

BOOK REVIEWS

Automation, Machine-Readable Records, and Archival Administration: An Annotated Bibliography. Compiled and edited by Richard M. Kesner. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980. 65 pp. Author, journal, and subject indexes. Paper. \$4, members; \$6, non-members.

In recent decades, the steady growth in the rate of production of recorded information has led to rapid expansion in the quantity of archival holdings, and an increasing portion of these records is machine-readable. In addition to the complexities of the information explosion, archivists are also faced with an increase in the number and variety of uses of their holdings, including computer-assisted research. To assist archivists in their efforts to manage machine-readable archives, to use computers for administrative and bibliographic control, and to understand the nature of quantitative research, Richard Kesner has compiled and edited an archival automation bibliography.

The 293 citations to works concerning machine-readable records, automated information storage and retrieval, and quantitative research are drawn from the literature of archives administration, records management, micrographics, library and information science, quantitative research, and museum management. Citations for 196 journal articles are drawn from 48 different publications, but most are from *Records Management Quarterly* (30), *American Archivist* (28), *Historical Methods Newsletter* (19), *ADPA* (Automatic Data Processing and Archives) (17), *Computers and the Humanities* (14), and *Journal of Micrographics* (13). Entries begin with 1957, but most were published during the 1970s. A chart in the Introduction analyzes both the chronological and subject distribution of the entries.

This compilation updates Meyer Fishbein's bibliography ("ADP and Archives," *American Archivist*, 1975) and is somewhat broader in scope, although it excludes non-English language works included by Fishbein and Michael Roper ("ADP in Archives," *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 1977). Unlike Fishbein's topical arrangement, Kesner's entries are arranged alphabetically by author. Access is facilitated by the inclusion of author, subject, and journal indexes. In addition to being current, the primary advantage of this work is the annotation, which is generally concise, accurate, and useful. The well-designed layout facilitates use, although proofreading errors do detract.

This bibliography is a valuable tool and will be used by many archivists. Its coverage of the management of machine-readable records and the use of automated techniques in archives is thorough. The selection of material from related fields has, however, been less effective. Since the bibliography is designed for use by novices, as well as advanced readers, the inclusion of additional works explaining the basic operating principles of modern computers would have been beneficial. (A brief but useful introduction is provided by James Joyce's article, "Hardware for the Humanist: What You Should Know and Why," in the Sept./Oct. 1977 issue of *Computers and the Humanities*.) In the area of library automation and information science, one cannot be comprehensive, but consistent guidelines must be adopted and should be explained to the user. The entries here appear to have been chosen somewhat haphazardly. Joseph Becker and Robert Hayes' *Information Storage and Retrieval* (1963) is included, but the updated version of that book (Lauren B. Doyle, *Information Retrieval and Processing*, 1975) is not. Nor is Hayes and Becker's *Handbook of Data Processing for Libraries* (2nd ed., 1974) included. *Introduction to PL/I Programming for Library and Information Science* (1972), coauthored by Susan Artandi, is included, but Ms. Artandi's more general *Introduction to Computers in Information Science* (2nd ed., 1972) is not. The *Journal of Library Automation* appears to be the only journal in this area systematically reviewed. I am surprised that no articles from the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* were included. These inadequacies make the inclusion of 42 citations concerning quantitative research questionable.

Compiling a bibliography for a new and developing field is a difficult but necessary task. This bibliography is a worthy accomplishment and will be widely appreciated by archivists.

H. Thomas Hickerson
Cornell University

The Smith and Telfer Photographic Collection of The New York State Historical Association. Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1978. 125 pp. 304 illustrations. Cloth. \$18.75.

Any archivist responsible for a collection of local history photographs would do well to study this book. Not only is it a catalog of 304 photographs selected from a collection of 55,000 images representing the life work of local professional photographic partners, it is also a model of the processing, preservation, and cataloging of a collection that depicts and documents 100 years of life in the small town of Cooperstown, New York. This catalog and the exhibition it records, made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, were presented to the public as the culmination of years of work on a collection of photographs, mostly in glass plate negative form, first acquired in 1951.

The town this collection visually documents is as unique as the vast collection. Founded in 1786 by the father of James Fenimore Cooper, its beautiful setting on the shores of Otsego Lake (Lake Glimmerglass in Cooper's books) naturally led to its becoming a summer resort town early in its history. History is greatly respected in Cooperstown. The New York State Historical Association is headquartered in Fenimore House, a museum of cultural history. There is a research library, the Farmers Museum and Village Crossroads, Seminars on American Culture held each summer, and the Cooperstown Graduate Studies Program in History Museums, American Folk Culture and the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Objects. Also of note is the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, in the town where the game of baseball was invented.

The first impression of Cooperstown is that it must be a restored village. Further inspection reveals it was not restored—it has been carefully, respectfully maintained for its nearly 200 years.

Perhaps this sense of history partly explains the dedication and perseverance of the many staff members who worked on this immense photographic collection during the twenty-seven years since its acquisition, and the willingness of local foundations to begin the funding of the work.

Three essays provide an introduction to the collection and greatly add to the usefulness of the catalog as a reference work for archivists of photographic collections. Unquestionably the essays help every reader to appreciate the collection and enjoy the photographs selected for the catalog. The biographical history, "The Studio of Smith and Telfer" by Gerard F. Reese, gives insight into the professional capabilities of the partners who made this visual record of life and events in Cooperstown.

"Photographs as Historical Documents" by John A. Kouwenhoven is a well-thought-out, convincing discussion of the validity of the use of photographs as documentary evidence. Kouwenhoven expounds arguments for the truthfulness of photos as visual evidence. He states that historians are only beginning to appreciate photographs as having documentary value apart from their pictorial qualities and their values as illustrations. They are historical documents and deserve to be "unmolested" by cropping or retouching for aesthetic or publication reasons. He alludes to the very subjective judgment and interpretation of photos used in *Wisconsin Death Trip*.

Jose Orraca, a leading American photographic conservator who consulted with the New York State Historical Association on the Smith and Telfer collection, in his essay, "The Care of Glass Plate Negatives," admonishes that we cannot judge nineteenth century and early twentieth century photographs by the same criteria used for present day photographs produced by high speed cameras using high speed film. From 1853, the date of the beginning of Washington G. Smith's career in Cooperstown, photography was dominated by slow, cumbersome wet collodion glass plate negatives. In 1879 dry plates of gelatin emulsion on glass were invented. These two mediums on glass make up the bulk of the collection. There are also some nitrate base film negatives.

Conservator Orraca states that the archivist needs to know the structure of the object, the process by which the image was made, and the professional practices of photographers of the time in order to properly treat, store, and use photographs. His recommendations for storage, handling, and copying of glass plate negatives are carefully delineated.

A collection of glass plate negatives of 55,000 images is stunning in size. It is to the credit of the small staff of this upstate New York historical agency that it was not overwhelmed by the task of identifying, classifying, and printing. All those involved appreciated the significance of the collection to the documentary exposition of rural life and town development during a span of 100 years. Their work provides guidelines for other local history collections.

Margery S. Long
Wayne State University

Disposition of Federal Records. General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, revised 1978. 100 pp. Appendices. Paper.

The development of a sound public records archives is dependent on the existence of an effective records disposition system. The National Archives recognized this principle when it first published *Disposition of Federal Records* in 1949 as an aid to records administrators in their efforts to dispose of agency records that were no longer required for fiscal, legal, or administrative purposes. In conjunction with periodic disposition workshops, the 1949 handbook served its purpose well for many years, but the continued growth of federal agencies in size, complexity, and systems sophistication dictated a need for revision. This new edition is the result. It improves on the earlier manual in physical form, content, and organization and as a result is a more effective records management tool.

Physical improvements include paper color, type selection, and

the updatable looseleaf format. Use of white paper is easier on the eyes because it presents a clear, sharp contrast to the type. The larger and bolder type selected also serves to ease strain on the reader. The updatable looseleaf format presents several advantages. Parts of the handbook can be easily lifted for inclusion in line operation manuals. It enables easier storage and retrieval. Finally, the new format may encourage updating at less lengthy intervals.

Content improvements and changes in organization also add to the value of the new edition. The importance of the records disposition office and its proper place in the administrative structure is stressed. A much needed section on the management, evaluation, and revision of a records disposition program has been added. Inclusion of forms and special tables such as "Appraisal Guidelines for Permanent Records" make this a much more practical tool than was the earlier edition. It would be even more useful if an example of each form, properly completed, had been included either in addition to or in place of the blank forms. A few are presented in a completed state and one form, ADP Inventory, has such precise accompanying instructions as to preclude the need to see a completed example. Section headnotes, which were not used in the previous manual, are an additional enhancement, as is the glossary of terms. A mutual understanding of terminology can go a long way toward unraveling the sometimes snarled line of communication between agency disposers and archives preservers. Perhaps the most striking improvement is the omission of a section contained in the earlier edition that stressed the techniques of archival microfilming. It did not fit logically with the other material. The new edition does provide microfilming information, but it is added as an appendix where it does not interfere with the logical flow of the manual.

Disposition of Federal Records is designed for use by federal records administrators and related personnel to assist them more adequately in disposing of needless records. It succeeds in that purpose but is not limited to that audience. It will prove very useful to those engaged in non-federal records disposition programs for comparative and evaluative purposes and generally for students who may simply want to know why and how such systems operate.

Martin McLaughlin
Michigan State Archives

Comprehensive Guide to the Manuscripts Collection and to the Personal Papers in the University Archives. Compiled by Marilyn Priestley. Seattle: University of Washington, 1980. Unpaginated. Indexes. Cloth.

A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities has permitted the University Archives and the Manuscripts Division of the University of Washington to compile and publish this comprehensive guide to its holdings, which document the history of the northwest region west of the Cascade crest. The public records of the University of Washington are not included in this guide, but the private papers of faculty and administrators are reported.

In his introduction, Richard C. Berner provides a history of the development of the collection, instructions for use of the guide, and an explanation of the elements of each entry. Information is also provided for researchers on access and photocopying.

The main body of the guide consists of an alphabetical listing of collections. Collections relating to special projects such as the ethnic projects and others are grouped separately.

The entries are admirably done. Each is numbered and the descriptive text is brief but concise, furnishing an identification of the person or organization that assembled the papers and enumerating the important subjects to be found in them. This guide is to be specially commended for providing some items of information not generally given, such as accession date, level to which processing has been done, and, when known, data on research use which has been made of a collection, including publications.

Important correspondents are not included in the entries but are listed in the name index. This means that the reader can look up names and be referred to the appropriate collection, but there is no way to determine who the important correspondents are in a given collection.

The subject index may trouble some users. Fourteen major subject headings distinguishing the "main lines of human activity" are employed. These are then broken down once or twice into more specific terms. For instance, to identify collections dealing with civil rights one must first go to "politics and

government” and then to the subheading “civil rights,” which is further broken down geographically. Despite the elaborate structure of the index entries, there is a lack of precision in many instances. For example, to locate collections dealing with feminism one must check the numerous entries under “politics and government—women.” Moreover, there are some inconsistencies such as entries for both “politics and government—civil defense” and “politics and government—civilian defense” which could lead to missing a citation.

Some assistance might have been provided for the researcher not familiar with the fourteen main lines of human activity by listing these categories at the beginning of the subject index. This would permit the likeliest term to be selected at the outset. As it stands, one is compelled to hunt randomly through the index in order to choose a main subject heading.

Joan Rabins
Wayne State University

BRIEFLY NOTED

Guides to collections, listings, and similiar works have been submitted to the book review section. Often these are not large enough to warrant a full review. They may, however, be of interest to readers of the *Midwestern Archivist*. Consequently, they have been listed here with as much bibliographical information as possible.

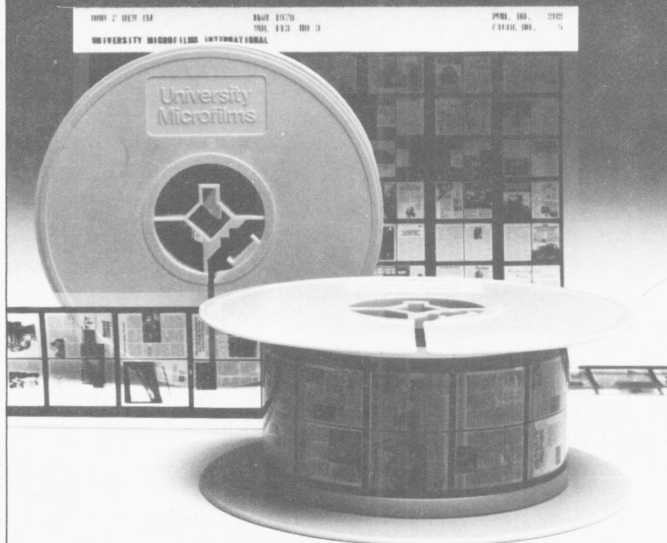
This initial appearance of "Briefly Noted" also contains references to a few writings that merited reviews, but since considerable time has elapsed since their publication, they have been noted here instead.

Contributions to this section and for reviews are welcomed and may be sent directly to the book review editor.

1. *Index to the American Jewish Archives*. By Paul White. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1979. 435 pp. Cloth, \$25.00.
2. *Archives of Appalachia Newsletter*, Volume III, Special Supplement, July 1981. Johnson City: East Tennessee State University. A guide to audio and visual recordings of Appalachian folk culture and regional history.
3. *Archival Management Forms for the Eighties*. Pullman: Pyramyridan Press, 1978. 10 pp. Paper, \$3.00.
4. *Listing of Archival Supplies and Services*. By Michael Kohl. Milwaukee: Library Council of Metropolitan Milwaukee, 1980. 11 pp. Paper.
5. *Inventory of the Jonathan Prentiss Dolliver Papers, 1860-1935*. By Bonnie Michael and Joyce Giaquinta. Iowa City: Iowa State Historical Department, 1978. 130 pp. Indexes. Paper.
6. *How to Preserve Local Union Records for Legal and Historical Purposes*. Milwaukee: Library Council of Metropolitan Milwaukee. 10 pp. Paper.
7. *Central Ohio Local Government Records at the Ohio Historical Society*. By Karen Matusoff. Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1978. 38 pp. Paper, \$2.00.
8. *Paper and Leather Conservation: A Manual*. By Paul Mucci. The Mid Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, 1978. 51 pp. Bibliography. Paper.

9. *Guide to the Microfilm of the Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Governments 1755-1790*. By Roland Baumann. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1978. 351 pp. Cloth, \$10.00; paper, \$7.00.
10. *Inventory of County Records, Ringgold County*. By Mark Jones. Iowa City: Iowa State Historical Department, 1978. 44 pp. Paper.
11. *Voices from the St. Croix Valley: A Guide to the Oral History Collection*. By Mary Hageman. River Falls: University of Wisconsin-River Falls, 1978. 49 pp. Index. Paper.
12. *The Winthrop College Archives and Special Collections: A Guide to the Records Relating to Winthrop College*. By Ron Chepesiuk. Rock Hill: Winthrop College, 1979. 41 pp. Index. Paper.
13. *Social Welfare History Archives: Guide to Holdings*. By David Klaassen and William Wallach. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1979. 55 pp. Paper, \$1.00.
14. *Guide to the Archives and Manuscripts in the University of Wisconsin-Platteville Area Research Center*. By Kathryn Otto. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1978. 17 pp. Index. Paper.
15. *Guide to the Archives and Manuscripts in the University of Wisconsin-Stout Area Research Center*. By Gayle Martinson. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1978. 25 pp. Index. Paper.

This publication
is available in microform.



University Microfilms
International

CONTRIBUTORS

Margaret L. Hedstrom served as project archivist for the Wisconsin Survey of Machine Readable Public Records, November, 1979—January, 1981. Her paper was originally presented at the spring, 1980, meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference, Chicago.

Mary Ann Bamberger is university archivist, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. Her article is a revision of a paper delivered at the 1980 annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists in Cincinnati, Ohio.

David A. Clary has made a career in environmental protection, particularly historic preservation. He now heads a historical, cultural, and environmental consulting firm in Bloomington, Indiana. This article is adapted from a talk given at the fall, 1978, meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference in Indianapolis, when he was chief historian of the U.S. Forest Service.

Anne R. Kenney is associate director of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri-St. Louis. Her paper was originally delivered at the spring, 1980, meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference, Chicago.

Edmund Berkeley, Jr. is curator of manuscripts at the University of Virginia, and has written or edited books and articles on manuscripts appraisal, collecting, and cataloging. His paper was originally presented at the 1980 annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, and has been revised for publication.

