BOOK REVIEWS

Keepers of Our Past: Local Historical Writing in the United States, 1820s-1930s. By David J. Russo. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988. 281 pp. Preface, notes, bibliography, and index. Hardcover. $39.95.

In *Families and Communities: A New View of American History* (Nashville, 1974) David J. Russo argued that American history had been written too long from the national perspective, ignoring the vastly rich domain of local history, and that amateurs and professional historians need to be reunited so that historical writing can once again have the broad appeal it had in the nineteenth century. In many respects *Keepers of Our Past: Local Historical Writing in the United States, 1820s-1930s* carries forward the same two arguments, and Russo remains the champion of the amateurs and gentleman-scholars. Russo reasons that history written by the amateurs dominated the scene until 1930 and that academic historians "are of quite recent origin as a species, given the whole span of such writing since North America was first settled by European immigrants" (p. xii).

This book is divided into four parts, covering twelve chapters, plus an introduction, conclusion, notes, and bibliography. Russo begins by providing an overview of local historical writing from the 1820s to the 1930s. Part one focuses on "The Early Antiquarians"—from the local historians of New England, who largely wrote from a colony-wide perspective, to Philadelphia's John F. Watson, considered by many "the pioneer in antiquarian research." The chapter on Watson is quite useful, but one must question why Russo neglects Samuel Hazard or others like him. Russo is clearly fascinated by the grass roots work of these amateur historians, who not only wrote about local people, places, and happenings and preserved evidence of the American past, but also were largely responsible for the founding of historical societies, archives, and museums.

In part two, entitled "The Later Antiquarians," the author examines the official local chroniclers—the town and city historians who left a record of the growth and urbanization of the United States. George Sheldon's history of Deerfield, Massachusetts, is a case in point. J. Thomas Scharf is also singled out as an "impresario of antiquarian endeavor" and as one of the more notable antiquarian editors (p. 145). Part three, entitled "Formulaic Local History," constitutes a review of local historical writing from three perspectives—as a publishing enterprise, as an editorial project, and as a contribution to historical literature.

In "The Coming of the Academics" (part four), Russo explores the question of amateur versus academic historical writing. He argues that the dominant academic perspective, with its commitment to concepts, models, processes, and patterns, is in danger of mistaking mental constructs for social reality. Russo concludes that, since the 1960s, academic historians have lost their "connected-

ness" with the amateurs and historical societies and have lost sight of real people, communities, and events. He shows the line between academic and amateur is no longer blurred and that joint efforts in running historical associations and societies are a shadow of what they were between 1930 and 1960. Not only have credentials and historical approaches begun to mean something but also the amateurs' commitment to historical writing "as end in itself" has become unacceptable in academic circles. Scholarly local history is no longer studied for the history of the locality itself but rather for the light it can shed on the history of the United States. According to Russo, once academics began borrowing techniques and methods from the social sciences, amateurs and scholars no longer shared a descriptive language.

There is no denying that local history lacks the broad appeal it had in the nineteenth century. The reasons behind the decline of the antiquarian tradition are nicely detailed by Russo. While the author hopes that some day historical inquiry can become "whole again," he does not chart a course for this to happen. Neither does he reveal how present-day amateurs can be more inclusive and less inclined to engage in ancestor worship and parochial excess. That is not to say that problems do not exist with the new "local history" of academicians. Russo is right: generalizations are often too sweeping and "statistical averages as well as generalized descriptions may conjure up fictionalized portraits" (p. 212). Whether the new amateurs of the 1980s can be analytical and correct the weaknesses of the academics remains to be seen.

All in all, this is a commendable study that should be of value to archivists and manuscript curators interested in the history of local historical writing. To be sure, applied historians would like to know more about the local sources used by the amateurs or the varieties of documentation. For example, how was it that J. Thomas Scharf and his amateur assistants solicited information from public officials and gained access to local archival sources? There are some occasional lapses with names: Israel Daniel Rupp is not Rapp (p. 135); Boyd Crumvine is not Curnvime (p. 139); and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin is not the Wisconsin Historical Society (p. 142), only to mention a few. Finally, Russo must appreciate that archivists expect to be very much involved in the common quest "to promote the utility of history in society through common practice."

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Managing Archives and Archival Institutions. Edited by James Gregory Bradsher. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. 304 pp. Index, bibliography. Hardcover. $45.00.

Eighteen authors have combined to produce a volume that fairly well represents the state of the archival art, particularly as it exists in the United States. Too many to name here, they and author/editor James Gregory Bradsher are to be commended for their brief and lucid expositions. Considering that eleven of the contributors are employed by the (U.S.) National Archives and

Records Administration and three others by federal or quasi-federal institutions, that only three work primarily with nongovernment materials, and that all but one are located on the East Coast, the book does surprisingly well at being "broad enough to apply to all types of archival institutions and custodians of archival materials."

Managing Archives covers the traditional topics such as "Appraisal and Disposition" (Maygene F. Daniels) and "Arrangement and Description" (Sharon Gibbs Thibodeau). Although sound, these chapters do not hint at the amount of discussion and even change going on in such key activities. For instance, the USMARC AMC format—probably the most significant development in archival description in decades—is not mentioned in the section on arrangement and description, but only in the context of "New Automation Techniques" (Bruce I. Ambacher).

Less traditional in a book of this sort are chapters such as "History of Archives Administration" (Bradsher and Michele F. Pacifico) and "Archival Ethics" (Karen Benedict). The history is succinct and interesting. "Ethics" is a current buzz-word, which does not diminish the value of including it in a work of this sort. It is important to bring increased attention to the subject, as Benedict urges.

There is an emphasis on comprehensive preservation planning rather than on item treatments, a broad look at archival considerations and procedures to get a grip on information that is in machine-readable form, and an up-to-date look at technologies such as optical character recognition and artificial intelligence. The corresponding chapters, by Norvell M. M. Jones and Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, Ambacher, and Thomas A. Weir respectively, are timely and helpful without being too generalized or too detailed.

"Archival Management" by Michael J. Kurtz and "Archival Effectiveness" by Bradsher are somewhat duplicative and should have been combined. It may be possible to apply Kurtz's prescriptions to a one-person archives, but it will take some effort to overcome the feeling that his experience is in a *BIG* institution. Discussing continuing education for staff, for example, he states that "a coordinator is needed to identify training opportunities and organize in-house and rotational assignments." Bradsher might have talked about what archival effectiveness *is*, and how to measure it. In neither of these sections is there a mention of users of archives. Surely to manage well and be effective we must pay attention to that sadly neglected sector.

One wonders exactly what the audience for *Managing Archives* will be. The editor prefaces the work by saying that space limitations forced a concentration on "major theories, principles, practices, issues, problems, and challenges." One presumes the old hands will not find much new here; newcomers and outside observers will get an idea of "what to" but usually not "how to." (John A. Dwyer's "Cartographic and Architectural Archives" is an excellent example of addressing why, what, and how.) There is generally too much precept and not enough example. An excellent bibliography will help readers fill in gaps or extend their learning.

Bradsher (p. xiv) cites the lack of a book-length work "providing the most up-to-date information relating to all aspects of archives administration and providing bibliographic citations to the most recent professional literature." A footnote mentions *Keeping Archives* (edited by Ann Pederson and published by the

Australian Society of Archives Inc., Sydney, 1987) as "an exception." *Keeping Archives* is a formidable competitor to *Managing Archives*. Archivists probably should own both, but *Keeping Archives* covers many topics not covered in the other (micrographics, for instance) and is chock full of lists, standards, checklists, forms, and examples.

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Public Accountability and Our Documentary Heritage: The Indiana Access to Public Records Law. By J. Thomas Brown. Indianapolis: Society of Indiana Archivists, 1988. 23 pp. Paper. $4.00 ($2.00 for SIA members). Available from Thomas Krasean, Society of Indiana Archivists, Indiana Historical Society, 315 W. Ohio Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202.

What are the public records? Who has authority for retaining and destroying them? What types of information are restricted? What are the legal aspects of such basic archival functions as accession and reference? These are the kinds of questions dealt with in this manual, the third in a series published by the Society of Indiana Archivists dealing with issues of archives administration.

The passage in 1983 of Indiana's Access to Public Records Law ended a six-year period in which a state oversight committee had been empowered to establish standards for records management, classification, and disposition. The 1983 authorization of state agencies to determine access guidelines independently led some to argue that the new law might result in uneven compliance or, at worst, in evasion of the legislative intent to guarantee public access. By clearly presenting the law's concepts, content, and implications (both good and vague), this manual provides a service not only to archivists but to agency records managers and to the public at large.

From a succinct summary of the main features of the Indiana Access to Public Records Law, the manual proceeds to an introduction tracing the origins of the law to the federal Freedom of Information Act and outlining the evolution of the law to the present day. The introduction is followed by the principal component of this manual, a synopsis of Indiana Code Section 5-14-3. A conclusion spells out implications of the statute for custodians of historical records repositories, reminding them that the new law pertains to all records regardless of the date of their creation. Finally, a postscript describing the archives policy statement of Indiana State University presents a case study of implementation of the law by a public institution of higher education.

The primary contribution of this manual lies in its section-by-section synopsis, in which direct quotation of the legal text is accompanied by matter-of-fact explication and commentary. To the degree that there can exist a handy reference tool to the intricacies of the legal mind, this is it.

Presumably an indispensable guide for Indianans, this manual can also serve to enlighten the rest of us with its clear discussions of basic issues. The historical introduction is a chronological portrait of wavering emphases on privacy and access. The discussions are from an archivist's perspective, not a legisla-

tor's, so that not only are they phrased intelligibly but also they address practical concerns. The author does not shrink from taking a stand, as when he notes that one section of the list of records that agencies are allowed to classify as confidential "is especially vague and subject to a potentially varied range of administrative opinion" (p. 5).

And so to the list of potential questions on access one can add, "How does the Indiana Access to Public Records Law rate as a statute?" The author of this manual has an answer, and on the basis of his discussion it appears justified: "While there may be the potential for circumvention of legislative intent within individual public agencies, the gain in public accessibility to the records of Indiana public agencies has thus far outweighed potential hazards" (p. 6).

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An Action Agenda for the Archival Profession: Institutionalizing the Planning Process. A Report to SAA Council by the Committee on Goals and Priorities. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1988. 74pp. Paper. $5.00 to SAA members, $8.00 to nonmembers.

This report from the Society of American Archivists' Committee on Goals and Priorities (CGAP) builds upon the 1986 report *Planning for the Archival Profession,* issued by the SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities. Where the earlier report outlined broad goals for the profession, the *Action Agenda* aims to direct the profession's energies to the highest priority objectives and to specific activities that will help to accomplish them.

CGAP focused its attention on the five areas identified as priorities in the 1986 report: appraisal and documentation strategies, automated records and techniques, institutional evaluation and standards, management training, and educational potential of archives. For each area, CGAP established small planning groups to examine the objectives and propose specific activities, actors, and resources with which to achieve them. More than half of the document consists of these planning groups' reports, containing brief descriptions of the recommended activities and explanations of their purpose and significance. In addition, the report includes a spreadsheet showing each activity's expected cost in time and money, and a list of the activities grouped by the recommended actor.

In all, CGAP recommends to the profession forty-four activities, ranging from fairly simple tasks, such as preparing a list of archival outreach awards, to much more expensive and ambitious projects, such as undertaking model documentation studies on presidential papers and an urban area. Although some activities will clearly require substantial outside funding, CGAP believes that most of them can be accomplished by SAA and its committees, roundtables, and sections with relatively little expense.

As the subtitle of the report suggests, raising the level of archival work is only a part of CGAP's purpose in this report. One of the committee's highest

priorities is to transform the haphazard way the archival profession operates by institutionalizing the planning process. This is the principal reason why CGAP did not re-examine the priority objectives outlined in the 1986 Task Force report, for it wanted to establish that report as the first phase of a planning cycle. The *Action Agenda* report constitutes the middle phases—reducing the priorities to specific activities, identifying actors and resources, and setting timetables—and the cycle will be completed when the activities are implemented and evaluated, presumably the topic of a future report. As CGAP argues in the executive summary that opens this report, completing an entire planning cycle will help to convince archivists and their institutions of the seriousness of the process and so make them more willing to commit their energies and resources to accomplishing the profession's agenda.

In fact, CGAP has not had long to wait to find archivists willing to commit themselves to this agenda. The only recommendation of the Institutional Evaluation and Standards Planning Group, a revision of the 1982 *Evaluation of Archival Institutions* workbook, was nearly completed before the report was issued; the recommendation for an urban area documentation study is being accomplished in a Milwaukee project recently funded by NHPRC; and many of the other recommendations are finding their way into the agenda of various SAA committees, sections, and roundtables. These initial projects are already indicating that the *Action Agenda* report will have the substantial impact on the archival profession that CGAP intended. As a consequence, this report is essential reading for any archivist who wants to participate in, or even just understand, the agenda that the profession seems to be following.

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Funding for Museums, Archives and Special Collections. Edited by Denise Wallen and Karen Cantrell. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1988. 355 pp. Bibliography, indexes. Paper. $48.00.

This comprehensive guide suggests funding sources for a broad spectrum of nonprofit organizations covering everything from *a* to *z* (archives to zoos). The authors set out to facilitate the search for the elusive dollar with a target audience of museums, archives, and special collections. They do so admirably.

The directory lists programs for funding a broad range of institutional activities including administration and operations, acquisitions and collections management, conservation, education, endowment and capital campaigns, exhibitions, historic preservation, internships, outreach programs, and renovation. It also steers the professional toward individual research and training programs.

The actual body of the directory lists over 270 sponsors in alphabetical order. The 525 individual programs sponsored by these agencies are individually listed or profiled. Each entry includes the sponsor name, address, telephone number, program title and purpose, eligibility and limitations, fiscal information, application information, and deadlines. Of particular benefit is the inclusion of a

sampling of previously funded projects which apprises the prospective applicant of the nature and scope of successful applications. Other useful sections of the directory include a description of how to use the directory, a bibliography (listing printed sources and online databases), and a series of indexes on specific subjects, geographic restrictions of various sponsors, and sponsor type. These greatly facilitate and encourage use of the directory.

No guide of this sort is ever totally comprehensive, and *Funding for Museums, Archives and Special Collections* is no exception. While covering the funding "bases" for museums, the authors neglected to mention a significant program for the archivist—the Bentley Historical Library's Research Fellowship Program for Study of Modern Archives. They list only three sponsors under the subject title "archives" in the index—the J. Paul Getty Trust, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Major sponsors of notable archival projects, such as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trusts are listed elsewhere in the directory. The archivist should study each program profile with a creative eye to discover funding possibilities for his or her institution. Armed with imagination and tenacity, he or she will uncover a wealth of beneficial programs. While the price may be prohibitive to some, this guide would be a welcome addition to any library—personal, professional, or institutional.

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Kentucky Archival and Manuscript Collections, Volume One. Frankfort: Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, 1989. 222 pp. Index. Looseleaf (with binder). $15.00.

Kentucky Archival and Manuscript Collections, Volume One is actually the second publication of the Kentucky Guide Project. In 1986 project editors produced the *Guide to Kentucky Archival and Manuscript Repositories*, a directory of the 285 institutions in Kentucky holding manuscript and archival materials. This new publication, providing detailed descriptions of the archival and manuscript holdings of libraries and other institutions, will prove even more useful to researchers than the earlier *Guide*. Arranged alphabetically by city or town, volume one starts with Albany and ends with Burkesville, encompassing twenty-eight collecting agencies. Most of the institutions are public libraries, although editors also included a civic club, the Ashland Oil Company, the Jean Thomas Museum, Berea College, and Western Kentucky University.

For each institution included, editors described individual collections, giving inclusive dates, information about the size of the collections, and a brief description. We learn, for example, that the Holcomb Family Papers at Western Kentucky University contain that family's business papers and correspondence dating from 1825-1867. A section on "contents" further explains that the Holcomb Family Papers relate to the North Carolina slave trade.

If any fault exists at all with *Kentucky Archival and Manuscript Collections* it is that the entries are not entirely uniform. In some cases an historical note explains the significance of the person whose papers archivists saw fit to save, but in other cases there is no historical note. Some guide contributors included a section on "arrangement" while others did not. All the Berea descriptions, for example, tell us whether the collection is "chronological," "topical," or "unarranged." No Western Kentucky University description contains such information.

Since veteran researchers and specialists probably already know about the most significant holdings of Kentucky libraries (or can find out in secondary sources), it is likely to be the descriptions of the routine minutiae of history, the store accounts and Bible records, that make this volume most useful. A genealogist or quantitative historian may find materials cataloged here that, although extremely useful, would not justify an institution-by-institution search. Some minor entries are also just fun to read. The public library in Benton has the papers of a veteran who, overcoming injuries sustained in World War I, became first a circus strongman, then a newspaper columnist on physical fitness, and then an artist.

This work will prove invaluable for researchers working on Kentucky and even fields outside of Kentucky. An excellent index allows users access to the work by subject. A researcher interested in Poland, for example, can quickly find two collections with relevant material. Since much of volume one relates to materials held in Western Kentucky University's Kentucky Building, this particular volume will be an essential resource for students of western Kentucky history. However, even researchers with little or no interest in Kentucky should consult this important publication.

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