

**THE
MIDWESTERN
ARCHIVIST**

VOLUME VII, NUMBER 1, 1982

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WHEN IS A COLLECTION PROCESSED?

MEGAN FLOYD DESNOYERS

Processing. The activities intended to facilitate the use of personal papers and manuscript collections generally comparable to arrangement, description, and preservation of archival material.¹ (To which the author would add the activity of screening or reviewing the material to insure that there are no legal or donor-imposed bars to opening it.)

When is a collection considered to be processed? When historically valuable material may be made available for research without violating any restrictions as to its use and without endangering its enduring physical state, and when that material is arranged and described so that a researcher may readily find what he/she is looking for in it.

Processing is done to meet the needs and interests of several different groups of people: donors, users, and archivists. Two of these groups—donors and users—often have mutually conflicting needs and interests.

Donors who have imposed restrictions on their materials want those restrictions applied before access is granted to any researcher to use any parts of their collections. To meet this need, archivists must review or screen each collection against restriction requirements and criteria as specified in deeds of gift, and must remove, for as long as necessary, those items embargoed by donors.

Users may be researchers, donors or their representatives, or archivists answering donors' or researchers' queries. Their common need is the ready retrieval of information, either facts or documents, from the material. Processing must result in adequate arrangement and description of the material to facilitate such retrieval.

The third constituency having needs and interests which processing must meet are the *archivists* or curators themselves. Archivists feel responsible for addressing the needs and interests of both the donor and the user, for enforcing legal restrictions on a collection's use, and for attending to the physical needs of the material itself. The archivists' needs and interests must also be met by adequate arrangement, preservation, description, and screening of each collection.

Archivists have accepted responsibility for applying donor restrictions to collections or parts of collections and for enforcing all other legal restrictions on the use of the material. We apply the provisions of the federal Privacy Act, of appropriate state laws, of legislation controlling the dissemination of national security classified information, and of any other relevant laws and regulations. This is a practical as well as an ethical responsibility. If we do not do the necessary screening, we run the risk of invading someone's privacy, compromising national security, angering a donor by violating his/her trust, and/or making ourselves liable for legal action on many different levels.

Archivists not only strive to meet users' needs for ready retrieval of information, but also have accepted responsibility for opening all collections as soon as possible after receipt and for supplying *all* researchers with as much information about a collection as possible, while giving the material adequate physical protection. Opening collections promptly requires speedy processing. Providing as much information as possible is accomplished through good description of the collection by the person who knows it best, the processor. The physical needs of the material are met by insuring that appropriate preservation and conservation measures are applied to the papers.

To meet these complex and often conflicting requirements, archivists have accepted the responsibility of maintaining a certain level of processing that is professionally suitable, but we have not defined that level very well and, therefore, we strive for an ideal that may not always be practical or appropriate.

There are two problems with establishing a standard level of processing. The first is that it dictates what must be done to a collection whether or not the collection warrants it, and it limits what can be done to a collection that might need more work. We

rarely ask the question: When is *this* collection processed? Instead, we process all collections to an ideal standard level. The second problem is that by processing all collections to the ideal standard level, we cannot keep up with the collections we have on hand or with the new collections coming in. The result tends to be a small number of beautifully processed collections available for use and an extensive backlog of collections that are closed while they wait to be processed.

This backlog is growing at an incredible rate because of two other fairly recent developments: the arrival of voluminous contemporary collections and the fact that more limited archival budgets are being spread over a greater variety of programs. The contemporary collections that institutions are now being swamped with are huge, and they differ from older holdings. They are collections "of great size and historical importance which contain few individual documents of specific research value or autograph interest in their own right."² At the same time, overall archival budgets are declining while services and demands are growing. Educational projects, professional meetings, and rising costs of staff, facilities, and materials stretch limited funds even further. There is not much money left for processing, and we are having to justify carefully how we spend the little that is available. We cannot afford to spend as much money to process a single collection as we might have in the past, now that we have more collections, less money, and bigger backlogs.

The backlog situation is especially serious because of its impact on the donors, researchers, and archivists. Donors may be annoyed when they discover that collections they deposited years ago remain unprocessed and inaccessible, and they may be even more unhappy when determined researchers approach them directly for access to their collections. Some donors understand and are patient; others become angry and testy. Researchers are frustrated and often angered by processing backlogs that keep collections unavailable. Their needs are certainly not being met. Archivists are equally frustrated because we would like to be opening these collections as soon as possible and to the greatest extent possible. We are apologetic to donors and researchers and genuinely concerned about the seeming impasse.

The author proposes that instead of trying to maintain an ideal

standard level of processing, we look at processing as a *range of choices along a continuum* for each of the four essential processing activities: arrangement, preservation, description, and screening. The continuum runs from the found, or original, state of the material up to the highest possible level of each activity, e.g., a calendared collection where each item is individually filed in an acid neutral folder in an acid neutral box.

The archivist should evaluate each collection and decide how far that particular collection needs to be taken along the arrangement, preservation, description, and screening continua. In making these decisions, he/she would consider the found state of the collection and the requirements and interests of the donor, the users, the applicable legislation, and the material itself. These factors would determine the lowest level of each of the four activities with which the archivist could live comfortably while fulfilling all of those needs.

The archivist must also decide *when* each activity is to be done. This decision will depend on the nature of the papers, the level of each of the four activities to which they will be taken, and the processor's experience. The options range from doing the four activities as concurrently as possible to doing them completely sequentially. Concurrent processing is the most efficient in terms of time and money and sequential processing is the least efficient. An experienced processor might be charged with doing the arrangement, preservation, and screening on each box at one time while also taking all notes necessary for later description. But if any of the activities become complicated or if the processor lacks experience, it may be better to break the tasks apart and do them more sequentially. The four activities are treated separately here to avoid confusion.

Arrangement. The process and results of organizing archives, records, and manuscripts in accordance with accepted archival principles, particularly provenance, at as many as necessary of the following levels: repository, record group or comparable control unit, subgroup(s), series, file unit, and document. The process usually includes packing, labeling, and shelving of archives, records, and manuscripts, and is intended to achieve physical or administrative control and basic identification of the holdings.³

Proper arrangement of the material in a collection is essential in order to retrieve information from that collection. Anticipating how users will approach the collection and how often they will use it, the archivist must decide on a scheme of arrangement and a work plan that is sufficient for the users' needs yet not too detailed to carry out with available budget and staff. The arrangement activity can be the most labor intensive, and therefore the most expensive, of the four processing activities, since rearrangement may be necessary on the series, folder, and document levels.

The archivist must first survey the entire collection, reviewing all folder, notebook, binder, or other container titles to answer the question: What is the found state of the collection? The found state can range along a spectrum from perfectly ordered, pre-existing series to total disorder. Most collections fall somewhere in the middle. The found state has a direct impact on the processing cost: the better the original order and the less arrangement the archivist has to do, the faster the processing can be accomplished and the lower the processing cost. The original order of a collection should be retained as much as possible, both because that order reveals how the papers were used and because of the practical consideration of cost. But the original order can be maintained only if it is usable and meets researcher needs. Cost factors do not outweigh usability.

The next question to ask is: Are there obvious series or major groupings of materials? These are frequently untitled but are readily apparent in the initial collection survey and are easily assigned a title. A common example is a correspondence file arranged either alphabetically by correspondent or chronologically by date of the letter. The materials may not be called "correspondence file," but a quick survey of the folder titles and a sampling of folder contents will show that that is what it is. Equally common are subject files where folders are titled by subject and arranged alphabetically, or a speech file which has a folder for each speech or for a chronological group of speeches. In each of these cases, a quick survey of the material will reveal the presence of the series.

Are the existing series usable for research? Evaluate them from a user's perspective. Often a minor change in the title of a series or in its arrangement will reconcile existing series with researchers' needs.

Are the existing series too general or too specific? Sometimes a great deal of material will be filed into one huge series when it really should be divided into several smaller, more specific series. At other times there are many small series which could conveniently be yoked together into a larger, more cohesive series. For example, there might be a modest sized subject file and several small files—such as civil rights, disarmament—which are also subjects. It makes sense to move the small units into the larger subject file.

Do the existing series need reordering among themselves? Are they filed consistently, either alphabetically, chronologically, or from general to specific or vice versa? Arranging the series in a logical order may be just a matter of renumbering boxes.

Unfortunately, the survey of the collection's arrangement may reveal that there are no series, either obvious or obscure. This will mean a lengthy, expensive sorting project, during which the processor will have to look carefully at all the materials, consider various arrangement schemes, settle on a final one, and put the material in that order. Maintaining original order is not important in this case, because the order reveals little of the way the materials were used and because the materials are unusable in the state they are in. Instead, we must settle on an arrangement that is determined by potential researcher use and by the ease of accomplishing the rearrangement. A sentence in the finding aid can explain what the original order was.

Once the series are determined, titled, and rearranged among themselves as necessary, the archivist must consider the internal arrangement of the units (folders, notebooks, binders, etc.) within the series. Each series should be reviewed and the following questions asked:

1. Are the units adequately titled?
2. Are they arranged in correct order?
3. Are they too large?
4. Are they too small?

An adequate title would include the series title and a unit description consisting of at least a name or word title for alphabetically arranged series or a date title for chronologically arranged series. Folders with word titles may also be given dates when the

dates are significant or when there is so much material on a subject that it needs to be divided into thinner folders by date. Folder titles do not need to be absolutely consistent as long as their contents are clear and like materials are easily identifiable in a once-through of the finding aid. The author has recently finished processing a small collection of research materials where the donor's titles were accepted absolutely and this fact was explained in the finding aid. There are inconsistencies and repetitions and not every title is perfect, but all of the information is retrievable.

Correct order means that each folder is filed in the order set for that series, whether chronological or alphabetical. This is a minimum requirement in order for users to be able to locate folders.

Folders are too large when their bulk poses a preservation or retrieval problem. When there are more items in a folder than it will comfortably hold, for preservation reasons the materials should be divided into thinner folders. If the folder is thick and the titling is so general that researchers will waste time searching for a small unit of information, the folder should be broken into thinner, more specifically described folders.

Folders may be too thin or too specifically titled. The decision to correct this involves cost factors. If we are replacing existing folders with acid neutral folders and are listing each folder in the finding aid, we should consider consolidating items into folders with more general titles. Folders are rarely too specifically titled for researchers' needs, however. If the material is valuable and is finely foldered, it might also be wise to keep it that way for preservation considerations.

The final and most expensive level of arrangement is the document level. Whether it is necessary to arrange at the document level depends on the importance of the material, its retrievability, the frequency of its projected use, and its quantity.

Certain forms of arrangement and types of material necessitate arrangement at the item level. Chronological or alphabetical correspondence files must be correctly ordered to permit effective retrieval. If each item of the collection or series is extremely important or if researchers will be looking for specific items, then we must make sure those items are perfectly arranged; literary manuscript collections fall into this category. Subject files do not

ARRANGEMENT CONTINUUM

Found State

SERIES LEVEL

Consider the existing order; review all folder, notebook, binder, or container titles. Ask if there are any obvious groupings or series; if they are titled; if they are usable for research; if they are too general or too specific; if they are in correct order.

Review reveals no rearrangement or retitling needed at the series level.

Review reveals at least some rearrangement or retitling needed at the series level.

Describe the rearrangement and retitling needed at the series level.

FOLDER LEVEL

Review the units in the series (folders, notebooks, binders, etc.). Ask if they are adequately titled; if they are correctly arranged; if they are too thick or too thin.

Review reveals no rearrangement or retitling needed at the folder level.

Review reveals at least some rearrangement or retitling needed at the folder level.

Describe the rearrangement and retitling needed at the folder level.

ITEM LEVEL

Spot review the items in a few folders in each series. Ask if the folder titles accurately reflect the contents of the folders; if the items need to be in correct order; if they are already in correct order.

Review reveals no retitling of folders or rearrangement of items in folders needed.

Review reveals at least some retitling of folders or rearrangement of items in folders needed.

Describe the retitling and rearrangement needed.

Weigh the costs in time, staff and material expenses. Decide on the level and course of action.

Apply the course of action.

necessarily need such specific arrangement because there is no required and expected internal order and because the user will probably be reading the contents of an entire folder rather than searching for a specific item.

If the item can be pinpointed to a specific folder by an adequate finding aid, and if the item is not extremely important and/or will not be searched for often, we do not have to worry about the arrangement within the folder. We can expect the user to go through the entire folder to find the item, and the finding aid will tell him/her to expect to have to do that.

If the collection is massive, then regardless of the importance of the item or the frequency of its use, we probably cannot justify arranging the items within the folder.

In considering whether or not to arrange at the item level, spot review the folder contents within each series. The decision will vary from series to series. Important and/or valuable series may have the items arranged within the folder, while less important series in the same collection will not be given item level arrangement. When sampling the contents of scattered folders in each series, we should ask if the folder titles accurately reflect the contents, if the items need to be in a particular order, and if they are already in that order.

Preservation. (1) The basic responsibility to provide adequate facilities for the protection, care, and maintenance of archives, records, and manuscripts. (2) Specific measures, individual and collective, undertaken for the repair, maintenance, restoration, or protection of documents.⁴

All collections should be evaluated to determine their need for protection from their containers, from self harm or destruction (such as from deteriorating chemicals or metal in, on, or near the documents), and from damage, destruction, or theft by users.

Preservation steps may either be taken at the time of processing, or scheduled for a later date if the materials will not be damaged by the delay. The major question to ask in determining how far to take the preservation activity and when to do so is: Is the danger, either from the environment or the users, immediate? If the answer is yes, the preservation steps must be taken immediately. Security preservation must be done prior to opening a collection. Steps to stop existing deterioration must also be taken immediately. Steps

to prevent future deterioration may be scheduled for the future.

Preservation from containers is done at the box and folder levels. Looking at each box, we ask:

1. Is the box contributing to the deterioration of the material because of its:
 - acidity,
 - size (too large, too small),
 - condition (torn, wet), or
 - lack of strength?
2. Will it contribute to the deterioration of the material in the future?
3. What is the size of the items in the box? Do they fit comfortably in the box without folding or bending?
4. What will be the amount of future use of the items in the box? Will the box size and structure permit this degree of use without excessive wear on the contents?

At the folder level, we examine a sample of several folders from each series and ask the same questions. We also consider whether the folder is too thickly or thinly filled to protect its contents during storage or use.

Traditionally, archivists have routinely refoldered most personal papers or manuscript collections regardless of the found state of the folders. Custodians of massive holdings, such as the National Archives, have not done this and have instead retained the incoming folders wherever they existed. We need to begin questioning the need for refoldering instead of making it a standard requirement for finished processing.

Preservation from self harm or destruction takes place on the item level. The items in a few folders from each series are examined to identify existing or potential instances of rusted metal fasteners, acid transfer, and deteriorating copies. Recommendations are then made for preservation steps for each series and a timetable is given for each step. Series within a collection will have different recommendations depending on their natures: e.g., a clippings series comprised of acidic newsprint will eventually deteriorate unless deacidified or photocopied, while a general correspondence series might not need anything done to it. The archivist must then

PRESERVATION CONTINUUM I

Preservation from Containers

Found State

**BOX
LEVEL**

Consider the boxing; look at and open each box. Ask if the box contributes to the deterioration of the material because of its acidity, size, condition, or strength; if it will contribute to the material's deterioration in the future; if it is the correct size for its contents; if it is appropriate for the future use of its contents.

Review reveals no reboxing needed.

Review reveals at least some reboxing needed.

Describe the reboxing needed.

**FOLDER
LEVEL**

Consider the foldering (or binding); make a sample exploration of several folders in each series. Ask if the folder contributes to the deterioration of the material because of its acidity, size, condition, or strength; if it has metal fasteners; if it will contribute to the material's deterioration in the future; if it is the correct size for its contents; if it is appropriate for the future use of its contents.

Review reveals no refoldering needed.

Review reveals at least some refoldering needed.

Describe the refoldering needed.

Weigh the costs in time, staff and material expenses against deterioration or damage potential. Decide on level and course of action for each series.

Apply the course of action to each series.

PRESERVATION CONTINUUM 2

Preservation from Self

Found State

ITEM LEVEL

Consider the need for preservation from self; make a sample exploration of several folders in each series and examine their contents. Ask if there is already deterioration from rusted metal, acid transfer, fading images, deteriorating copies; if there is potential deterioration and when it can be expected to happen.

Examination reveals no preservation needed.

Examination reveals at least some preservation needed either now or in the future.

Describe the level of preservation needed within each series.

Weigh the costs in time, staff and material expense against deterioration potential. Decide on level of action and schedule for each series.

Carry out the course of action decided on.

PRESERVATION CONTINUUM 3

Preservation from Use

Found State

Consider the potential for unintentional user harm; look at the contents of a few folders in each series. Ask what the level of use will be for each series.

Review reveals low use probable.

Review reveals medium to very high use probable.

Consider the impact of use on the items; decide what preservation measures to take such as not stapling items, numbering items, placing fewer items in a folder, photocopying entire series, or micro-filming the collection.

Apply the measures decided on.

Consider the potential for intentional user harm; look at the contents of a few folders in each series. Ask if there are valuable materials in the series that might be stolen or defaced.

Review reveals no series have valuable materials.

Review reveals at least some series have valuable materials.

Review each document and decide how to protect it (photocopy, ownership stamp).

Apply the measures decided on.

determine what he/she can afford to do.

Preservation at the item level is, of course, the most expensive, but there are choices as to how much we do and when. For example, for metal deterioration, we can choose to:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| Least | Note deteriorating metal for future removal.
Remove deteriorating metal. |
| | Note potentially deteriorating metal for future removal. |
| Most | Remove all metal and replace with non-rusting metal. |

Security preservation steps to prevent intentional and unintentional harm from users are also taken at the item level. The contents of a few folders in each series are evaluated. To protect materials from honest user damage, we consider what level of use there might be. If the anticipated usage level will be extremely high, we might want to consider filling folders more thinly; numbering the pages of items that will frequently be photocopied instead of stapling them; or even closing the originals and making a microfilm or photocopy set available for use. To prevent dishonest damage or theft, we determine whether there are valuable items in the series. If there are, we can decide either to do nothing, to stamp each item on the back with the institution's name, or to replace the item with a photocopy.

There are, then, three continua for preservation:

- Preservation from containers (continuum 1),
- Preservation from self (continuum 2), and
- Preservation from use (continuum 3).

Description. The process of establishing intellectual control over holdings through the preparation of finding aids.⁵

Description is necessary so that users will know where within a collection they can find information they want, and so that the processor can pass on to every researcher what he/she has learned about the collection.

The form of description for each collection is determined by the nature of the collection, its anticipated research use, and the rules and requirements of the institution. The nature of the collection and its research use are often closely interrelated. Important collections or series will probably be used heavily and thoroughly; their descriptions will have to be detailed to help serve their many

users. Less important materials will probably be used less frequently, and the few users will be able to approach the collection with less detailed descriptions. Institutional requirements may influence the form and degree of description. For instance, the institution may have a card catalog of subject and title entries, requiring the processor to prepare entries for each collection processed.

Description may range from the least to the most detailed, but the minimum requirements for each collection are:

1. A citable title, so that researchers may ask for or cite that specific collection. Example: The Personal Papers of Jane Thomas.
2. The date span of the collection, to place it in time. Example: 1938-1945.
3. The quantity of the collection, to indicate the amount of material to be looked at. Examples: 5 linear feet, or 96,000 pages.
4. A summary of the collection's contents, describing the major record types, subjects, and correspondents or types of correspondents. Example: Diaries, draft manuscripts of Ms. Thomas's works, and original incoming correspondence and copies of outgoing correspondence with family members and academic associates in American social history. Subjects treated include American social history, 1850-1945, . . .

and perhaps:

5. When the material was received by the institution.

The lowest level of description is a container list of the material as received. Such a list sometimes comes with a collection, or it may be made by a staff member at the time of accessioning. If the archivist decides the material is useful in its receipt order and makes no changes in the arrangement, that list could serve as the basis for the final finding aid. The archivist would, at the least, add an introductory narrative including the minimum requirements listed above.

More often, the material needs some rearrangement, after which the archivist prepares a new list of the series and their folders as

DESCRIPTION CONTINUUM

Found State

CONTAINER OR FOLDER LEVEL	<i>Consider the existing description. Was any description provided by the donor? Is it accurate?</i>	
	Review reveals accurate container list exists.	Review reveals no list or an inaccurate container list exists.
		Prepare an adequate list of the materials as received.
COLLECTION LEVEL	<i>Determine the final form of description. Consider the nature of the material and its potential use.</i>	
COLLECTION LEVEL	Process the collection taking necessary notes.	
FOLDER LEVEL	Write a folder title list of materials as processed.	
SERIES LEVEL	Write descriptions of each series.	Elements of an Inventory/ Register
COLLECTION LEVEL	Write scope and content note for the collection.	
COLLECTION LEVEL	Write biographical note for creator or agency history.	
COLLECTION LEVEL	Write an introduction and provenance note.	
COLLECTION LEVEL	Relate the collection to other holdings in the institution.	
COLLECTION LEVEL	Relate the collection to other collections in other institutions.	
COLLECTION LEVEL	Prepare catalog entries for the institution's catalog or guide to holdings.	
COLLECTION LEVEL	Prepare catalog entries for outside sources.	
ITEM LEVEL	List each item in the collection, if warranted.	

rearranged. This is the first element in an inventory or register, which consists of:

1. A list of the series and their folder titles,
2. Descriptions of each series,
3. A scope and content note for the collection,
4. A biographical note on the creator or an agency history, and
5. An introduction and provenance note.⁶

After an inventory/register is completed, the archivist may prepare catalog entries for the institution's catalog or guide to holdings and for outside sources (such as the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections). Notices of the collection's having been opened may also be sent to professional journals.

The most detailed forms of description are item listing and calendaring. A calendar is an item list, arranged chronologically, which includes a brief description of each item. These are very expensive and time consuming processes. They can only be justified when each item in the series or collection is extremely important or valuable, will be heavily used, and will be sought as an individual item. The manuscripts and correspondence of a famous writer might justifiably be described in this way.

Screen. To examine records or archives to determine the presence of restricted documents or information and to remove such documents from the files.⁷

The screening activity is probably the least flexible and most sensitive and immediate of the four activities. If a collection is going to be screened in part or in its entirety, it must be screened prior to opening, for there is no point in screening it once the material has been used by researchers. Screening has the greatest impact on the labor intensiveness of processing the collection, the length of time needed, and the resulting expense. Screening requirements drive us immediately down from the collection or series level to the document level.

Screening is done to meet the requirements of the donor and any applicable legislation. The first step is to review the donor's deed of gift to determine what restrictions the donor has imposed on the

SCREENING CONTINUUM

Found State

COLLECTION LEVEL	<i>Identify any restrictions on the use of the collection.</i> Ask if there are any donor-imposed restrictions, Privacy Act restrictions, national security restrictions, or any applicable state laws.
	Review reveals no restrictions on the use of the collection.
	Review reveals some restrictions on the use of the collection.
SERIES LEVEL	<i>Examine the series titles.</i> Ask if any of the series are likely to contain sensitive materials that would be closed under the restrictions identified above.
	Review reveals no series which are likely to contain restricted materials.
	Review reveals some series which are likely to contain restricted materials.
FOLDER LEVEL	<i>Examine the folder titles in the series identified as likely to contain restricted materials.</i> Ask if any of the folders are likely to contain restricted materials.
	Review reveals no folders which are likely to contain restricted materials.
	Review reveals some folders which are likely to contain restricted materials.
ITEM LEVEL	<i>Review the contents of the folders identified as likely to contain restricted materials.</i> Ask if the items should be closed under the restrictions identified above.
	Review reveals no items which need to be closed under the restrictions identified above.
	Review reveals some items which need to be closed under the restrictions identified above.
	Close those items; open the remainder.

use of the collection. Next, the archivist needs to determine what other legislation applies to the collection. Once the pertinent restrictions are identified, the series titles are examined to determine which series might need to be screened. Within the identified series, the archivist then reviews the folder titles for folders whose contents have to be examined. Finally, he/she reviews each item in the identified folders.

Following this review, the archivist closes the items, folders, or series that the restrictions require be closed. The remainder of the collection is opened for research use.

When is a collection processed? When the archivist has selected from the processing continua and applied the appropriate degree of arrangement, preservation, description, and screening activities that will make that collection usable for the researcher while protecting the physical well-being of the material and honoring donor and legal restrictions on the collection. If this process is judiciously applied, many collections will be appropriately processed more quickly and at more reasonable expense than in the past, and processing backlogs will begin to disappear.

FOOTNOTES

1. Frank B. Evans, Donald F. Harrison, Edwin A. Thompson, and William L. Rofes, "A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers," *The American Archivist* 37 (July 1974): 427.
2. Eleanor McKay, "Random Sampling Techniques," *The American Archivist* 41 (July 1978): 283.
3. Evans et al., "A Basic Glossary," p. 418.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 421.
6. The Society of American Archivists' publication, *Inventories and Registers: A Handbook of Techniques and Examples* gives an excellent description and several examples of each element in an inventory/register.
7. Evans et al., "A Basic Glossary," p. 430.

And now there are nine.

The Society of American Archivists' popular Basic Manual Series has two new additions: *Archives & Manuscripts: Maps and Architectural Drawings*, by Ralph E. Ehrenberg, and *Archives & Manuscripts: Public Programs*, by Ann E. Pederson and Gail Farr Casterline.

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RATES OF PROCESSING MANUSCRIPTS AND ARCHIVES

KAREN TEMPLE LYNCH
and
THOMAS E. LYNCH

Archivists must constantly balance the amount and kind of material taken into their repositories against the staff available to arrange, describe, preserve, and service it. In order to coordinate a program of arrangement and description and balance the time devoted to processing against that spent on other elements of an archival program, it is useful for the archivist to have a sense of how long it takes to arrange and describe papers. Without this knowledge, the archivist is unable to set realistic priorities and project the completion of processing assignments. For budget purposes, too, it is important to understand processing time requirements, since staff time is the largest expense involved in processing.¹ Although the role of the archivist's intuition is enormous, good planning should also draw on whatever concrete evidence is pertinent. The project on which this paper is based was designed to explore estimates of processing rates that appeared in fifty-five grant proposals submitted to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and the National Endowment for the Humanities.² Grant proposals are a useful source of processing estimates, because the archivist requesting funding is obliged to justify requests for staff.

Both the NHPRC Records Program and the NEH Research Collections Program fund projects to process and make available historical records. The range of projects dealing with manuscripts and archives which the two agencies fund is, of course, much broader, but for this study only arrangement and description projects were examined. Thirty active and closed files for grants funded by NHPRC and twenty-five active grant proposals funded

by NEH were examined. All of the proposals had been funded. Every effort was made to make the figures from the various proposals and reports consistent, but since each document was written from a different perspective, these figures are not entirely reliable.

Neither NEH nor NHPRC has guidelines for what constitutes an appropriate processing rate. Rather, each agency relies on the comments of reviewers, panelists, and sometimes consultants to determine whether a project can realistically be carried out as described in the proposal. Therefore, even if the figures obtained from the proposals are not strictly empirical, they should represent a consensus from the applicants, the various professional archivists who reviewed the proposals, and the staffs of NEH and NHPRC that will give a range into which appropriate processing rates might fall. The fact that all the proposals examined had been funded should be an indication of the perceived feasibility and appropriateness of their work plans.

The following information was taken from each proposal: the total project staff, the total amount of material to be processed, the amount of time scheduled for the project, the number of separate collections to be processed (if indicated), the level of control to be achieved, the type of records involved, and the dates of the records. The average processing rate was found by dividing the total number of processing weeks into the linear feet of records to be processed. For grants funded by NHPRC, proposed average processing rates ranged from 0.1 linear foot to 72.5 linear feet per processor per week. For NEH-funded grants, the range was from 0.1 linear foot to 13.9 linear feet per processor per week.

Although the range of data is wide, it is not as wide as it seems at first. The largest rate was apparently based on an incorrect initial estimate of bulk. The project proposed to process 20,000 linear feet of records, but only 2,250 were actually processed, while 3,750 feet were discarded. Using the 2,250 figure, the recalculated processing rate is about 18.8 feet per week. Similarly, the bulk listed in another proposal as 5,000 linear feet was later estimated by a consultant to be closer to 500 linear feet.

The distribution of the data is represented in Figure 1. The data can be seen to be in roughly normal form—approximately a bell-shape curve. In order to compress the horizontal dispersion of the

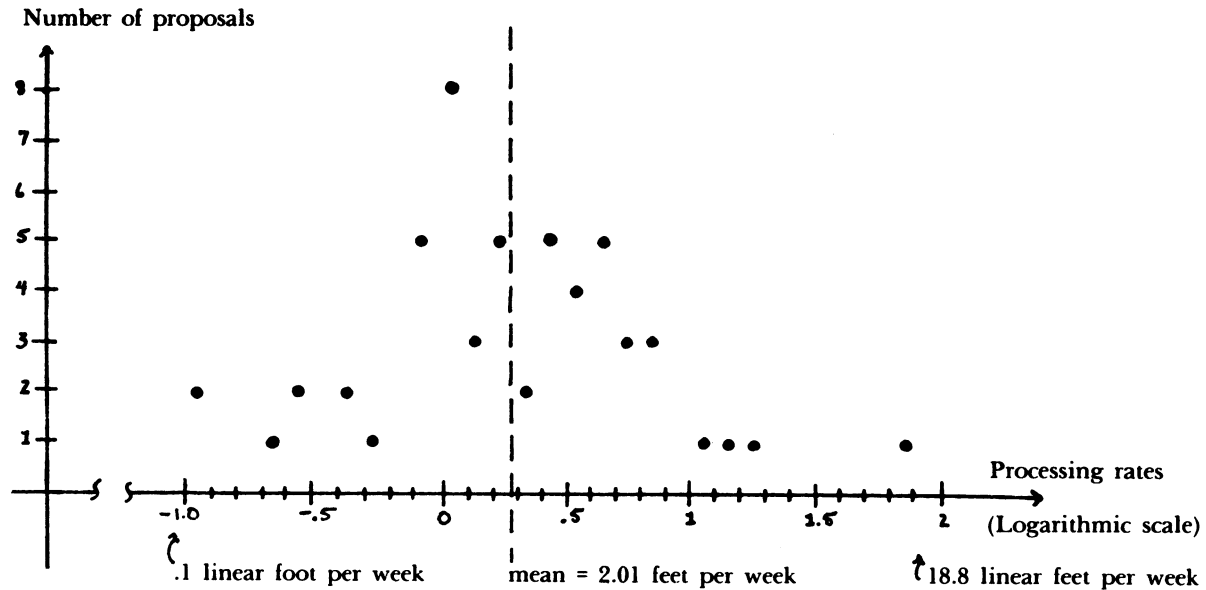


Figure 1: Frequency distribution of processing rates based on proposals.

data, the logarithms of the processing rates are shown on the horizontal axis. The appropriate mean for this logarithmic scale is a geometric mean, shown in Figure 1 at the point corresponding to a processing rate of 2.01 linear feet per week. This mean was calculated using 52 data points. The two lowest and one highest values were dropped. In this sort of statistical analysis, dropping these two outliers is legitimate, largely because the data are so highly subjective. In summary, if the statistics based on initial miscalculations of bulk are omitted, the applicants expected processing projects to be completed at a rate of 0.1 to 18.8 linear feet per week.

These expectations, especially those at the upper end of the scale, were not always realistic. Of the twelve completed NHPRC grants, five were completed as proposed and on schedule. Their processing rates were 0.8, 0.9, 1.3, 2.3, and 3.4 feet per week per full-time processor. The other seven projects took longer than estimated. In no instance was there any indication that a grant had been completed early or that initial estimates of processing time had been too large. Often there were signs that processing estimates had been too low, even for grants that had proposed a relatively slow rate of processing.

The progress reports to NHPRC and NEH often described factors that slowed progress. Preservation often proved to take much longer than estimated, in one case five times as long. Even pulling out staples and removing paper clips required a more substantial time investment than some grantees had expected. Other factors that slowed progress included addenda to collections that had to be incorporated into an existing arrangement, foreign language materials, and confidential material that was sprinkled throughout the collection rather than concentrated in one series. Some grantees also admitted that personnel problems and poor supervision had contributed to their failure to complete projects on schedule.

Aside from miscalculations, processing rates varied with the dates of the records processed, the types of records, and the level of intellectual control that was to be established. An attempt was made also to analyze the influence of the size of collections and different staff compositions.

To see the effect of the dates of records on processing rate,

consider a distribution of the processing rates of only those projects that dealt with pre-1800 records. The geometric mean rate for those projects was 0.98 linear feet per week, considerably lower than the aggregate rate. Processing sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century records apparently takes longer than average. If all grants dealing with records dated before 1900 are included, the geometric mean is 1.55 feet per week, still lower than the aggregate mean rate of 2.01, but higher than the mean rate for earlier records. For twentieth century records, however, the geometric mean rate is 2.51 feet per week, indicating that twentieth century records can generally be processed faster than average. In part, the longer processing time for older records is due to the necessity for more careful handling and more extensive preservation work. Then too, often when twentieth century records need cleaning, deacidification, and other preservation work, their volume disallows extensive work.

The records to be processed were designated as belonging to one of five categories: personal papers, institutional records, business records, government records, and records of mixed types. Only one designation was used for each grant project. The data suggest that business records (with a mean rate of 3.07 feet per week) and government records (3.11) are processed more quickly than institutional records (1.87), which in turn can be processed at a slightly faster rate than personal papers (1.51) or papers of mixed types (1.54). It is interesting that the four most rapidly progressing projects involving personal papers were all concerned with processing papers of twentieth century political figures. Because of the large bulk of records produced by politicians and the large amount of mail they receive, their papers tend to be more like institutional, business, or government records than they are like other personal papers.

The intellectual controls proposed were classified into four levels beyond basic accessioning. Partial control was defined as the stage when the collection has been examined, series have been delineated, and possibly a container list or series list has been generated. The most usual level of control was the inventory level, where the collection has been arranged, usually to the folder level, and described in an inventory or register consisting of a biography or agency history, a scope and content note, and a container list or

folder list. Limited indexing may also have been done. Special controls were tailored to each collection and included item lists, extensive indexes, bibliographies, lists of speeches, and other lists. For some proposals, the archivist stated the intention of using whatever level of control was necessary to make the collection usable. These variable controls usually ranged from the inventory level up to more specialized controls. Almost all of the projects proposed to go to the inventory level and often to include special controls as well. Of the projects that created special controls, thirteen had processing rates slower than the mean rate, while five had faster rates. It is interesting to note that the two proposals that used variable controls both had relatively fast processing rates of 3.4 feet per week.

Average size of the individual collections was also computed in an effort to determine whether large collections or small ones take proportionately more processing time. It appears that large collections are processed at a faster rate, but it should be noted that most of the large collections consisted of institutional, business, or government records. Therefore, it was impossible to tell whether the faster rate was due to the size of the collection, the type of records, or the initial order. It might be argued that doing background research and writing an inventory take about the same amount of time regardless of the size of the collection. Sometimes, though, processing a small collection of papers created by a person for whom little biographical information is available requires that more time be spent on research and writing. On the other hand, it has been argued that a large collection in disarray requires a much more intricate job of arrangement than any small collection can.

The full-time equivalent processing staff as computed from the proposals was broken down by function whenever possible. Project activities including administration, decisions on appropriate arrangement and description methods, routine sorting, preservation work, and typing finding aids and catalog cards were sometimes all undertaken by a single processor, but more often the different activities were divided among staff members. Staff was classified into four categories: administrative staff (concerned with budgetary matters and sometimes advising processors), processors, clerical staff, and processors' assistants (often students). From the information gathered from the fifty-five proposals, it was not

possible to tell whether a more specialized staff—that is, a staff divided by function—is more efficient than a single processor working alone on all phases of the work. Some archivists have found that the use of assistants is helpful. Delegating routine tasks to students or paraprofessional assistants frees the processor's time for decision-making, research, doing more complicated arrangement, and the like. On the other hand, some archivists encounter problems with such division of labor, chiefly in the large amount of time required to supervise the assistants and in the difficulty of maintaining the morale of junior staff members as they become bored with routine tasks.

The basic results of this study are summarized below in Figure 2, which shows the geometric mean for each category into which the projects were divided, the number of data points used to calculate each mean, and the 90% confidence intervals.³ These confidence intervals indicate that if a new sample were taken, there is a 90% certainty that the means of the new data would fall into these ranges.

Proposals by Records Grouped	Geometric Mean*	Number of Data Points	90% Confidence Interval
All proposals	2.01	52	1.592-2.541
Pre-1800	0.98	7	0.676-1.545
Pre-1900	1.55	31	1.13-2.11
Post-1900	2.51	19	1.92-3.26
Personal	1.51	11	1.06-2.17
Institutional	1.87	9	0.97-3.58
Government	3.11	5	insufficient data
Business	3.07	4	insufficient data
Mixed types	1.54	19	0.99-2.36

* Processing rate in linear feet per processor per week.

Figure 2: Processing rate as affected by time period and record type.

Conclusion

The statistics taken from the proposals suggest that a rule-of-thumb rate for processing personal papers might fall into the range of 0.5 to 2 linear feet per full-time processor per week. Government and business records take somewhat less processing time and might reasonably be processed at a rate ranging from 2 to 4 linear feet per full-time processor per week. In between, institutional records might be done at a rate of 1 to 3 feet per week. The archivist might expect these figures to be about right for nineteenth and twentieth century records processed to the inventory level. Earlier records would probably take longer. Control beyond the inventory level would probably require a substantially larger investment of processing time.

It must be stressed that these estimates are only—at best—ballpark figures. By definition grant proposals include only estimates of how long processing will take. Further, as any processor knows, a multitude of factors can slow or speed progress on a given project. Inevitably some collections will be processed at a rate different from that expected, but the archivist should try to analyze the factors that cause the variance and incorporate them into future estimates.

A few of the grants submitted to the agencies included processing estimates based on experience. Grants submitted by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin usually included the statement that the processing estimates in the grant were based on current performance statistics in the repository. Similarly, a Temple University grant included this statement:

The total of the combined unprocessed collections amounts to approximately 400 cubic feet. Work involving weeding, arrangement, description at the box and folder level and preparation of a complete inventory for each collection will involve an eighteen month project. This estimate of work progress is based on experience with very similar records undertaken during the 1975-76 grant period above.

The fact that statistics for the same type of records were the basis for the estimate increases the probability that an accurate estimate of processing time will have been made.

More controlled analysis of processing rates should greatly

increase our planning capabilities. Suppose that an archivist is able to determine from an initial look at a collection how much material is present, what the inclusive dates are, what types of records are involved, and maybe even a degree of disorder. Then it should be possible to devise a rough formula to indicate approximately how long processing the collection to a given level of control might require. There would still be factors that would change the estimate—discovery of foreign language materials, restricted or sensitive documents, more preservation needs than expected—but the archivist would develop some sense of the time required to deal with these additional problems. Adjustments in the estimated overall processing time could be made as processing proceeded.

The implications of such planning are not easy to assess. Not all of the variables in processing time are easy to control. The types of records, their dates, and the size of the collections can be observed and analyzed but not changed. Two other factors, however, are different: it is possible to change the composition of processing staff, and it is possible to vary levels of control of collections. Such changes are not mandated by statistics. Efficiency, after all, is not the only standard archivists use. Even if they were to be convinced that using students or paraprofessional assistants was most efficient, many archivists would still be unable or unwilling to use them. But knowing the options increases archivists' ability to plan.

An interesting by-product of increased planning might be a renewed exploration of methods of processing at various levels, particularly at the series or box level. For many collections, the so-called preliminary inventory provides quite adequate access to the collection, and it might well be accepted as permanent. It is crucial always to remember the reason that intellectual controls are created—to serve the needs of the research public. Faced with a clear choice between having a few collections processed to inventory level and having minimal controls for all holdings, archivists may find a new appeal in partial and variable level processing.

FOOTNOTES

1. In a survey of grants funded by NHPRC, Robert W. Coran found that processing costs ranged from \$61 to \$321 per linear foot, and that labor costs accounted for about 90% of the total cost.
2. We are grateful for the assistance of people at both agencies, and especially for the kindness of Larry Hackman of NHPRC and John Fleckner of NEH.
3. We are grateful to Holy Cross College for the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences in computing these data.

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ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY: A PROPOSAL FOR A RE-EVALUATION OF ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

ARTHUR D. LARSON

Archivists are generally in agreement that a basic knowledge of administrative history, applied through the central principles of *provenance* and *respect de fonds*, is essential to the organization and arrangement of archives. The importance of administrative history for this purpose was recognized by the pioneers of modern archives administration in both the United States and Europe. In his well-known paper, "The National Archives: A Programme," and in other of his writings, Waldo Gifford Leland emphasized the importance of a knowledge of administrative history to what he called the "classification" of records.¹ The same point was made in greater detail in the archival manual by the Dutch archivists Muller, Feith, and Fruin; in the manual by the English archivist Hilary Jenkinson; in the writings of the dean of American state archivists, Margaret C. Norton; and by many other archivists.²

Broader conceptions of the role of administrative history have been implied, for example, by H.G. Jones, who asserted that the archivists, in addition to a "general knowledge of history and government," must acquire "firsthand knowledge of the history, organization, and functions" of an agency in order to make what he called a "critical analysis" of its records.³ Similarly, Theodore Schellenberg stated that the analysis of records, involving the study of the "organizational and functional origins of records," is "basic to practically all activities of the archivist."⁴ Indeed, one of the two

tests proposed by Schellenberg for determining the evidential value of records is whether they contain information concerning the "organization, functions, activities, and methods of procedure" of administrative entities.⁵

The views of these authorities reflect a conception of administrative history as a tool, albeit an important one, for carrying out the steps in the archival process. But in an article published in 1941 and addressed to federal archivists, Karl L. Trever suggested a broader conception of the role of administrative history in the archival profession.⁶ Trever stressed the importance of administrative history for the processing and use of archival materials. But he went beyond this conventional view of administrative history as a tool to propose that it should be part of the "cultural background" of the federal archivist. The federal archivist, Trever declared,

must get the general idea of administration as the way in which governments carry out their functions. He must obtain a comprehensive picture of the manner in which the American people, through agencies of government, have met their needs. He must see administrative history as a part of the cultural history of the United States, to see it as it ties in with the economic, social, political, and military history of the people, relating the changing organizations and functions of governmental administration to the expanding or contracting developments and needs of a democratic community. He must see the records created by these changing organizations and functions as a 'living photograph' of a growing people working out their problems. Only from this point of view can the federal archivist see the details of his daily tasks in the proper perspective as related to the larger framework of national culture;...⁷

It is the duty of archivists to the historical and archival sciences, Trever declared, to take the lead in "the collection, preservation, and preparation of materials for the study and writing of... administrative history." Administrative history, Trever concluded, is a fundamental means through which the federal archivist can fulfill the trust placed in him or her to conserve the records of "government's past activities as an instrumentality of the people" and make them "the living heritage of democracy."⁸

Trever summarized and synthesized ideas that were current among archivists at the time he wrote concerning the importance of administrative history to government archival work.⁹ But these ideas, with suitable qualifications, are relevant to the work of archivists in all institutional settings. All organizations—political, economic, educational, and social—have contributed to the growth and development of American society. This is not an original idea, of course. Recently, an “organizational synthesis” school has emerged in history, the central theme of which is that the transformation of the United States into an industrialized and urbanized society was accompanied by the growth of large-scale, bureaucratic organizations that have had an important, if not decisive, role in shaping all of the institutions of the society.¹⁰ The implication of this idea for archivists is that the records of these organizations, no less than those of the federal government, document the struggle of a people to build a nation. The archivists in these organizations, no less than those in government, must view the administrative history of their organizations as part of the cultural history of the nation. Administrative history must also be part of their cultural background and a means through which they make the history of their institutions part of the nation’s heritage; and it is their duty, as much as it is that of government archivists, to collect, preserve, and prepare materials for the study and writing of administrative history.

Trever’s article appears to have made no significant impression on the work or the intellectual life of the profession. In the four decades after the appearance of the article, no articles of consequence focusing on the subject appeared in the *American Archivist*, and only one paper in the other literature of the profession.¹¹ While archivists use administrative history (in an elementary form) as a tool in archival processing, and while the collection and preservation of materials bearing on administrative history is implicit in their basic professional function, they have apparently not seen it as their professional duty to prepare materials for the study and writing of administrative history by others, much less undertake such study and writing themselves.

To gain an appreciation of the place occupied by administrative history in the archival profession today, an informal, exploratory mail survey of the practices and opinions of a sample of leading

archivists was carried out in the spring of 1979.¹² The survey population included head archival officials in the 50 states, 12 chief provincial and national archival officials in Canada, and the 31 heads of the major United States and Canadian archival education programs. Of the 93 archival officials and educators, 91 returned completed questionnaires for a response rate of 97.8%. The survey was designed, first, to assess how important administrative history is, in the opinion of the officials and educators, to the work of archivists; second, to assess the extent to which officials and educators considered administrative history to be an important part of the "cultural background" of the archivist and a "fundamental means" for fulfillment of his or her mission; and third, to gather information on the arrangements for training archivists in administrative history both in archival institutions and in archival education programs.

With respect to the first point, both officials and educators agreed almost unanimously (96.6% and 92.3% respectively) and not unexpectedly, that administrative history is essential to carrying out the archival functions. Concerning the second point, almost all of the archival officials (98.3%) and a lesser proportion of the educators (88.9%) indicated that they thought administrative history was important to the "cultural background" of the archivist. Almost all of the officials (94.8%) and a substantial proportion of the educators (76.9%) responded that they considered administrative history to be a "fundamental means" through which the archivist can fulfill his mission. And regarding the third point, the arrangements for training archivists in administrative history, one-third of the archival educators reported that part of a course (usually a course in methodology) in their programs was devoted to the subject. None of them indicated that their programs included a course devoted exclusively to the subject. A substantial number of educators (82.1%) agreed that training staff members in administrative history in archival organizations was valuable. Almost all of the archival officials (96.6%) reported that staff members received training in administrative history through on-the-job experience, and only a few (16.9%) indicated that staff members received formal training on the subject.

The results of the survey suggest, first, that the general view in the profession is that administrative history is an important aspect

of the work of the archivist;¹³ second, that there is considerable agreement in the profession with Trever's ideas concerning the general relevance of administrative history (in contrast to its importance as a tool) to archival work; and third, that despite the importance which thus appears to be attached to administrative history by the profession, the arrangements for training in the subject are quite limited.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest that administrative history can make a more substantial contribution to the professional growth of the individual archivist and to the development of the archival profession than it does as it is presently defined and used; and to propose what archivists and the profession as a whole can do to make this contribution a reality.

One of the points raised by some of the survey respondents in their written comments, and by other archivists in interviews, concerned the nature or content of administrative history, and its intellectual or cultural significance. Some denied that there was such a thing as administrative history, while others suggested that it was and could be nothing more than a compilation of the significant legal and administrative events in the lives of organizations, valuable only as a tool for carrying out the archival functions.

The extensive research and writing by historians and political scientists in a subject which is referred to by them as administrative history would appear to demonstrate as well as anything that the subject is an identifiable and recognized field of study. Gerald Nash has included a bibliography of some of this work in his *Perspectives on Administration: The Vistas of History*. Included are studies in the ancient, medieval, and modern periods; in government, the military, the church, and business; and studies from institutional functional, biographical, psychological, entrepreneurial, and other "perspectives."

But what is the content of these studies in administrative history? Trever proposed that federal administrative history is concerned with "the development, organization, functions, and activities" of the agencies of the federal government.¹⁴ This is actually a description of administrative history in its usual role as an archival tool in any institutional setting. It is too narrow for Trever's idea of administrative history as part of the "cultural

history" of the nation, and of the "cultural background" of the archivist. What is needed is a conception of the subject matter of administrative history which is broad enough to encompass both its role as an archival tool, on the one hand, and its place in the "cultural history" of the nation, on the other.

Such a conception is provided by distinguishing between what might be labelled "history of administration" and "administrative history."¹⁵ The focus of history of administration is the origin and development of the structure, functions, and activities; the procedures, policies, and programs; and any other aspect of a public or private organization. The focus of administrative history, on the other hand, is more on the role of social, political, economic, and cultural factors in the origin and development of an organization, and the impact of the organization on these factors. Administrative history does not neglect the organizational matters which are the concern of history of administration, but the emphasis is on the interaction between the organization and the social environment.

With respect to form, histories of administration may range from simple lists or compilations of the legal administrative acts by which an organization, or some aspect of it, originated and developed; to digests which cover the same information but in more detail and in narrative form; to studies which (at least at their best) deal analytically and in some depth with the origin and development of an organization, or some aspect of it, in relation to external factors. Compilations and digests are the usual forms of history of administration prepared by archivists as tools for selection, accessioning, and arrangement, and as finding aids. Studies in history of administration and in administrative history are more likely to be prepared by scholars in history, political science, public administration, or economics. As a practical matter, archivists will be more concerned with the forms of history of administration than with administrative history. Both have a large potential contribution to make to the professional growth of the archivist and to the development of the archival profession, however.¹⁶ (In the subsequent discussion, administrative history refers to both history of administration and administrative history.)

Any contribution of administrative history to the archival

profession can, of course, take place only through the activities of individual archivists, and what they will do will be determined by their backgrounds and interests, and by the time and resources available to them in their particular institutional settings. At the present time, as suggested earlier, the role of administrative history appears to be confined for the most part to the compilations and digests which are prepared by archivists as tools for collection administration. These basic forms of administrative history, while essential to the work of the archivist and the mission of the profession, do not make a substantial contribution to the professional growth of the archivist, or to the development of the archival profession.

There are, however, at least four additional ways by which the contribution of administrative history can be expanded. First, archivists can systematically study published and unpublished works in administrative history which pertain to their particular institutions and to other similar or related institutions. They can conduct research in administrative history (beyond that necessary to prepare the basic compilations and digests) for the purpose of preparing advanced finding aids, bibliographic guides, synopses, and other materials for the use of scholars. They can themselves research and write studies in administrative history for internal use or publication. And they can contribute to the preparation of other archivists for study, research, and writing in administrative history by means of instruction and the preparation of instructional materials.

At each level—study, research, writing, and instruction—the contribution of administrative history to the professional growth of the archivist, and to the development of the archival profession, will increase. The archivist will acquire a broader foundation for carrying out the basic archival functions, an appreciation of the relationships of his or her collections to those in other repositories, and an understanding of the connections between the history of his or her institution, and the social, economic, and political history of the larger society. From the standpoint of the profession, its mission will be accomplished more effectively because of the increased effectiveness of individual archivists in carrying out their work; its knowledge base will be expanded through dissemination of a knowledge of administrative history among archivists and

the accumulation of administrative history studies; and its moral legitimacy as a profession will be reinforced because the relationships between the work of the profession and the realization of fundamental values in the larger society will be revealed.

There are a number of steps that the profession as a whole should undertake to facilitate and support the work in administrative history of individual archivists. First, archivists must be encouraged and supported by the profession (and by their employing institutions) to contribute to the role of administrative history in the profession at whatever level—study, research, writing, instruction—they find it possible to do so. To prepare them for this work, course work in administrative history should be part of archival education programs and of the formal training programs in archival institutions, and regional seminars on the subject should be offered, perhaps under the auspices of the Society of American Archivists or regional professional associations. The SAA could also sponsor the development of model courses and basic course materials in administrative history for such programs and seminars. And to support archivists in this work, a methodology manual on research in administrative history should be prepared, and the large number of published and unpublished studies on the subject available in libraries and repositories should be brought under bibliographic control, projects which also could be undertaken by the SAA. And finally, preparation in the methodology and subject matter of administrative history should be made a professional requirement for archivists. With respect to the last point, Frank B. Evans has urged that administrative history be part of the formal educational background of archivists; and according to the SAA “Guidelines for Graduate Archival Education Programs,” administrative history is a subdivision of one of five “theory elements” that must be covered by courses in archival theory.¹⁷

This essay is intended as a preliminary statement in what, it is hoped, will become a creative dialogue on the issue of the place of administrative history in the work, intellectual foundations, and mission of the profession. One important line of criticism which perhaps can be anticipated is that an increased emphasis on administrative history would fall squarely within, and reinforce, the traditional concern of the profession with the records of

established institutions and elites, at a time when the profession should be turning its attention to compiling "a whole new world of documentary material, about the lives, desires, needs, of ordinary people."¹⁸ It is true that administrative history is central to the customary orientation of the archival profession to large-scale bureaucratic institutions in the public and private sectors. But the critics do not advocate that the profession abandon its concern for the records and documents of these institutions, which have been and will continue to be a dominant force in American society, but only that it broaden its perspective to include those of social history as well. And as the archival legacy of public and private bureaucracies increases in volume and complexity, archivists will need more than ever before a solid foundation of administrative history for their work. Nor is administrative history unrelated to the new concern for social history. Buried in the records of large bureaucracies is the evidence for the "processing" of millions of ordinary people. To locate these records, to extract information from them, to understand the purposes and procedures, the values, definitions, and assumptions which underlie this processing, requires a thorough knowledge of the administrative history of these institutions.

Archives administration displays most of the features of an established profession: an association, a journal, a code of ethics, requirements for admission, and so on. But just because an occupation has the formal characteristics of a profession does not necessarily mean that it is a fully developed profession. Indeed, Herman Kahn has noted that the professional status of their vocation seems to be a matter of concern to archivists. Their tendency to reassure each other constantly that archives administration is a profession, and that archivists are professionals, reflects "some nervousness" on their part about it.¹⁹

I would like to suggest that the commitment of archives administration to administrative service and records management as primary missions has hindered the emergence of full professionalism, because it has prevented the development of the substantive characteristics of professionalism, and has encouraged the view that archives administration is just another staff function. As a result, the strongly proclaimed convictions of archivists notwithstanding, archives administration is probably not held to be a

profession by the larger society. And it is this evaluation which must be the ultimate goal of professionalization, for only society can bestow the legal monopoly of a key social function, the occupational autonomy, the rewards, and the prestige which an established profession such as medicine or law receives, and which confirms its status and acceptance as a profession.

A reorientation of archives administration away from its preoccupation with administrative service and records management toward the cultural-historical mission which was relegated to the background years ago for the sake of professional and bureaucratic security would open up new opportunities for professional development. Study, research, writing, and instruction in administrative history by archivists, encouraged and supported by the profession as a whole, would make a substantial contribution to the renaissance of the profession's cultural-historical mission.²⁰

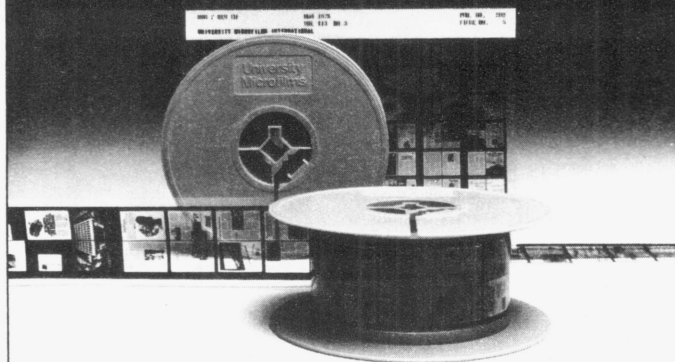
FOOTNOTES

1. Waldo Leland, "The National Archives: A Programme," *American Historical Review* 18 (October 1912): 24.
2. S. Muller, J.A. Feith, and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1968), pp. 52-59; Thornton W. Mitchell, *Norton on Archives; The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archival Records and Management* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), pp. 48-49.
3. H.G. Jones, *The Records of a Nation; Their Management, Preservation, and Use* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 84-85.
4. Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 118.
5. Schellenberg, p. 140.
6. Karl L. Trever, "Administrative History in Federal Archives," *American Archivist* 4 (July 1941): 159-169.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 160, 169.
9. Trever's article was based on material presented in a seminar on Federal administrative history taught by Solon J. Buck and Philip M. Bauer; on research in the National Archives Library; and on a study of the archival manuals of Jenkinson, and of Muller, Feith, and Fruin. Personal interview with Karl L. Trever, May 16, 1979, Arlington, Virginia.
10. Louis Galambos, "The Emerging Organizational Synthesis in Modern History," *Business History Review* 44 (Autumn 1970): 279-290. Also see: Wayne K. Hobson, "Professionals, Progressives and Bureaucratization: a

Reassessment." *Historian* 39 (August 1977): 639-658 (and the material cited therein); and Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967). In his survey of the study of administrative history, Gerald Nash takes as his thesis "that civilizations have flourished and maintained themselves only as they were able to effect a satisfactory balance between cultural achievement and the development of an organizational framework." Gerald D. Nash, *Perspectives on Administration: The Vistas of History* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California-Berkeley, 1969), Parts I-IV.

11. The only paper besides Trever's on the place of administrative history in archival work which could be located was Hugh A. Taylor, "Administrative History: An Archivist's Need," *Canadian Archivist* 2, no. 1 (1970): 4-9. Also see the accompanying paper: V. Seymour Wilson, "Administrative History: An Historian's Opportunity," pp. 9-17; and the discussion of the two papers, pp. 17-20. The literature search did not extend to published administrative histories of public and private organizations.
12. The survey was financed entirely from personal funds, and its scope was therefore necessarily limited. I am grateful to all who took time to complete and return the questionnaire.
13. The high level of agreement among archival officials no doubt reflects the fact that administrative history is especially important to archives administration in government. Archivists in non-governmental institutions would probably also agree that administrative history is important to their work, but perhaps would not be as fully convinced on this point as the government archivists.
14. Trever, "Administrative History in Federal Archives," p. 160.
15. A similar distinction was suggested by Taylor in his "Administrative History: An Archivist's Need," p. 5.
16. An example of the potential contribution of administrative history to archival work is provided by Francis X. Blouin, Jr., in his review of Alfred J. Chandler's, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1977). Blouin suggests that Chandler's book will help business archivists with the appraisal process by answering questions about the evolution of corporate structure, the business activities which created various types of records, and the character of record keeping practices. Francis X. Blouin, Jr., "A New Perspective on the Appraisal of Business Records: A Review," *American Archivist* 42 (July 1979): 312-320.
17. Frank B. Evans, "Postappointment Archival Training: A Proposed Solution for a Basic Problem," *American Archivist* 40 (January 1977): 72-73; *SAA Newsletter* (May 1977) pp. 4-5.
18. Howard Zinn, "Secrecy, Archives, and the Public Interest," *Midwestern Archivist* 2, no. 2 (1977): 25; also see: Sam Bass Warner, Jr., "The Shame of the Cities: Public Records of the Metropolis," *Midwestern Archivist* 2, no. 2 (1977): 27-34; and Fredric M. Miller "Social History and Archival Practice," *American Archivist* 44 (Spring 1981): 113-124.
19. Herman Kahn, "Some Comments on the Archival Vocation," *American Archivist* 34 (January 1971): 5.
20. Copies of a "Selected Bibliography on Administrative History," prepared in conjunction with this article, are available from the author at the Department of Management, College of Business, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, WI 53190.

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BOOK REVIEWS

"Preserving the Past for the Future: Local History and the Community," Papers Presented at Chester, Lancaster, York, and Rock Hill, March 24-27, 1980. Edited by Ron Chepesiuk. Rock Hill, South Carolina: Dacus Library at Winthrop College, 1980. 45 pp. Paper. \$4.00.

This publication includes seven papers which were presented at the March 1980 conference, "Preserving the Past for the Future: Local History and the Community." The conference, sponsored and funded by Winthrop College and the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities, consisted of four sessions held at Chester, Lancaster, York, and Rock Hill, South Carolina, and was designed to stimulate and promote interest in studying and preserving local history in the Catawba Region of South Carolina.

Although the focus of this conference was on the study and preservation of local history in the Catawba Region, the basic concepts presented in these papers may be applied to various local history research projects and preservation programs throughout the United States. These concepts, therefore, will be beneficial for many genealogists, historians, archivists, librarians, and others involved in local history.

Genealogists, and sometimes historians, forget that genealogy and local history are inseparable. In Lawrence K. Wells's paper, "Local History and the Community: The Genealogist's Perspective," the author demonstrates, with examples from South Carolina genealogies and histories, how important it is for the researcher to know and understand a community's history as a basis for accurate and interesting research. He also shows how a knowledge of a region's local history will help a researcher locate records more easily. In addition, Wells emphasizes the need for good documentation of data.

John Bonner's article, "How to Write Your Own Local History," based on concepts presented in Wells's paper, identifies types of sources and repositories available for the researcher. Bonner also provides a helpful format for those writing their first community history.

One of the most interesting papers in this collection is "The Role of the Archives and Historical Society in Preserving Local History" by Ron Chepesiuk. He believes that archives, historical societies, and libraries have an essential role in preserving the local history of a community. Besides knowing what records to preserve and providing the proper care and storage for these records, curators need to make their community aware of the value of collecting and preserving local history. Chepesiuk suggests that curators involve the people in their community by presenting talks and seminars and providing opportunities for individuals or groups to participate in oral history, photography, historic preservation and other local history projects. Thus, this paper not only stimulates interest in local history, but also provides constructive suggestions for developing good local history programs.

The next two papers in this collection are Louise Pettus's "New Methods of Documenting" and Julian L. Mims's "County Records: Their Protection and Use." Pettus shows how oral history and photographic projects provide new and interesting ways of documenting history. She also suggests topics and methods for using oral and photographic history. Mims identifies the types of county records and their uses. He also discusses the problems of protecting and preserving these records against fire, theft, water damage, and other destructive elements.

The last two papers provide interesting accounts which stress the value of local history. Through a case study of John Gary Anderson, Arnold M. Shankman shows the reader that "in studying those who lived where we do today we can find out not only about the history of our section of South Carolina but also about the history of the South and of the nation." In "The Genesis of State and National History," Carolyn H. Sung traces the interest and development of state and national history from the earliest cultures to the present. She concludes her paper by encouraging others to join her in a study of various topics about Chester County, South Carolina.

After reading these seven papers by experts in various fields of genealogy and local history, archivists, genealogists, historians, librarians, and other local history fans will be stimulated by the ideas presented. The topics in these papers will appeal to many groups in a community and will promote and encourage an active pursuit of preserving and researching local history, not only in the South Carolina region, but also throughout the United States.

Elizabeth Agard
The Newberry Library

Illinois Libraries 63, No. 3 (March 1981): 225-82 and 63, No. 4 (April 1981): 283-342. "Archival Issue." Edited by Patrick M. Quinn.

Journals of librarianship frequently publish articles on techniques used in archival management. It is not often, however, that their editors devote whole issues to archives. *Illinois Libraries*, the journal published by the Illinois State Library, has produced two notable exceptions in recent years. In March 1975 (Vol. 57, No. 3) a special archival issue surveyed the holdings of selected repositories in the state. In 1981 the journal again covered the archival scene, this time filling two issues.

As was the case with the 1975 issue, the 1981 *Illinois Libraries* survey consists mainly of articles describing individual repositories. The first five contributions in the March issue, however, have a more general focus. Editor Patrick M. Quinn leads off with a general assessment of the current archival situation in Illinois. This is followed by a look back at the "pioneer period" written by the eminent Margaret Cross Norton. Joyce E. Gianatasio briefly attests to the presence of the Society of American Archivists headquarters in Chicago. The development of the Illinois Regional Archives Depository System (IRAD) is described by Roy Turnbaugh. Mary E. Janzen contributes a bibliography of literature on Illinois repositories written during the 1970's. The balance of the March issue is about repositories outside the Chicago area. Included are descriptions of the Manuscript Section

of the Illinois State Historical Library, the Illinois State Archives, the Sangamon State University Archives, the Knox College Archives, the Special Collections Department of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, the Everett Dirksen Center, the University of Illinois at Urbana Archives, the Northern Illinois University Regional History Center, the John Deere and Co. Archives, and the Western Illinois University Archives and Special Collections.

The April issue is devoted to archival repositories in the Chicago metropolitan area. The first section, "General Repositories," includes articles on the Chicago Regional Branch of the National Archives, the Midwest Manuscripts Section of the Newberry Library, the International Harvester Archives, the Chicago Historical Society Manuscripts Collection, the Chicago Public Library Special Collections Division, the Swedish Pioneer Archives, and Manuscripts of the Burnham Library of Architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago. The second section concerns repositories at Chicago area colleges and universities. Among the institutions surveyed are the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, Aurora College Archives, Loyola University at Chicago, Northwestern University and the University of Chicago. Religious archives is the theme of the third section. Included are articles on the Lutheran Church in America Archives, the Brethren Historical Library and Archives, the Chicago Archdiocesan Archives, the Moody Bible Institute Archives, the Archives of the Billy Graham Center and the Archives of the Evangelical Covenant Church of America. The fourth and final section concerns repositories in health care institutions. The articles survey archives at the Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Michael Reese Hospital, the American Medical Association, the Cook County Hospital and the University of Illinois Medical Center.

Considered as a reference work for archivists, one would have to say that the 1981 *Illinois Libraries* survey has limited utility. Much of the same information can be found in a more concise and handier form in the NHPRC *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories*. It is true that the journal survey includes articles on several repositories missed by the 1978 edition of the *Directory*. But a comparison with the *Directory* also reveals a number of Illinois archives not described in the journal survey.

Perhaps a future "Archival Issue" in *Illinois Libraries* could include articles on collections of the Episcopal Diocesan Archives at Chicago and at Springfield, the Museum of Science and Industry, Illinois State University, Principia College, Quincy College, and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, among others.

Considered as a broad sample of developments in the state archival scene, the *Illinois Libraries* survey plainly succeeds. The late 1970s were years of significant growth for most of the thirty-three featured repositories. The total picture is something of which the professional community can justifiably be proud.

Paul G. Anderson
Washington University

An Introduction to Archives and Manuscripts. By David B. Gracy II. New York: Special Libraries Association, 1981. 36 pp. Bibliography. Paper. \$7.25.

Librarians sometimes find themselves dealing with an alien beast—the administration of archives and manuscripts. That is a fact of life and may become even more common in these times of economic retrenchment. This book, published by the Special Libraries Association, is an attempt to familiarize librarians somewhat more with the interiors of Grendel's Cave. Although advertised as "invaluable to all archivists, librarians, and information managers," there can be little doubt that Gracy has aimed it primarily at librarians. He constantly draws comparisons between archival and library work, explaining, among other things, why archivists "think groups" rather than in terms of items, why cooperative cataloging will never work for archivists, and why collections arranged around a subject are anathema to archivists.

Writing in layman's language, Gracy has done a fine job of explaining the philosophies behind archival work, as well as the process itself to the non-archivist. For example, to illustrate the concept of "respect des fonds," he draws an analogy between the archivist and the mechanic: "Both work with units made up of

many individual parts—cars for the one, record groups and collections for the other. They receive the units usually in a state of disrepair or disarray. Their jobs are to tinker with the units... until, for the mechanic, all the parts are in proper relation to each other, tuned and balanced. The archivist has completed the chore when the records and papers are arranged and described adequately to facilitate locating on demand the information they hold."

This book is divided into two sections, one dealing with the principles and one with the actual process of archival work. The former includes such concepts as the difference between archives and manuscripts, the uniqueness of archival materials, "respect des fonds," provenance, the conflict between the right to know and the right to privacy, and the dichotomy of archivist as scholar and/or businessman. The section dealing with the process illuminates the areas of acquisition, appraisal, accessioning, arrangement, description, conservation and reference. Gracy also includes a brief glossary of archival terms.

Asked, in effect, to put archival work into a nutshell, Gracy has written a highly readable and easily understandable introduction to the administration of archives and manuscripts. Of course, in a book this brief, there is always the danger of oversimplification, as Gracy himself admits in his preface. In the reality of archival practice, things are rarely as black and white as they sometimes appear in this narrative. To be sure, the appendix contains a suggested reading list for further study, and librarians who purchase this book would be well advised to add some of the others to their collection as well.

In conclusion, while this book might be effectively used in a library school curriculum as a good introduction to archival work, to initiate students into its mysteries without all the jargon which each profession invariably accumulates, professional archivists will find nothing in it that has not been said in the SAA Basic Manual Series, and in much more detail.

Beverly D. Bishop
Missouri Historical Society

Manuscripts Collections of the Minnesota Regional Research Centers: Guide Number 2. Compiled by James E. Fogerty. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1980. 79 pp. Index. Paper. \$4.50.

The network of Minnesota Regional Research Centers (MRRC), established by the Minnesota Historical Society and cooperating universities, originated in 1967 when centers were established at Mankato State University and St. Cloud State University. In addition to these there are now six more centers located on the campuses of Bemidji State University, Moorhead State University, Southwest State University, Winona State University, the University of Minnesota-Duluth, and the University of Minnesota-Morris. *Guide Number 2* includes a map indicating the location of each center and lists the counties which each center has responsibility over.

This volume, as the title suggests, is an update of a previous work, the *Preliminary Guide to the Holdings of the Minnesota Regional Research Centers* (St. Paul, 1975). Whereas the *Preliminary Guide* included 114 entries, *Guide Number 2* lists 858, indicating a healthy growth in new accessions. Since there is no indication to the contrary, one must assume no unprocessed collections are included in *Guide Number 2*. This certainly is the case with the St. Louis County Historical Society holdings, which were unprocessed when they were transferred to the MRRC in 1977.

The large number of entries pertaining to local public records—the records of counties, municipalities, and townships—indicates the keen interest of the MRRC in the preservation of such records. More than half of the 196 entries to public records in *Guide Number 2* pertain to school districts. The 145 entries for church records reflect the MRRC's active microfilming and collecting activity in that field. The papers of Minnesota state legislators comprise 73 entries, and the papers of women and women's organizations number 58 entries.

Entries in *Guide Number 2* are arranged in alphabetical order and numbered. Information in the entry heading includes the collection title, the birth and death dates for creators of personal papers wherever possible, inclusive dates of the collection, quantity of material (indicated in number of pages for single items, in

items for collections less than one linear inch, linear inches or feet, volumes, and rolls of microfilm), location of originals of copied materials, notation of restriction if pertinent, and a letter abbreviation indicating which center holds the collection. The content note provides a brief summary of principal persons and organizations associated with the collection. Record types, also included in the content note, have been given inclusive dates often times although this practice is somewhat inconsistent, particularly with public and church records. Only when a collection listed in the *Preliminary Guide* has received substantial revision is it included in *Guide Number 2*.

The index to *Guide Number 2*, which is keyed to the entry number, focuses heavily on proper names, including personal, organizational, and geographical, but also includes sufficient subject analysis. The indexing of public records by type is omitted except, curiously enough, for crow and wolf bounties (although the wolf bounty records for French Township, St. Louis County proved to be elusive). This reviewer believes the index would be more valuable if it also treated the holdings entered in the *Preliminary Guide* (which merely contained a geographical index and no subject analysis whatsoever). As only 6 entries from the *Preliminary Guide* were included in *Guide Number 2*, the remaining collections—which include the papers of 25 state legislators and 1 Congresswoman—await their day.

Taken on the whole, however, *Guide Number 2* provides significant insight to the research materials of the MRRC and should stimulate their use. Lucile Kane must be complimented for her cogent introductory remarks outlining the history of the MRRC. Fogerty, too, must be commended for his description of the guide's intent. The network's success proves Kane correct in her assertion that the MRRC is "a bright passage in the history of the state's effort to document the past."

Michael J. Dabrishus
Texas State Archives

A Manual for Records Preservation and Disaster Planning for State Government Agencies in Nebraska; A Manual for Paper Preservation and Disaster Planning for Archives, Libraries and Museums in Nebraska; and A Manual for Records Preservation and Disaster Planning for Local Government Agencies in Nebraska. By Judith Fortson-Jones. Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1981. 20 pp. (each). Paper.

Though it is a well-organized, well-written handbook on the preservation of paper records and the prevention of and recovery from records disaster, I found this publication more than a little puzzling. For it is, essentially, one publication masquerading as three. The titles vary slightly and the paper covers are different colors, but the prefaces (all written by Nebraska State Archivist James E. Potter) and the introductions are substantially the same, while the texts of the three publications *are* identical, so far as I could tell. I would think that the interests of the public, as well as those of the Nebraska State Historical Society and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, would have been better served with one publication with a more general title, such as, say, *A Manual for Paper Records Preservation & Disaster Planning for Nebraskans*. In any event, archivists should not be misled by the titles of these “three publications”—buy one of them and you’ll have all three.

The manual itself is divided into three sections: “Environmental Controls,” “Storage and Handling,” and “Disaster Prevention and Recovery.” (For some unknown reason, though, the first two sections are both labeled “Section I,” and the last is “Section II.”) The environmental controls section deals with the effects of pollution, temperature, relative humidity, and lighting on paper and microfilm. Discussion of each hazard is followed by a brief checklist that summarizes the corrective/precautionary actions that can be taken to deal with each. The actions recommended are the standard precautions outlined elsewhere throughout archival and curatorial literature, but Ms. Fortson-Jones does an excellent job of compiling them in an easily readable format. She explains how it is that the hazard affects paper or microfiche, what the cumulative effects of exposure can be, and what can be done to prevent or alleviate the effects of exposure. Her suggestions for corrective action are always concrete and specific.

The second section, "Storage and Handling," covers storage furnishings and containers, handling procedures, and supplies and suppliers. The author does not recommend any one type of storage furniture over another, but discusses, in a general way, the pros and cons of each type. She does note that the only perfectly safe storage furniture is stainless steel, but it "is not ordinarily used because of its expense." This section, like the first one, has checklists at the end of each subsection, which can be taken in hand and used to evaluate your own facility. This section, too, offers nothing radical or new, but does serve as a concise summary of the state of the art to date. It ends with a list of supplies and suppliers which, unaccountably, fails to include the Hollinger Corporation. (Can any list of archival suppliers be complete without mentioning Hollinger?)

In the third section of the publication, "Disaster Prevention and Recovery," the author relies very heavily on Peter Waters' booklet *Procedures for Salvage of Water-Damaged Library Materials*. She translates his work into a step-by-step "recipe for coping" in the event of a records disaster. The manual format used is quite appropriate, and the steps outlined would generally be applicable to any archival institution recovering from a disaster. Archivists in other states would not, of course, contact the Nebraska State Historical Society's Conservation Specialist, but they would be led by Fortson-Jones's advice to find out who in their area is a competent conservation specialist, and how they can be reached in the event of a disaster.

The "Categorizing and Preparing for Treatment," "Treatment of Water-Damaged Paper" and "Treatment of Water-Damaged Microfilm" sections rely very heavily on Waters' work, but are written in a procedural format and are meant to be used as a guide while actually coping with such disasters. The author completes the disaster recovery section with a list of recommendations for short-term and long-range steps that can be taken to prevent possible disasters, or to prevent confusion and loss in the event of a disaster.

Though the work is largely derivative from other sources, and no institution needs to have copies of it in all three of its incarnations, it would be a very worthwhile addition to the professional collections of most archives as a "how-to" guide for

evaluating one's preservation, disaster preparedness, and disaster recovery efforts.

Jean Marie Deken
National Personnel Records Center

The WPA Historical Records Survey: A Guide to the Unpublished Inventories, Indexes, and Transcripts. Compiled by Loretta L. Hefner. Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 1980. 42 pp. Appendices and bibliography. Paper. \$4.00, members; \$6.00, non-members.

The Works Progress Administration Historical Records Survey (WPA-HRS) began as a work-relief project in 1935 and ended in 1942 as the largest survey of historical records ever conducted in the United States. Thousands of workers in every state inventoried public and private records, including county government records, court records, and church records. They indexed newspapers and the proceedings of state legislatures. They transcribed cemetery inscriptions, Civil War diaries, and court records. By 1942, 90 percent of the field work in all 3,066 counties in the United States had been completed and more than 2,000 inventories published, but 80 percent of HRS findings never reached print. During the war, this material was temporarily transferred to repositories in each state until the project could be revitalized. Unfortunately, this never happened. What, then, was the fate of those unpublished findings? This question intrigued Leonard Rappaport, who in 1970 began his own survey, reported his findings four years later to the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and the Society of American Archivists, and urged those organizations to expand his project. Finally in 1977 the SAA received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to conduct a state-by-state survey and publish a guide to the remaining HRS material.

The WPA-HRS Guide to the Unpublished Inventories, Indexes, and Transcripts is the first guide to come out of the publications program of the Society of American Archivists. The SAA and

project editor Loretta L. Hefner have done a good job. Leonard Rapport, in an introductory essay, recapitulates the history and value of HRS material. The guide itself is arranged alphabetically by state. It includes a brief paragraph describing each state's HRS activities and the past and present locations of HRS material. "See references" are included for material from one state located in repositories in other states. The number of HRS publications is also noted. Separate entries for each repository are given along with addresses, a general description of holdings, collection titles, volume, inclusive dates, and the availability of finding aids. Lists of specific projects at each repository are divided into National Projects (such as Inventory of County Records) and State Projects (such as Inventory of Cemetery Records). For some projects, marked by an asterisk, lists of counties, municipalities or denominations are provided on the microfiche card in the back of the guide. Of particular value is the listing of transcripts of records for which the originals may no longer be available.

The results of the SAA's survey are sometimes depressing. Eleven states reported holdings of 10 cubic feet or less, a small percentage of the original records if one judges from the hundreds of cubic feet kept by some states. No records were reported for New Mexico (which integrated the historically valuable material into regular record group series), Washington (where the majority of the records were discarded in the 1960s) or Maine (where the records were dumped "from a wharf into Casco Bay when no Maine library would accept them.")

Fortunately most states did preserve their HRS material—this guide would not have been necessary had they not. Thirty-one states plus the District of Columbia and New York City reported holdings of 50 cubic feet or more. The value of the guide, however, goes beyond the reporting of record locations. Luther Evans, the first director of HRS, wrote in the foreword that he hoped the guide "will remind archivists, librarians, and researchers of the value of the records and give them their deserved attention." This publication should stimulate the care and use of HRS material. It could also be an invaluable tool for those charged with locating and preserving local public records. The original HRS forms could be models for current surveys or updates of HRS inventories. Perhaps this guide will provide the incentive for such projects.

I do have some criticisms of the Guide, but most are minor. (1) It would have been helpful to include the phone numbers as well as the addresses for HRS repositories. (2) Although the Guide was carefully edited, there are some omissions, but these could well be the fault of the reporting institutions. For example, the Missouri entry does not list the transcripts of county court records, which for some counties may be the only extant copy. (3) No information on the administrative and legal files is included and should have been. Those records are important for anyone researching archival practice or the history of the HRS itself. (4) It would have been extremely helpful to provide a description of the National and State Projects instead of just listing them. This information is essentially duplicated in a handy chart in the appendix. How much more work would it have been, for example, to include the volume, years covered, and percentage of counties surveyed for the Inventory of County Records? What exactly is included in an Inventory of Church Records? Does it cover all churches or just one denomination? All counties or just northern ones? All years or just those prior to the Civil War?

Aside from these minor points, the HRS Guide is extremely well done. One hopes that it is the first of many more guides to sources published by the SAA.

Anne R. Kenney
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Guernsey County's Black Pioneers, Patriots, and Persons. By Wayne L. Snider. Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1979. 136 pp. Appendices, illustrations, index, maps, notes. Paper. \$4.95.

Wayne L. Snider's *Guernsey County's Black Pioneers, Patriots, and Persons* combines genealogy and local history into a narrative of black development in an Ohio county where blacks comprised only 1.45 percent of the total population in 1870, and only 1.85 percent a century later. Though the title refers to its subjects as pioneers, patriots, and persons, the book's emphasis is on pioneers, and its content is largely confined to the years up to and including

the Civil War. Chapters exceeding this framework do so only to complete their subject matter. A retired pastor and amateur historian, the author dedicates his book to those Guernsey County churches that minister to blacks or are concerned with their welfare.

The individual chapters are uneven in their quality. The best exceeds the boundaries and concerns of local history to portray the legal status of Ohio's black residents during the nineteenth century. In so doing, Snider destroys the claims of those mythmakers who would have us believe in the enlightenment of the northern states, by reminding us that Ohio's black residents were for decades excluded from suffrage, jury duty, public assistance, attendance in public schools, and interracial marriage. Many of these prohibitions remained after the end of the Civil War; the last of them disappeared only in 1887. In contrast, Snider's chapter on the county's black churches is little more than a disappointing listing of black congregations and their ministers. Nowhere in it do we obtain any sense of the religiosity of the black community, of the consolation black churches provided their parishioners for a hard life in a largely hostile environment, or of the role black churches often played as a substitute career path for able black men who found all other doors closed to them. The five remaining chapters are concerned with identifying Guernsey County's earliest black settlers and the circumstances of their arrival; highlights of the operation of the Underground Railroad system in Guernsey County; Ohio's black soldiers and their units during the Civil War; the education of blacks in Guernsey County during most of the nineteenth century; and the life and achievements of Reverdy C. Ransom, bishop of the A.M.E. Church, and one of the county's most remarkable men.

This book rests on archival material, published sources, and oral testimony. Frequently noted written materials include military, pension, and cemetery records; death certificates; the laws and statutes of Ohio; all nineteenth century federal censuses for the state of Ohio; and William Wolfe's voluminous *Stories of Guernsey County*. Photographic images, maps and diagrams, population charts, and biographical sketches of twenty-six Guernsey County blacks who served in the Civil War enhance the value of Snider's work. Photos of nineteenth century blacks always have a

special value of their own. In this case they offer poignant testimony of the poverty and hardship, dignity and pride, of their subjects.

There are shortcomings to this work that one attributes to the author's lack of formal historical training. The use of long quotes where paraphrasing would have been suitable, and the presence of long lists of names in the text, are minor matters. A more important weakness lies in the lack of a bibliographical essay, or at least a bibliographical list, to indicate the full range of resources that were important to this study. The many historical questions passed over without comment are significant omissions. It would be helpful to know the response of Guernsey County's white population to the modest influx of blacks during the nineteenth century; or to know what the daily routine in the life of a black family was like; or to learn to what degree blacks were subjected to social pressures, to open discrimination, or to genuine persecution, in addition to the legal strictures that denied them most of the basic rights of citizenship.

In the prefix to *Pioneers, Patriots, and Persons* an unidentified commentator notes that the book is the first step toward recording the history of Guernsey County's black residents. This accurately sums up the book's value. It is praised as a hopeful, important beginning, a skeleton to be fleshed out by later researchers, and is recommended on this basis as a resource for local black history.

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Automating the Archives: Issues and Problems in Computer Applications. Edited by Lawrence J. McCrank. White Plains, N.Y.: Knowledge Industry Publications, for the American Society for Information Science, 1981. 363 pages. Appendices, bibliography and index. Cloth, \$34.50 (ASIS members \$27.60); paper, \$27.50 (ASIS members \$22.00).

At a 1980 symposium on archival automation, Nancy Sahli remarked "... there is no standard monograph, evaluative text, or

even a reader of articles on archival automation to be used as an introductory guide," Ironically, much of the need for a comprehensive examination of automation for archives has been answered by the edited and published proceedings of the very symposium at which Sahli spoke.

Lawrence J. McCrank's *Automating the Archives: Issues and Problems in Computer Applications* is an essential source book for archivists interested in developing systems for automated subject and administrative control of their holdings. If H. Thomas Hickerson's *Archives & Manuscripts: An Introduction to Automated Access* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1981) is the introductory manual to archival automation, McCrank's book is the advanced book of readings.

McCrank has edited the proceedings of a two-day symposium, entitled "Archival Automation: Future Access to the Past," co-sponsored by the College of Library and Information Services at the University of Maryland, College Park, and the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Society for Information Science. In preparing conference papers for publication, McCrank rearranged the presentations to provide a coherent treatment of the subject. Keynote addresses by Frank Burke, Maynard Brichford and Theodore Hershberg, representing respectively the views of administrator, professional and researcher, are followed by case studies of automation in seven institutions. Critiques of archivists' approaches to automation are offered by six information scientists. Then, both archivists and information scientists state their priorities for future developments. The proceedings conclude with five presentations analyzing automation needs in relation to cooperation of archives, libraries, and information centers in a national information system.

A particular strength of *Automating the Archives* is the inclusion of descriptions of several automated systems for controlling archival material, including SPINDEX, PARADIGM, Philadelphia Social History project, BRISC-ARCHON, the Midwest Archives Guide project, NARS A-1, Library of Congress Master Record for manuscripts, and the Smithsonian Institution's SELGEM. In most cases, descriptions are illustrated by appendices which provide valuable examples of system design, scope and output capabilities.

A second major strength is the inclusion of commentary by users and information scientists. They criticize archival systems for being too heavily focused on administrative service and provenance, and insufficiently oriented toward researchers and expanded subject access. Many archivists may not agree, but the perspectives of information scientists Philip Leslie, C. David Batty and Dagobert Soergel, in particular, must be considered by all archivists interested in being more than mere custodians of records and manuscripts.

Finally, this work, if read cover to cover, is a particularly effective illustration of the complexity of archival automation. Diverse and competing systems are described; issues of cooperation and national systems are raised; and the relation of automation to appraisal, arrangement, description, preservation and reference service is noted. Definitive answers to these questions are not presented, nor are they available. *Automating the Archives* will not tell archivists whether or how they should automate their repositories. Rather, it suggests issues that must be considered and questions that must be asked before an archivist can embark on any automation project.

McCrank has done an admirable job in converting conference proceedings into a monograph. The work includes a detailed table of contents, excellent name and subject indices, the symposium's program, summaries of discussion, biographical information on speakers and panelists, and a list of symposium attendees.

Still, the work is not without limitations. Some information and opinions are becoming outdated, especially some system descriptions and hopes for greater funding. Since system descriptions are based on speakers' comments, some read more like press releases than critical analyses. Important problems, such as the difficulty of obtaining inter-institutional cooperation and the prevalence of competing systems, are glossed over. Finally, since the conference drew almost entirely upon relatively large institutions in the Maryland-Washington, D.C., area, many archivists in smaller repositories may question the relevance of some speakers' remarks. Shortcomings of this nature, however, are inherent in any set of conference proceedings.

Despite these limitations, *Automating the Archives* is the most detailed and comprehensive text on archival automation to date.

McCrank's careful editing has resulted in a volume that should be basic reading for all archivists interested in automation. Its value as a sourcebook makes it well worth the rather high price.

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The American Federation of Labor Records: The Samuel Gompers Era. Edited by Peter J. Albert and Harold L. Miller. Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1981. 67 pp. \$5.00.

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin and the Samuel Gompers documentary editing project at the University of Maryland and Pace University recently completed the microfilming of two large groups of records of the AFL from the Samuel Gompers era. *The American Federation of Labor: The Samuel Gompers Era* describes the microfilm edition of these records, which are held by the Society and the AFL-CIO.

The two groups of Gompers-era records described in this guide were arranged, described, and filmed independently. The Gompers project was responsible for the records held by the AFL-CIO, while the Society was responsible for the records in its possession. The guide, a collaborative effort, comprises two distinct sections reflecting this division of responsibility.

The guide consists of a rights and permissions statement, table of contents, preface, chronology of the AFL in the Gompers era, and a provenance statement. In addition each section contains a description (scope and content) of the records filmed and a reel list. Overall, the guide is of good quality with only a few minor problems. The rights and permissions statement says "Generally accepted use of the microfilm is unrestricted" (p. v.). In our litigious society "generally accepted use" is meaningless until the Copyright Act of 1976 is tested in court. Also, such imprecise phrases as "approximately 300,000 pages" (p. viii.) and "some 120 pages" (p. 7) are used. This lack of precision detracts from the rigor of processing that goes into all quality filming projects, including this one.

The value of every microfilm guide is measured by the ease and accuracy with which a researcher can locate desired information. This guide is accurate and facilitates easy access to the film. In fact the guide and film were used to pinpoint the address of one of the meeting halls used by the founding convention of the AFL in 1886. Again, however, there is a minor problem. Each records description tells the researcher the number of reels per series, rather than the reel numbers. The researcher is forced to cross-check the description statements against the reel lists. This problem is particularly evident in Part 2 where some of the descriptive statements are broken down into chronological segments. Giving the reel numbers with the descriptive statements would further facilitate research and would not detract from the use of the reel lists as indexes.

The film itself is third generation silver positive on a polyester base, filmed at a 14X reduction ratio. Like the guide, occasional minor flaws detract from overall quality. The Edmonton Papers, for instance, contain images of a blank piece of paper and an envelope with no letter. No explanation is given about the appraisal of these items which might explain why they were photographed.

Regardless of these minor problems, the guide and the film are excellent pieces of work that give researchers the necessary tools to investigate the Gompers era. The Gompers Project and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin are to be congratulated for bringing together the descriptions and the film in an easily understood and usable manner.

Roger A. Meade
Ohio Historical Society

The International Institute Movement: A Guide to Records of Immigrant Service Agencies in the United States. Compiled by Nicholas V. Montalto. St. Paul: Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, 1978. 74 pp. Appendix and bibliography. Paper.

This guide is the product of a survey of International Institute records made by the Immigration History Research Center funded by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

The first International Institute was established in New York City by the YWCA in 1910 to provide assistance to immigrant women and girls. The idea spread quickly, and by the end of the decade Institutes existed in major cities across the country. They offered a wide range of social services to the foreign born. The Institutes stressed the value of the individual's ethnic heritage while providing aid in the complicated process of adaptation to American life.

Beginning in the mid-thirties many of the Institutes re-affiliated with organizations other than the YWCA. During and after World War II much of their work concerned resettlement of displaced persons. More recently they participated in the Civil Rights Movement, and gave assistance to Vietnamese and Cuban refugees.

This guide furnishes a helpful short history of the movement together with a select bibliography. The introduction to the guide in addition to setting forth the structure of the book gives the researcher helpful background information regarding organizational affiliations of the Institutes.

The guide is organized into three sections: national administrative records, agency records, and lastly, personal collections and oral histories. The section on agency records is the largest. It contains entries on individual Institutes and other agencies engaged in similar work arranged alphabetically by the name of the city. These entries are based on survey reports supplemented by on-site visits. The entries are quite full, providing the address of the agency, the name of the director, historical notes, size of the collection in linear feet, a good concise description of the nature of the records, and information on access for researchers. The guide is illustrated with photographs of ethnic festivals and Institute programs. The appendix furnishes a list of agencies not surveyed.

The announced goal of the project which resulted in this guide was to generate interest in the proper care and preservation of International Institute records, and since its inception many agencies have transferred their records to archival repositories. As a result, in some instances papers will not be found at the site listed

in the guide. Such a case is the International Institute of Detroit, whose papers are now deposited in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University.

The Immigration History Research Center deserves recognition for this fine project and the contribution it has made to preserving the documentation of an important aspect of American ethnic history.

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Sources for the Study of Migration and Ethnicity: A Guide to Manuscripts in Finland, Ireland, Poland, The Netherlands and the State of Michigan. Edited by Francis X. Blouin, Jr. and Robert M. Warner. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The Bentley Historical Library, 1979. 337 pp. Illus., index. Paper. \$6.50.

Studies of immigration to the United States based solely on sources available in this country tell only part of the story. Evidence of migration also exists in the home country in the form of government records and reports, organizational records, and personal papers. Material was often generated not only as a result of the departure but also by continued communication with the home country. We must not forget, then, that as important as immigration has been to the United States, it has also been a phenomenon of international dimensions. With this in mind, and with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Bentley Historical Library of the University of Michigan launched an "Immigration Sources Project," 1976-1979. It had two purposes: first, to "suggest the variety and extent" (p. 1) of source material in Michigan and four foreign countries and, second, through those findings, to point to the types of materials that might be found in other foreign countries and other states in the United States. The project resulted in the present guide, listing more than 850 collections located in Michigan and nearly 250 found abroad.

The volume begins with an extensive and valuable discussion of the "Immigration Sources Project," the methods employed and the

implications of the findings. Thereafter follow major sections on Michigan and the four foreign countries investigated. Each of these sections is divided by type of institution covered. The section on Michigan includes churches, voluntary organizations, college and university libraries, historical societies, and museums. In most cases, the information from these institutions or organizations was gathered through questionnaires, with actual on-site inspections reserved for the larger collections. For the sections on Finland, Ireland, Poland, and the Netherlands, almost all of the national and regional repositories in each of those four countries were visited by a project staff member.

The sections on the foreign surveys are useful, accompanied as they are by introductory essays which describe the survey process for each country, place the materials found there in their proper context, and provide helpful hints for researchers planning to visit a particular area (e.g. visitors to Poland should take heed that "... it is better to have too many credentials and documents than too few," p. 292). Though the foreign phase focuses on repositories (and does not represent exhaustive searches), the surveys for Ireland and the Netherlands also include some material (mostly "America" letters) still in private hands. The Michigan section and all of those on the foreign countries also contain information on printed materials, most notably American ethnic newspapers—a surprising number of which are located abroad. A very general index which references collections by ethnic group name is helpful for the Michigan section.

Perhaps the most valuable portions of the survey of the Michigan ethnic sources are those for churches and voluntary organizations. Though the response to the questionnaire was disappointingly small (239 of 640, and 139 of 694, respectively), the information gathered could serve as the basis for further collection solicitation. At the very least, the inclusion of lists of organizations reporting no extant records (23 in number) may be important simply for its identification value.

A problem I find with this guide, particularly in the foreign phase of the project, regards the lack of consistency in repository and collection description. (The state section is the best in this respect, perhaps reflecting the amount of control the editors were able to exercise through their knowledge of the state and the use of

a comprehensive survey questionnaire.) While the narrative introductions to each of the foreign surveys are generally good, individual repository background as detailed as that found in the Michigan section is often lacking. Addresses, hours, and sometimes even telephone numbers are included and the existence of finding aids and restrictions on collections are also noted, but the collections are frequently described with perplexing variety. This is especially so with reference to collection size, including the use of meters and, in one instance, the indication of "an entire bank of shelves" (p. 274), as well as the more conventional linear foot measurements. Questions also arise regarding the amount of description given to certain collections, especially those consisting of only a few items. These are, however, minor points. In almost every case, the collections located are adequately identified and frequently evaluated for their research potential.

This guide fulfills the editors' purpose, making us aware of the variety and types of sources available for the study of United States immigration. It should encourage others to conduct more extensive surveys of material in other foreign countries and in our other states and will serve as a useful model for such endeavors. As the editors note, however, a great deal of work lies ahead in bringing together this material here and abroad so that it is accessible for extended research. Their endorsement of cooperative microfilming ventures is certainly a good one for the achievement of that end. In all, this project was a worthwhile one, of benefit to both researchers and archivists.

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Guide to the Holdings of the American Jewish Archives. By James W. Clasper and M. Carolyn Dellenbach. Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1979. 211 pp. Appendices and index. Cloth. \$20.00.

While awaiting the millenium of a national on-line interactive system for the location of archival materials, one can only be

grateful when important repositories publish guides to their holdings. The American Jewish Archives, founded in 1947 and located on the Cincinnati Campus of the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, has a rich gathering of collections dealing with the Jewish heritage in the Western Hemisphere. This *Guide* is essentially a summary of the previously published five volume work, the *Manuscript Catalog of the American Jewish Archives* (Cincinnati, 1971, 1978). The authors' goal, to provide "a small but adequate and relatively inexpensive guide . . . for the use of scholars and researchers," has been well met.

The sixty page index refers readers to numbered collection entries and indicates whether the resources on the topic are of a major or minor nature. The descriptive entries themselves are grouped into several major categories including collections of personal papers and records of local and national organizations. Microfilm holdings representing similar types of collections in other repositories are listed separately. The entries are often quite informative, providing in the heading and following descriptive paragraph data on the types of material, dates covered, and linear measurement of the holdings.

Unfortunately, a significant number of the entries for personal papers fail to identify adequately the subject or donor of the collection beyond the name alone. In other cases, where a collection appears to have been gathered by one person about another person or organization, it is given the name of the subject rather than the name of the donor. The designation of certain holdings as "collections" is also questionable as is their relationship to the rest of the holdings. For example, Collection Number 6 is that of "Adams, John Quincy" which is described as "Photocopy of a letter from Secretary of State Adams with a transcript of the list of passengers who arrived in the United States from 1819 to 1820. (Washington, D.C.)"

The comprehensive listing of microfilm copies held of collections in other repositories is certainly useful. However, the value of a brief, partial listing of holdings of such secondary works as "Theses, Dissertations and Essays" is doubtful. For example, it would have been more helpful to have included a complete listing of unpublished essays and Master's theses which are unlikely to have been indexed elsewhere and to have omitted listing the Ph.D.

dissertations entirely because of the availability of *Dissertation Abstracts* and its retrospective series.

The *Guide* concludes with a comprehensive listing in several appendices of "Special Files" which include family biographies, wills, vital statistics, and other individual documents. These items are indexed by name only, making them of use primarily to genealogists, though under the right circumstances they might become grist for the mills of the social historians.

It would have helped potential researchers if the authors had included information in the *Guide* regarding the Archives' basic research rules, the availability or permissibility of copying of documents and so on. Nevertheless, despite this and certain other flaws mentioned earlier, the *Guide* is a reference tool that will be highly valuable to those researchers interested in the Jewish population of the Americas and its relationship to the larger society.

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Karen Temple Lynch was Senior Archival/Manuscripts Specialist at the Institute Archives and Special Collections of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Libraries when this study was undertaken in 1979. She has recently completed the first year of the MBA program at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. *Thomas E. Lynch* is a former Assistant Professor of Mathematics at Holy Cross College, where the computer analysis of the statistics for the paper was completed. Currently he is a member of the senior engineering staff at RCA in Camden, New Jersey. A version of this article was presented at the 1980 annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists and subsequently appeared, with other session papers, in SAA's Problems in Archives Kit IV.

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