann, wrote the section on that topic. Together they have fashioned a useful evaluative tool. For the experienced archivist there is little new in the *Guide,* but that is not the point. What the book does provide is a conceptual framework that allows its users to measure the effectiveness of their programs. In a systematic way it asks the questions that we intuitively understand need to be answered. It is a well written and logically arranged volume that will be useful to a variety of staff members at all types of historical records repositories.

Tim Cary
University of Wisconsin, River Falls

A Manual for Small Archives. Association of British Columbia Archivists, Small Archives Committee. Burnaby, B.C.: Association of British Columbia Archivists, 1988. Index. 213 pp. Looseleaf in binder. Available from the Society of American Archivists: $40 to members, $45 to nonmembers.

Despite its title, this is *not* a manual for small archives. As the preface explains, "it is designed to help persons in small archives, with limited access to training, with few employees, with restricted finances and time. It attempts to explain archival principles and practices, offer guidelines and suggestions for various archival activities, and provide information on available resources." The *Manual* therefore compounds, sadly, the stereotype of archivists in small repositories as *ipso facto* nonprofessional. Judged as a primer for untrained custodians of archives and manuscripts collections, however, the *Manual* remains badly flawed and even redundant.

The work comes in a three-ring binder, with chapters marked by tabbed dividers. The binding is problematic (pages tear as they snag on the binder rings), but does permit easy location of chapters, and the book is well indexed—important features because its organization is somewhat confusing. Chapters one and two cover starting an archives, and locating and making use of resources. The next four sections are on archival functions: appraisal and accessioning, organization/arrangement, description, and conservation. Then come five chapters that refer to types of materials most commonly found in archives: textual records, visual records, maps and architectural drawings, sound recordings, and "other." Back to functions—records management, reference—a chapter on "computers," appendices consisting of a glossary of archival terms and lists of suppliers, and a bibliography.

The argument presented in the introduction notwithstanding, the organization of the manual involves a great deal of useless repetition. The chapters on types of records all refer the reader to the functional chapters, and the abbreviated arrangement and description discussion within the record type chapters are virtually identical (including the uniform omission of "women" and "families"

from the suggested subject authority list). In any event, why are all the functional chapters not grouped together—is reference indeed (as the chapter order implies) a secondary activity?

The *Manual* makes some other curious judgments about content selection. "Some archival issues, including conservation techniques such as deacidification or fumigation and appraisal activities such as weeding or sampling, are beyond the scope of this manual. Anything less than a complete analysis would be misleading and a disservice to the reader." Such a statement is at least debatable as regards weeding and sampling which, for a physically small archives, are crucial issues. And the *Manual* commits the kind of disservice it seeks to avoid in discussing conservation of photos, appraisal (it mentions administrative value, but not evidential or informational value), and access restrictions. On the other hand the book does not discuss problems arising out of the undocumented backlog found in many small archives; the very substantial issue of how to arrange and describe the almost inevitable flood of single item accessions; copyright in relation to a collection's incoming letters; or the original negative as the "archival" photographic image.

The *Manual* does provide many useful caveats and encouragements to nonprofessional archivists. It is written in a highly accessible style. The sample forms are generally excellent. And most of the content is perfectly sound. But for a book that may be the only education received by nonprofessional archivists, the lapses and mistakes that do occur are more significant than they might otherwise be. And as the bibliography makes clear, the *Manual* is based heavily on SAA's basic manual series, with relatively few dramatic updates. The question arises, then, whether the untrained curator would not be better off simply purchasing the SAA manuals. The answer is probably yes.

Mark A. Greene
Minnesota Historical Society

"Audio Preservation: A Planning Study," Final Performance Report, NEH Grant PS-20021-86. Compiled by the Associated Audio Archives Committee, Association for Recorded Sound Collections. 1988. 860 pp. Bibliography, appendixes. Looseleaf. $42.95. Available from Elwood McKee, 118 Monroe St. #610, Rockville, MD 20850. Check payable to Association for Recorded Sound Collections.

During 1986 and 1987, the Associated Audio Archives Committee of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections carried out a project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, to gather information about the conservation, preservation, and restoration of archival sound recordings. The project culminated in this 860-page final report, which includes the methodology, findings, and recommendations of the investigators as well as an abundance of general information on audio archives and preservation not previously available in a single reference work.

The six investigators on the project team gathered much of their data from detailed questionnaires completed by thirty-eight major U.S. and foreign sound

archives. The report contains the raw data collected from the questionnaires as well as reports and recommendations of the investigators. Topics discussed in the report include storage and handling, technical aspects of audio preservation; documentation (of artifacts, preservation transfer copies, etc.), disaster planning, and legal issues. The report also includes an enormous bibliography, a glossary of terms, lists of standards, and, perhaps most importantly, recommendations for future research in this field.

Since little research has been done to date on the subject of audio preservation, the value of the report lies as much in the many gaps and needs that it exposes as in the compilations of "recommended current practices" that it puts forward. Archivists will undoubtedly find disturbing the current weaknesses relating to preservation of archival audio materials.

The investigators found a "clear and urgent need to preserve our surviving heritage of sound recordings," but no organized plan or guidelines for such preservation. Important elements that the researchers found missing include a proven archival medium for preserving the sonic content in preservation transfer copies, and agreement on re-recording standards and documentation. Other weaknesses include a lack of research and standards on basic storage and handling practices for audio materials, and a lack of educational opportunities and training programs for audio archivists and technicians. The report presents numerous topics for future research as well as proposed guidelines for establishing preservation priorities.

This report is intended by the writers to be a working draft rather than a polished "handbook" or guide to audio archives. It is therefore a rather complex document. From a practical standpoint most "hands-on" archivists will find certain portions of the report more useful than others. The sections relating to storage and handling, establishing preservation goals and priorities, use of the MARC AMC format for noncommercial recordings, legal aspects, and education and training for sound archivists will be especially useful. Some contributions of the investigators include lists of "current recommended practices," or descriptions of procedures and policies of major sound archives. The 325-page bibliography and the glossary of audio-related terms are outstanding resources.

This report is a welcome addition to the small body of literature available on audio archives, one that belongs on the bookshelf of every archivist who has custody of audio materials.

Christopher Ann Paton
Special Collections Department
Georgia State University

The High Technology Company: A Historical Research and Archival Guide. By Bruce H. Bruemmer and Sheldon Hochheiser. Minneapolis, Minn.: Charles Babbage Institute, University of Minnesota, 1989. 131 pp. Illustrations, appendixes. Paper. Available from the Society of American Archivists: $10 to member, $15 to nonmembers.

The High Technology Company grew out of the concern of the Charles Babbage Institute (CBI) over the difficulty historians and archivists have in doc-

umenting the large high-tech companies. These companies are driven by rapidly changing technology, rely heavily on research and development, and generate a large amount of technical records. CBI's experience showed a clear need for a more detailed model of the organization and practices of high-tech businesses to prepare the archivist or historian faced with the task of preserving the history of these companies. The guide presents a generic description of industrial activity in a high-tech environment and introduces a technique called a documentary probe for obtaining general historical and documentary information about the development of specific products in the industry.

In the guide, seven business functions are analyzed: planning, basic research, research and development, production, marketing, sales, and product support. Legal, financial, and other support services are also covered but in a more cursory manner.

The discussion of each of the seven functions is divided into three sections. The first section presents an overview of the function and describes the activities within it. The second section is a description of documentation typically generated by the activity. The third section provides additional observations on the difficulties in documenting these industrial activities and assesses the historical value of the records generated within each function. Real-life examples from high-tech industries, primarily the Control Data Corporation, are used throughout the work to illustrate the points being made.

The final part of the guide describes the process of conducting what is called a documentary probe and illustrates the technique with several case studies of products developed by the Control Data Corporation. The probe technique originated with work done by the American Institute of Physics at the Department of Energy Laboratories. As defined by the authors a documentary probe is a product study that generates diverse historical, organizational, and documentary information from all facets of a company to aid in the selection of historically valuable records. This involves using prior research, interviews, records surveys, and the descriptions of industrial activity covered in the first part of the guide.

Don't be scared off by the emphasis on high-tech companies. The guide is a basic, very readable introduction to the way any business operates and the documents it creates. Anyone involved with business records will find this guide helpful, although it has the most to offer for the archivist or historian just beginning to come to terms with documenting business organizations.

The section on documentary probes, however, should generate continued discussion within the profession as to their usefulness and application in documenting other businesses. The authors promote the use of the probe technique because they believe that the traditional approach to documenting a company beginning with a records survey does not work with high-technology industries that create voluminous records and have products with short life spans. The primary weakness of surveying, in their opinion, is that it is focused first on extant records, not on historical issues. Probes reverse that emphasis by developing a picture of what should be documented even before records are examined.

When assessing the validity of the probe technique one has to keep in mind the intended audience of the guide—historians and archivists on the outside of a particular corporation seeking to preserve the history of a specific product or development within that corporation. The documentary probe may be less use-

ful to the corporate archivist faced with the long term organization and preservation of the records of a company. It also remains to be seen how this approach applies to companies other than product-oriented high-technology firms.

Edward Rider
Procter & Gamble Archives

Managing Business Archives. Edited by Colleen Pritchard. Canberra, Australia: Australian Society of Archivists Incorporated, 1987. 56 pp. Paper. Available from the Society of American Archivists: $10.00 to members, $12.00 to non-members.

This is a compilation of papers on the basics of business archives that were presented at a 1986 seminar conducted jointly with the NSW Special Libraries Section of Australia and the Australian Society of Archivists. The seminar was intended to address the Australian business community's growing need to know how to care for and preserve their institutions' archives. Many of the basics of starting archives and caring for them were discussed, including records appraisal, arrangement and description, and conservation techniques, as were practical tips on how to sell the idea of an archives program to management and how to get one started.

The keynote address cites the advantages and uses of corporate archives and rightfully points out that the most extensive use of business archives is in the area of public relations.

The appraisal section is quite general, emphasizing "that a considered, well researched appraisal decision is infinitely preferable to leaving these decisions to chance." It also stresses the differences between archives and libraries, the need for very close relationships between archivists and records managers, and the need to know the organization's structure, function, and administrative history in order to make good appraisal decisions. A records appraisal checklist is included, which could be useful; but the list is merely a guideline, a fact that should have been made clearer.

The arrangement and description paper is well done and is hedged by the statement that no overall classification scheme can possibly be applied to all the various records in any one archives. A section dealing with numerical coding systems for records groups, series, etc., is well-documented and instructive. Author Pemberton's "Five Points to Remember in Creating Numbering Systems" is concise and straightforward.

The two papers, "Selling the Idea of a Business Archives Programme" and "How to Make a Start and Where to Find Help" are well done although they often overlap, a problem when papers written independently are brought together in book format. Also, these two papers are positioned at the end of the volume, which seems illogical. They might have been more appropriate immediately after the introduction. The sections outlining the "selling factors for the archival sales person" and the "activities needed to sell the idea of an archives" were instructive and underlined the importance of the archivist's credibility, visibility, and empathy with management's position when planning and selling the concept.

Because most of these papers were presented by and to Australians, those dealing with appraisal of legal records (Australian law) and archival agencies have their limitations for American audiences. The balance of the information contained in these, however, is general enough so that it is quite applicable to institutions outside Australia.

Managing Business Archives is a good supplement to other resources in the field, including business archives workshops, SAA basic manuals for beginning archivists, and visits to established business archives and local historical societies.

Jean Toll
General Mills, Inc.