PUBLICATION REVIEWS

The Gutenberg Elegies; The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age. By Sven Birkerts. New York, NY: Fawcett Columbine Books, 1994. 231 pp. Introduction. Softcover. $12.50.

Archivists now spend a good deal of time discussing the impact of technology on our profession. Much of our attention is focused on the problems associated with preserving and providing access to records in electronic form, or on learning to use automated techniques to better manage and make accessible records for which we are responsible. But even though a few archivists who work directly with researchers have spoken of the decreasing attention span and the impatience some researchers have with our time-honored methods of plowing through archival collections, less attention has been paid to the subtle impact of the electronic age on a generation of records creators and users more accustomed to the instantaneous retrieval of information via a keyboard and a color monitor than from an actual book—let alone a box of old documents!

Sven Birkerts' *The Gutenberg Elegies* illustrates that archivists can learn much if they dare to venture beyond the safe confines of Archival Fundamentals manuals and archival journals. He can help us to understand the culture of which we now are a part—even if only reluctantly—and in which, ultimately, we must survive.

Birkerts asks the question, "What is the place of reading, and of the reading sensibility in our [electronic] culture?," from a personal and sometimes autobiographical perspective. *The Gutenberg Elegies* consists of fourteen "free-standing" essays that are divided into three sections: "The Reading Self," "The Electronic Millenium," and "Critical Mass: Three Meditations."

As a self-confessed lover of books and the opportunity that they provide to think and to dwell on the expression of ideas rather than simple fact-gathering, Birkerts focuses on the value of reading, an activity that he defines as complex—far beyond simply absorbing information as quickly as possible in order to answer a question or accomplish a specific task. From his perspective, electronic communication has eroded our ability to understand or appreciate ambiguity and nuance. It has also diminished the opportunity to contemplate ideas before moving on to the next screen. For example, in a telling anecdote concerning a failed discussion of a work by Henry James, Birkerts relates that his students:

> "...were not, with a few exceptions, readers—never had been; they had always occupied themselves with music, TV, videos [and] had difficulty slowing down enough to concentrate on prose of any density...they had problems with what they thought of as archaic diction, with allusions, with vocabulary that seemed 'pretentious'; that they were especially uncomfortable with indirect or interior passages, indeed with any deviations from straight plot; and

that they were put off by ironic tone because it flaunted superiority and made them feel that they were missing something."

It may be sobering—certainly food for thought—for archivists to consider how the same group would have fared with handling a collection of fragile letters written in Victorian prose, by an unfamiliar and not altogether legible hand?

Birkerts' arguments are complex and thought-provoking. He contends that as readers and as a society generally, we have become "extensive" readers at the expense of being "intensive." In other words, we consume much that is superficial but spend less time examining topics and sources in-depth. The extensive, superficial approach is, in part, something we have adopted as a defense mechanism to cope with the quantity of information we face and the pace at which we are expected to absorb it.

As a result of our immersion in the electronic age we have seen an erosion of language and the ability to concentrate for any length of time in order to draw forth meaning that is not readily apparent. True knowledge, he asserts, is not merely "a straightforward matter of access" or of "conquest via the ingestion of data." Implicit in his argument is a belief that society distinguishes itself not from our "technological prowess, but from our rather extraordinary ability to confer meaning on our experience." Unfortunately, he concludes, in our present frame of mind, "[d]oing is prized over being and thinking."

Birkerts' concern is that, as the result of this emphasis on the speed of retrieval and the quantity of accessible information, our society is becoming increasingly superficial. He is concerned that with the new communication technology, the means may be changing the ends. We may ingest more information, but it is increasingly general. We may know, in other words, a little about many topics, but this has come at the expense of knowing nothing in detail. In Birkerts' words, "we are, as a culture...becoming shallower; that we have turned from depth...and are adapting ourselves to the ersatz security of a vast lateral connectedness." Archivists will find many passages, such as his discussion of the evolution of documents from handwritten, to typed, to created on word processor, to e-mail that relate directly to their work. Other observations, such as the devaluation of a reproduction over the original work of art, or document, will be familiar in light of their own experience. "The aura is the uniqueness, the presence, the natural emanation of a thing—its spirit," Birkerts contends. "The aura is there when we stand in front of the original...and it is absent when we are before the copy—even if the copy is so faithful as to be nearly identical." Such ideas are important to consider, and whether we agree with Birkerts' own assumptions is less important than weighing their implications as we seek better ways to provide access to our holdings.

For many, this book will not be an "easy read," but perhaps that simply reinforces one of Birkerts' main points: that there is value in being forced to slow down, to contemplate, rather than to race headlong to the end of the page.

Some will argue that Birkerts does little more than provide us with an articulate nostalgia that overvalues our traditional approach to communicating ideas and information; that notwithstanding Birkerts' assertions to the contrary, his stance is a bit too skeptical and too pessimistic. This may be true, but probably no more so than the hyperbole with which the heralds of the Information Age have proclaimed their own virtue.

Whatever our perspective and our attitudes toward this topic, archivists need to avoid retreating completely into our Hollinger boxes. We must keep abreast of the implications as well as the possibilities of the Information Age and to do this we can begin by reading more widely. *The Gutenberg Elegies* would be a good place to start. To what extent is the "click-speed" delivery of information a realistic, inevitable, or even desirable goal? To what extent and in what ways does the manner in which people communicate influence the information they value and the records they create? Or how does it influence the way they go about finding and using information? The questions Birkerts raises will be useful in adopting more flexible approaches, as well as understanding and providing more effective service to our various constituencies of records creators and records users.

Timothy L. Ericson
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Inside Hanoi's Secret Archives; Solving the MIA Mystery. By Malcolm McConnel and Ted Schweitzer. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1995. 462 pp. Introduction, bibliographies, maps, index. Hardcover. $25.00.

The Vietnam War stands as one of America's most painful memories, and the issue of those soldiers whose fates remain uncertain—the Missing in Action (MIA)—has been a lingering reminder of those years. In their quest for a full accounting of what happened to United States troops in Indochina, U.S. government task forces and fact-finding missions were long rebuffed by authorities in Hanoi who rejected American inquiries on the pretense that they had very little archival material regarding the MIA's. In 1989, this situation changed when Vietnamese officials offered to open up their archives to Ted Schweitzer, an American doing private relief work in Vietnam. The story of what the archives contained, how Schweitzer got the information back to the U.S., and what questions it answered about the MIA's is detailed in *Inside Hanoi's Secret Archives; Solving the MIA Mystery*, written by Malcolm McConnel and Ted Schweitzer.

The book opens by covering the political endgames accompanying the repatriation of American prisoners at the end of the Vietnam War. The Paris Peace Accord of 1973 was an agreement neither side intended to keep. In the treaty was a stipulation for United States reparations to Vietnam and North Vietnamese acceptance of the Southern government—promises neither side kept. It is not surprising, therefore, that speculation arose about the number of MIA's and the witholding of information by the North about both live and deceased MIA's and Prisoners of War (POW's).

After Operation Homecoming in 1973, which reportedly returned all live American POW's to United States soil, officials were still squabbling as to whether or not their return was a full accounting. Moreover, these concerns were echoed by MIA family members, many of whom continued to hope that their sons were alive somewhere. By 1975, these families were already starting to coalesce into what would become the POW/MIA movement. The idea that information about the MIA's was being withheld,

by either the Vietnamese or the United States government, grew into a huge political force by the 1980s. It was both a grass-roots movement and an issue kicked around by both political parties. The emotions of MIA family members were prey to various scams that promised information on a missing child or husband—either photos, skeletal remains, or even the live person. The issue became a stumbling block for Vietnam, which sought normalized relations with the United States after the Soviet Union's decline both for protection from China and for the business and money offered by American capitalism.

When Ted Schweitzer appeared on the scene, the issue had reached something of an impasse. Schweitzer, a longtime UN officer in Southeast Asia, had worked mostly with Vietnamese boat people seeking refuge in Thailand. In 1989, Schweitzer sought to bring medical supplies into Vietnam on his own initiative. The Vietnamese saw in Schweitzer a possible way to resolve the stalemate over the MIA issue and regain relations with the United States. As a private researcher, he could be fed materials on American captives without loss of face among government officials. To test their plan, the Vietnamese brought Schweitzer to their archives in Hanoi and let him photograph sample documents and artifacts. The display of this sample suggested that they had a larger collection of information than they had been claiming.

Upon his return to the United States, Schweitzer brought the pictures he had taken to government officials. After much bureaucratic run-around, he was referred to the Defense Intelligence Agency in the Pentagon. Schweitzer was then recruited as an agent to get as much information as he could out of the Vietnamese archives. In the course of his operation, Schweitzer discovered an extremely detailed, well-preserved archive of PAVN's activities dating from the earliest days of resistance to the French to the present day. The condition of the archives was contrary to Vietnamese claims that their documents were termite-infested. Schweitzer was given access to photographs, ID cards, and a huge index of holdings (called the "Red Book") which told the fate of many MIA's. The amount of information collected by Schweitzer during his two years of probing in the PAVN archives not only shed light on what really happened to the MIA's but also served to hasten more normalized relations between the United States and Vietnam.

Archival records were key to the production of this book. Before Schweitzer's entry into the archive, most information on MIA's was sought by hiring a helicopter crew and local workers to excavate crash sites. Not only was this an expensive task—estimated by some to cost $1 million per remains recovered—it accounted only for those servicemen killed in crashes or buried in known graves. Through records kept in the archives, a greater number of cases could be examined and cheaper and more satisfactory answers could be obtained. In addition, the records in the PAVN dealt with Americans who died either in or before captivity.

The idea that MIA's were killed during tortuous interrogations in the North's prison system was not a new one, nor was the rumor that many downed airmen had been killed before capture by irate villagers or irregular units. Archival records strengthened and supported these claims. Schweitzer was given access to lists of discovered corpses of airmen, photographs of these corpses, reports, ID cards, and a whole host of artifacts. Some of these are shown in his book. It would later be established that several MIA's

had been lost before they reached prison or during their time in captivity—what one of the PAVN officials referred to as his country's "deep, dark secret."

How reliable are the records in the Hanoi archives? The authenticity of the archival record is of primary importance when considering the MIA question. Myths circulated by both con-artists and the larger MIA/POW lobby created half-truths and exaggerations which acquired the status of fact. Many of these myths were corroborated with bogus photographs purportedly showing loved ones still alive. So-called formers POW's produced phony credentials to capitalize on the intense emotions generated by the POW/MIA issue. Photos of the con-artists were proven to be fraudulent. But servicemen's ID cards found by Schweitzer among sources in the museum proved to be accurate, as did photographs there. And while some of the ID cards could have been picked up off the ground, it seems unlikely that all were obtained in this way. Some of them doubtless fell in PAVN hands when soldiers went into captivity.

Other cards belonged to repatriated, living soldiers. They were thus found not to be forgeries. While it is possible that the records may be forgeries, the extent of the collection Schweitzer scanned into his computer suggests that if all the documents are forgeries, it is one of the largest hoaxes ever concocted. Moreover, the fact that some of the photos, ID cards, and documents pertain to living airmen and can be matched against survivors would make it a partial, shoddy hoax.

The issue of primary versus secondary value of archives is also worth keeping in mind. The records in the PAVN archive were created to administer and control the ongoing military operations of the PAVN. This includes the capture of prisoners and the maintenance and control of irregular units. By 1989, the archives had acquired a further value both to the Vietnamese and the Americans. For the United States, the archives represented a possible end to the POW/MIA dilemma which had been stirring political fires at home for some time. For the Vietnamese, these records represented a bargaining chip to gain, on their terms, improved relations with the United States. Moreover, the archives could be used to clear Vietnam's name with regard to hoaxes generated by other agencies. For example, during Schweitzer's study, a document was found in Russian archives which accused the Vietnamese of keeping and then killing off 600 POW's after Operation Homecoming. Using documents from their own archive and noting the unusually glib and informal tone used by an operative to his superiors (which would be a severe breach of etiquette in Vietnam) the Vietnamese, surprisingly, could also use their archives to save face.

Saving face is certainly an important consideration in Vietnamese society, a fact that also leads to the question of access restrictions. While some of the records could clear Vietnam of certain charges, others documented torture used to extract propaganda statements and vital technical information from captured Americans. Some of this torture led to death. In an effort to improve relations with the United States, some of the items were denied to Schweitzer. He often noted that certain records were withheld from him, and as the stacks were closed he could tell how "hot" the items were by how long the archivist took in retrieving materials. She often used the excuse that she was having "difficulty locating" some of the items. Thus, in Vietnam, we see access has less to do with legal restriction or right to privacy than with keeping a positive public image intact.

One must wonder ultimately if the records were given to Schweitzer with stipulations. Are the facts he uncovered complete or even more than half-truths? It has been determined that the documents discovered so far are authentic, but only a partial accounting has resulted from Schweitzer's operation. Whether a full accounting can be provided seems doubtful, especially since the remaining cases may detail torture of Americans. But this has less to do with accuracy than with access.

While Schweitzer's forays did not solve the MIA problem, they do renew hope that more complete answers may eventually be available. Most importantly, the archive was proven to exist and a good deal of its contents were made available. The book also explores such archival issues as the authenticity of records, the value of records, and access restrictions that one faces when operating outside the United States. Archivists will find this book compelling not only because of the archival issues that are played out, but because it demonstrates yet again how crucial archives are for resolving or at least clarifying major controversies. While Schweitzer's scanning of the Hanoi archives may not have answered all the questions about what happened to missing Americans in Vietnam, it certainly laid the groundwork for further studies and further discoveries in that field.

Jeremy Green
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The Russian Century: A Photographic History of Russia's 100 Years. Text by Brian Moynahan. Foreword by Yevgeny Yevtushenko. Photographs researched by Annabel Merullo and Sarah Jackson. New York, NY: Random House, 1994. 320 pp. Foreword, introduction, index. Hardcover. $45.00.

A photo caption for the prison file of the poet Osip Mandelstam refers to it as having been "discovered in the Gulag archives in Magadan in 1993" after a British writer "was allowed fleeting access to a room packed with prisoners' files." Just as this collection of files was hidden away, so too were many other photographs in Brian Moynahan's *The Russian Century: A Photographic History of Russia's 100 Years* hidden from view until the recent fall of the Soviet Union. Archivists will appreciate *The Russian Century* not only as a fascinating collection of photographs, but also as a case study for the discussion of archival access, appraisal, and preservation issues as well as other elements of archival theory relating to the importance and use of photographic records.

Brian Moynahan's written text for *The Russian Century* summarizes the key events of Russian history from the fall of the Romanov family to the fall of Communism. In his introduction, Moynahan tells of a former Moscow dentist who told him that the Party "stole our past" and that it was "dangerous to ask who we once were." With the recent fall of the Communist Party's power over the Russian people, that past is slowly being restored—in large part because of a renewed access to their documentary past.

The book deals extensively with the 1917 revolution as a turning point in the country's history. Moynahan traces the leaders from Stalin to Yeltsin, paying special attention to the impact of World War II and Stalinism. He demonstrates in his final chapter that,

even with the fall of Communism, intolerance and hardship continue. The next century, he implies, will have new hope, but also new changes and new problems to confront.

While Moynahan's text tells of struggle and endurance, it is the photographs that graphically show the lives—and often the deaths—of the Russian people. He notes that many of the images "were previously in sealed archives and are published here for the first time. Without the opening of access to Russian archival records, this book would not have been possible."

The danger of political considerations exerting influence over access to archival records is, of course, not confined to Communist governments. The archives of any institution can be subject to political pressure from donors, employers, and users to restrict or to open access to records. This book demonstrates how the truth can be distorted or suppressed when access to archives is denied. In one vivid example, Moynahan reminds the reader that in the face of a famine in the early 1930s, in which as many as ten million people would eventually die, "the Soviet government denied that any famine was taking place." The gruesome, sad photographs of desperate children and of adults reduced to cannibalism tell a different story.

Such stark images cause one to wonder, if those in political power were so concerned about the damage that these records might do to the Party, why were the photographic records created in the first place? Why does any organization create and preserve such records? Does this require archivists to keep all records until that elusive day when the political forces, whether the government or an institution's administration, that deny access to records will change?

Although taken from different sources, the images are related. Together they tell a more complete, richer tale than individually. The editor addresses the issue of authenticity by stating that the photographs were treated "as historical documents" and that the project's policy was "not to alter images in any way." Unfortunately, the photographs are rarely referred to in the written text and while they compliment Moynahan's words, their relationship to the narrative is not clearly expressed.

In a similar way, the context of the creation of the photographs is frequently difficult to ascertain. The images have been drawn together from many collections. The original creators, the reason for which the images were created, and the manner in which they accumulated are largely unknown. One is left to wonder why the photographs were created, and who decided to document these scenes that the government did not want known. Within this same context, the reader is also left to wonder what photographs from the same collections were not chosen and why. Because these selected visual records were pulled together from different sources, one wonders what bias they reflect and what evidence was lost when they were stripped from their original context.

The photographs that were selected for this project convey the idea of oppression, turmoil, and endurance under the Tsarist and Communist regimes, as well as the idea of new difficulties resulting from the new freedoms of the present government. In the acknowledgements, a collector is thanked "for filling our every last-minute gap with a suitable image." There is a sense here that, to some extent, the images were chosen to fit the format and the written text rather than the text being written as a result of the study of the available images.

Although there was, as in all such projects, an agenda or bias in the creation of this book, the photographic records, on their own, are impartial observers of history. Yevgeny Yevtushenko, a Russian poet who wrote the foreword to the book, expresses this idea by using the image of a mirror. He warns, "If there is something shocking in this book, remember the good Russian proverb: 'The mirror is not to blame if your mug is crooked.'"

The Russian Century is an important work in large part because of the newly accessible images that fill its pages. From an archival perspective, the book's use of these images raises interesting questions for all archivists about the issues of access, appraisal, and preservation. It also challenges us to think about how archival records are used to fit a writer's perspective. Such analysis reminds us of the importance of preserving the integrity of original collections so that the records remain truly impartial mirrors of history.

Rhonda J. Huber
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 1925-1936. Edited by Lars T. Lih, Oleg V. Haumov, and Oleg V. Khlevniuk. Translated from the Russian by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995. 276 pp. Introduction, appendix, glossary of names, index. Hardcover. $25.00.

The recent opening of Russian archives has had a profound effect on the historiography concerning the former Soviet Union. Newly available documents not only forced historians to reconsider previous conclusions, but allowed the public to see on a grand scale the purpose and importance of the Russian archival profession. Decades of preservation, arrangement, and description of government documents by Soviet archivists finally paid off for scholars when the spirit of *Glasnost* afforded them the opportunity to view for themselves these valuable records. Without the work of archivists, reinterpreting Soviet history would have been a formidable, if not impossible task for historians. Stalin's *Letters to Molotov* illustrated both the benefits of this recent harvest, as well as some of the troubling questions that remain concerning the Soviet era.

In 1969, Viacheslav Molotov, who was a Politburo member, minister of foreign affairs, and Stalin's chief lieutenant during the 1920s and early 1930s, turned over his personal correspondence with Stalin covering the years 1925–1936 to the Central Party Archive. These letters appear to represent an important record that documents how the Soviet state was administered during the decade in which they were written. Most were created while Stalin vacationed on the Black Sea coast and Molotov remained in Moscow to run the government. Despite Stalin's relaxed surroundings, the letters were primarily business-related. Only occasionally did Stalin inquire about Molotov's personal life or wish him well. Although the letters lack gossip or small talk, they serve historians well as an excellent primary source because the official ideas Stalin expressed were intended only for Molotov and not for public consumption.

The interrelatedness of these documents with other records make it possible to gain a more complete picture of how various ideas and practices were combined under the unifying direction of Stalin's rule. Furthermore, the natural chronological arrangement of the letters allows researchers to learn how policy evolved from New Economic Policy to the purges.

The best illustration of these concepts was Stalin's view of world revolution and the contradictory notion of preserving Bolshevism at home. Historians who have studied these letters believe that Stalin combined the two; it was not a circumstance of strictly one or the other leaning toward Soviet self-preservation as scholars had previously suggested.

A number of letters reveal Stalin's intimate involvement with revolutionary movements in both England and China during the 1920s. He attempted to encourage these revolts but quickly backed off when it became apparent that both would fail. It was at this point that he began to concentrate his attention solely on the internal affairs of the U.S.S.R. The Eastman affair was another historical event that must be reconsidered in light of these letters.

Interpretations of Stalin generally fall into two categories. The first portrays him as a ruthless manipulator whose paranoia and instinct for self-preservation led to the destruction of the Leninist Soviet Union, and to the subsequent implementation of a genocidal and autocratic Stalinist regime. The second interpretation, espoused by Nikita Khrushchev, claims that Stalin's evil deeds were necessary to maintain the revolution, preserve the party, and liberate the working class. Lars Lih, in his lengthy introduction to the letters, suggests that the content, tone, and style of the letters support Khrushchev's view. Lih contends that the letters portray Stalin as a powerful and opinionated radical who was often uncertain and who despised bureaucracy. Also, he was an angry, ignorant, and often frustrated leader whose incredible power led to terrifying results.

But how complete and ultimately reliable are the letters included in this work? There were no letters at all from the years 1928 and 1934, and only a sparse collection that date from after 1930. There are a number of reasons which could account for this, including that the letters somehow did not survive, or that Stalin communicated with Molotov by a different means, or that Molotov destroyed the letters earlier to protect himself or somebody else. More likely, Molotov decided simply to submit only letters that placed himself and Stalin in a favorable light. Even though the two had a falling-out after World War II and it was likely that only Stalin's death prevented Molotov's own execution, Molotov remained loyal to the former Soviet dictator up until his own death in 1986. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Molotov gave up only those letters that portrayed Stalin in the positive light that Molotov desired. If this is true, then the opening of the Russian archives has removed only one barrier to the truth; Molotov's own bias still must be considered by researchers.

In addition to the pro-Stalin bias the letters convey, their authenticity must also be questioned. A number of the letters have inaccurate dates. In six of the eight letters from 1927, Stalin wrote the year 1926 instead. Scholars and archivists had concluded that the letters do, in fact, pertain to events from 1927 and that Stalin must have erred when writing the date. However, it seems strange that this mistake occurs only during 1927 and in seventy-five percent of the letters. The editors do not question the letters

despite these peculiar circumstances. Furthermore, in letters that Stalin did not personally date, Molotov estimated their dates before donating them. Archivists and editors checked Molotov's estimates and corrected them when appropriate.

The end of the Cold War and the opening of the Russian archives has resulted from an unprecedented spirit of openness. Archival documents have yielded some incredible new information about Soviet history. After careful study, various documents, including *Stalin's Letters to Molotov*, reveal a great deal about the history of the former "Evil Empire." Men like Stalin and Molotov can now be reexamined without the bias of Cold War paranoia or restricted access. But other limitations, such as Molotov's bias and questions of authenticity, remain to hinder scholars.

Thomas F. Jorsch
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

An Eye for An Eye; The Untold Story of Jewish Revenge Against the Germans in 1945. By John Sack. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1993. xii, 252 pp. Introduction, index. Hardcover. $23.00.

John Sack is a journalist with more than fifty years of experience, reporting from all over the globe. He was a war correspondent in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq. Well-respected in his field, he was also the author of several other non-fiction works. Despite his numerous accomplishments, Sack's reputation was brought into question by the publication of his book entitled *An Eye for An Eye*. Questioning the research that Sack conducted, many people have refused to believe the story he tells. Nevertheless, the book offers an exciting, seemingly credible story that is supported by numerous archival documents and personal interviews. However, because of the great controversy surrounding *An Eye for An Eye*, a closer look at the nature and reliability of his sources is warranted.

The story centers around the life of Lola Potek, a Jewish woman from Bedzin, Poland. She and her family were sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz in August 1943 when Lola was twenty-three years old. Although many of her relatives died at Auschwitz, Lola's determination and strong will kept her alive. She encouraged her only two remaining relatives to fight to stay alive. Together these women endured bitter cold, disease, and degradation at the hands of the Nazis. In January 1945, Lola finally escaped as the retreating Nazi forces marched the remaining prisoners of Auschwitz to Germany. Exhausted and ill, she arrived at the home of a German brother-in-law. There she was bathed, fed, and hidden in a bunker until liberated by allied armies.

Lola Potek returned home to Bedzin but was unable to find any surviving family members. Assuming that they had all died, she traveled to Kattowitz and applied for a job with the Polish Office of State Security. The Secretary of State Security, a man named Pinek, was a childhood friend to whom Lola expressed her desire for revenge against the Germans for all the pain and suffering she had endured. Pinek assigned her the position of commandant at the Office of State Security's prison at Gleiwitz. As a

first lieutenant in the office, Lola would be well-fed, well-housed, and well-paid. In April 1945, she accepted the job and reported to Gleiwitz.

As commander of the prison from April to August 1945, Potek saw thousands of German citizens pass through the gates. For most of these people, according to Sack, their only crime was being German. However, they became the object of Lola Potek's anger. Sack contends that mistreatment at Gleiwitz and other prisons resembled that of concentration camps during the war. One former Auschwitz prisoner reportedly stated later that he would have preferred ten years there to one day at a post-war Polish camp.

Lola realized eventually that her actions as commandant were wrong and she began to treat prisoners with greater care. In August 1945, she left the prison and the Office of State Security, seeking refuge in Paris.

Readers will wonder how such an important story went unreported for so long. Sack contends that some effort was made to make the story public in 1945 and that witnesses had travelled to Berlin to inform American and British officials. Reports were also sent to London and Washington, D.C. Winston Churchill is said to have questioned the reported number of Germans who simply turned up missing behind the Iron Curtain.

Sack's story seems extremely well-documented; sixty-five pages of notes support his research. His research rests heavily on oral historical documentation, most of which was collected recently. However, Sack also consulted archival records in Germany and Poland. Included were records from the Office of State Security and more than a thousand death certificates from the prisons.

To examine the reliability of *An Eye for an Eye*, one must look at the difficulties that all researchers face when consulting archival material. Archival records are not a guarantee of truth. Records, or more likely the selective use of records, can lead one to erroneous conclusions. But in Sack's defense, the records seem to support the story he was told by Lola Potek and others. A document with Lola Potek's signature as commandant might not be totally convincing on its own. But its combination with another document showing her appointment to commander and her application to the Office of State Security gives credibility to her story. In a similar way, the German prisoners' statements that were found in the German federal archives do not tell a complete story. But these statements, combined with the thousands of death certificates, add credibility to Sack's story. The interrelatedness of the impartial documentary records helps to build and support the sequence of events that Sack outlines in his book.

An Eye for an Eye is a well-documented story of revenge that seems unbelievable at first. However, the oral testimony and the documentary materials that Sack uses, make for compelling evidence. While individual documents and recollections may not be infallible, the collective use of such evidence can reveal important historical facts and secrets of the past.

Kristine L. Krueger
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

May It Please the Court: The Most Significant Oral Arguments Made Before the Supreme Court Since 1955. Edited by Peter Irons and Stephanie Guitton. New York, NY: The New Press, 1993. 375 pp. and six 90-minute cassettes. Introduction, bibliographies. Hardcover with cassettes. $75.00.

Peter Irons, a professor of political science at the University of California, San Diego, assembled *May It Please the Court* using tapes of Supreme Court oral arguments. Irons chose twenty-three cases which he felt illuminated issues in five important areas, all involving the Bill of Rights. He quotes pertinent portions of the oral argument and adds explanatory narration; each case ends with majority and dissenting opinions, excerpted by Stephanie Guitton. The tapes include the oral argument and narration, but omit the opinions.

The first two parts of the book include cases relevant to archival issues and the historical record. Parts three, four, and five deal with criminal prosecutions, equal protection under the law, and the right to privacy.

Irons entitles part one of the book "Secure the Blessings of Liberty." Cases he presents in this first section raise questions regarding Constitutional limits on the powers of government officials. One case highlighted is *United States v. Nixon*, where the President was forced to turn over tapes of conversations recorded in the Oval Office to a lower court judge; here the Court was responsible for balancing the powers of the Executive branch against those of the Judiciary. Without this ruling the tapes may have been destroyed and researchers would probably not have access to these archival records today.

Part two of the book is entitled "Congress Shall Make No Law." These cases deal with freedom of speech, which Earl Warren said, "Has provoked the most difficult cases in the Court's history." The most interesting case here is *New York Times v. United States*, in which the government attempted to exercise prior restraint against the publishing of excerpts from the Pentagon Papers, a Defense Department history of the Vietnam War. The Court ruled in favor of the *Times*, but noted there was no absolute prohibition against prior restraint.

Several archival issues emerge as important themes in *May It Please The Court.* Accession agreements are shown to be indispensable both to donors and archival repositories. Earl Warren initiated the taping of oral arguments as Chief Justice in 1955; by 1993 about five thousand cases had been deposited on tape in the National Archives. Warren, according to Irons, intended the tapes to be accessible to the public upon donating them to the National Archives. However, the agreement signed by Irons before being allowed to copy the tapes stated that use was "for private research and teaching purposes only." Apparently, no written document regulating use was drawn up when the tapes were donated; in fact, it is unclear whether the tapes are considered donations, or whether they are on deposit. Irons states that restrictions were added, contrary to Warren's wishes, by Chief Justice Warren Burger. When pre-publication publicity about the book began to circulate, Burger was quite upset. Controversy arose as the Court was said to be pondering legal remedies in an attempt to quash the book, although no accession agreement existed to back up the Court's claim of control.

A second issue closely related to the lack of an accession document is the question of whether the Court could legally restrict use of the tapes. These tapes were seen by some as public records, not the personal papers of the Justices because they document the important proceedings of the highest Court in the land. Chief Justice Burger sought to limit access to a select group of scholars, but others argued that this drew an unwarranted distinction between scholars and the general public. The public records had finally caught up to a Supreme Court whose proceedings were previously shrouded in mystery.

It is ironic that one of the results of these tapes being made public, over the Court's protest, is that respect for the institution will likely increase. The reader can clearly see how rigorous the oral argument sessions are, and how seriously the justices take their work. Another future result may be scholarship tracing the increasingly important role played by minority and female lawyers and justices.

Although these records have only been widely available since 1993, it is undoubtedly true they will have continuing value. The interest shown in the book by the public, with over 60,000 copies sold, demonstrates that legal scholars will not be the sole users of these records. Apparently, they are the only verbatim records of Supreme Court oral argument in existence. These arguments can be compared to the written decisions in order to analyze the process of Court decision making.

This book provides a fascinating glimpse at how the Supreme Court operates during oral argument. It is sure to be an entertaining read for any archivist with a passing interest in the Court; one feels a great sense of excitement when hearing the actual arguments of *Gideon v. Wainwright* or *Roe v. Wade.* It also gives the archivist a somewhat greater appreciation for how records document the process of decision making within the Supreme Court. With the recent PROFS case, as well as other cases likely to be raised as we sort out the nature of electronic records, the courts will have a great impact on the work of archivists in the coming years.

Jim Peterson
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The Diary of Jack the Ripper; The Discovery, the Investigation, the Debate. By Shirley Harrison. New York, NY: Hyperion, 1993. 323 pp. Introduction, maps, illustrations, index. Hardcover. $21.95.

Many works claim to reveal the true identity of Jack the Ripper. This one goes a step further by including the alleged diary of the Ripper. The diary's author gives several cryptic clues that suggest his identity to be James Maybrick, a Liverpool cotton merchant and drug addict, insanely jealous over his wife's infidelity. The manuscript was "discovered" by Mike Barrett, also of Liverpool, who received it from a friend, Tony Devereux. Devereux, who died soon after, would say nothing of the diary's origins, only that it was authentic. Realizing that he was in over his head, Barrett contacted Shirley Harrison, a literary agent, to help determine the authenticity of the diary. Harrison, in turn, took the diary to Dr. Nicholas Eastaugh, a specialist in identifying and dating

manuscripts; Dr. David Forshaw, a psychiatrist specializing in addiction; two forensic document examiners; and several "Ripperologists," historians devoted to the study of the Ripper. According to Harrison, none of the experts could find any indication of forgery.

Harrison conducted her own investigation to see if the documentary record supported the possibility that James Maybrick was Jack the Ripper. Harrison weaves a fascinating story of Maybrick, and his wife Florie, as well as Maybrick's murderous campaign as the Ripper. According to the diary, Maybrick was jealous over Florie's affair with Alfred Brierley, a family friend. This jealousy was the explanation in the diary for the slaying of the Whitechapel prostitutes. The diary reveals the gruesome details of the Ripper's fantasies of decapitation and his gory crusade of murder, mutilation, and cannibalism. Maybrick taunted the police with cryptic letters and clues. He wrote that he was truly amazed that he had not been caught.

Also included in the book is a facsimile of the original diary and a transcript. This is by far the most disturbing portion of the work. One can read the actual words of the alleged Ripper and see how the handwriting supposedly changed with the mood of the author. The last portion of the work is a debate on the authenticity of the diary between Robert Smith, of Smith Gryphon Publishers (who published the book in Britain) and Kenneth Rendell, manuscript authenticator and author of *Forging Histories; The Detection of Fake Letters and Documents*.

Archival and other historical records play a large role in *The Diary of Jack the Ripper*, as Harrison uses a number of records to substantiate the diary's authenticity. By comparing the manuscript to newspaper accounts and letters, Harrison is able to link the activities of Maybrick and the Ripper. Harrison often presents information that one can only assume came from archival materials; unfortunately, she fails to note from what sources she obtained her information. Much attention is paid to the transcript of the case in which Florie Maybrick is found guilty of murdering her husband by poisoning him with arsenic in 1889. Harrison also presents contrary information, probably from letters, which strongly suggests Florie's innocence. Old newspapers are used to establish what was known about the Ripper at the time of the murders in comparison to what is written in the diary. Photos of James and Florie Maybrick, and extremely graphic photos of the Ripper's victims, are also included.

Harrison makes extensive use of known writings of both Maybrick and the Ripper. She includes a copy of the letter written by the Ripper to the police, known as the "Dear Boss" letter, which is believed to be authentic. She also includes a copy of Maybrick's will, which she believes to be a forgery. Forensic document examiners evaluated the diary and found that the handwriting did not match the "Dear Boss" letter or the will, although their findings may be inconclusive.

The authenticity of the diary is highly debated. Harrison obviously believes the diary is genuine. According to the book, so do her authentification experts. Rendell's report on the diary, located in the last section of the book, lays down the opposite opinion. In his book, *Forging History*, Rendell goes into more detail about why he believes the diary to be a forgery and notes its similarities to the fraudulent Hitler diaries.

Rendell used the handwriting of the diary as the main evidence of forgery. He notes that Harrison's own experts believe that the handwriting on the "Dear Boss" letter does

not match the diary. He also states that although Harrison's experts found nothing in the diary's ink to be inconsistent with a date of 1888, she fails to mention their recommendation that further tests be done. Rendell also questions why the author of the diary chose to write in a scrapbook rather than a standard diary book and why the first approximately twenty pages had been torn out. He feels this lends credence to his theory that the diary is a forgery, because a forger may not have known the difference between a scrapbook and a diary. Rendell cites many other examples in his study of the diary's authenticity, all with the same conclusion that the diary is forged.

The impartiality of the diary is also questionable. In order to assess the reliability of the work, it is necessary to question why it was created, or if the diary is a forgery, did the author pick James Maybrick? Of the many, many works that reveal the supposed identity of Jack the Ripper, this is the first one that points to Maybrick. Why would a potential forger fabricate an entire diary which obviously implicates this one man? According to Rendell, "forgers are not always motivated by money or fame; their goal can be the simple satisfaction of fooling the experts. Knowing the psychology of forgers is almost as important as knowing how to analyze handwriting."

Rendell warns us not to be fooled by the intricacy of the diary: "People who have not been involved in major literary forgeries are unaware of the resourcefulness of perpetrators of such hoaxes....If investigators assume that something is too complex to be a fraud, then they are likely to be deceived." Whether or not Maybrick really was Jack the Ripper, this book provides a fascinating new angle to one of the most intriguing unsolved mysteries of all time.

Bonita J. Shucha
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

White House E-Mail; The Top Secret Messages The Reagan/Bush White House Tried To Destroy. Edited by Tom Blanton. New York, NY: New Press, 1995. 254 pp. and 1 computer disk (3-1/4 in.). Bibliography and index. Softcover. $14.95.

This book and the accompanying disk contain a sampling of 500 unedited electronic messages created by top White House officials from 1982 through January 1989. This was the time frame from when the White House e-mail system, called the Professional Office Systems (PROFS), went online to when Ronald Reagan left office. The book's title gives readers the first hint of Tom Blanton's unabashed bias. He states in the introduction that "Power—and the (mis)use of it—is the real issue in the White House e-mail case."

The e-mail case to which he refers is Civil Action No. 89–142, *Scott Armstrong, et al v. Ronald Reagan et al*, more commonly known as the PROFS case. Blanton readily admits that he is one of the *Scott Armstrong, et al* litigants in this case. The battle began on January 19, 1989, when members of the National Security Archive, including Scott Armstrong and Blanton, filed a series of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests together with a lawsuit against President Ronald Reagan. The suit was intended to prevent the erasure of White House electronic mail backup tapes.

This lawsuit is briefly discussed in the introduction of the book. A chronology of the case, along with a biographical Who's Who, is provided on the disk. The real stars of this book, however, are the e-mail messages themselves. *White House E-Mail* is comprised of scanned images of actual White House e-mail messages which have been officially declassified by the government. Of the 4,000 records surveyed by Blanton, the messages selected for inclusion fall under eleven categories, including *Dancing with Dictators*, *The Real War Room*, *Spin Doctors*, and *Censors and Secret*. Eavesdropping on the uncensored e-mail conversations of the U.S. government's inner circle about such controversies as Iran-contra dealings, relations with the Soviet Union, Saddam Hussein, Manuel Noriega and other world leaders proves to be scintillating reading indeed.

For purposes of clarity, Blanton provides running commentary on each page: e-mail messages are put into context; abbreviations are defined; events leading up to and resolutions of the messages are provided. Unfortunately, Blanton's heavy-handed bias is liberally applied in these illustrative passages, which are riddled with snide comments and unnecessary statements that relay his obvious dislike of the Reagan administration and White House officials. It causes one to wonder if certain messages, with less substantive information, were chosen over other e-mail messages because they cast the e-mail authors in an especially bad light. Regardless of this drawback, *White House E-Mail* is highly recommended for archivists, record managers, and anyone else interested in contemporary issues dealing with the preservation of information. The contents touch upon almost every area of archival theory and application, sometimes directly and other times indirectly. After reading this book, every archivist who does not already have a written acquisition policy in their repository will want to have one. Indeed, the need to define what constitutes a *record* is thrown into stark relief. Issues of access are woven throughout the book as well. Traditional archival principles regarding collection restrictions, censorship, and privacy issues are called into question by the PROFS case, as are the intent and interpretation of existing regulatory mandates. *White House E-Mail* is concerned foremost with preservation issues. Emerging technology is impacting the archival field on many levels. Although the archival profession is making great strides in the preservation and care of non-traditional record formats such as audio-visual and electronic records, the Internet and e-mail systems have created a completely new record format, the digital record, which has heretofore been almost completely ignored. Not only does the format present a challenge for preservation, but sifting through the sheer volume of digital records and appraising them for informational content pose even larger problems for archivists committed to preserving digital records. *White House E-Mail* does not attempt to provide any solutions to these problems. What it does do—and rather well—is show us what will happen if these concerns are ignored for much longer.

Julie Thomas
Motorola Museum of Electronics

Watergate: The Corruption of American Politics and the Fall of Richard Nixon. By Fred Emery. New York, NY: Times Books, 1994. 555 pp. Bibliographies, appendix, index. Hardcover. $27.50.

Fred Emery's 1994 book *Watergate: The Corruption of American Politics and the Fall of Richard Nixon* is a fascinating examination of the entire Watergate debacle, from its planning to Nixon's resignation. Emery does an excellent job of balancing the facts of the break-in and subsequent cover-up with the other important events of the times, and with the reasoning and purposes behind the Nixon administration's responses to the scandal. Utilizing records such as office memos that escaped shredding, memoirs of the principals involved, and, most importantly, recently released tapes of conversations in the Oval Office, Emery leaves the reader with a significant insight into the innermost workings of the men behind Watergate.

The story of Watergate begins before the actual break-in at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) Headquarters in the Watergate office building, and Emery adroitly covers the other covert operations planned and initiated by the Nixon administration prior to Watergate. This background information makes the break-in attempt at the DNC seem like the next "logical" step, albeit a poorly handled one. Indeed, the reader is left believing that if the two principal figures in the initial Watergate break-in, arrest, and cover-up, G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt, had not been so incompetent, the entire episode may have been no more than a two-paragraph story buried on page twenty. But Liddy and Hunt did not handle the capture of their fellow conspirators well, and hence the cover-up began as the White House desperately tried to keep the arrested men quiet, and the connection between the break-in crew and the Committee to Re-elect the President (CREEP) a secret. Thus began hush money payments to the arrested men and cover-up plans that entailed misleading the FBI and CIA, shredding incriminating documents, influencing the Attorney General, and perjury. When the entirety of the deceptions was eventually found out, it was no wonder that Congress was ready and willing to impeach Nixon for abuse of power and obstruction of justice.

Indeed, the amazing thing about the scandal is how close Nixon and his men came to getting away with their crimes. After reading the book, one is left thinking that if Nixon had just not taped himself making incriminating statements, the investigation would have gotten no higher than low level administrators at CREEP. Without the so-called "smoking gun tape" and other devastating recordings of Nixon, Haldemann, Ehrlichman, and Dean plotting to obstruct justice, Nixon would almost certainly have survived Watergate.

What makes Emery's work especially poignant and insightful is the large variety of archival records and other materials used to document the story, many of which were not available to those writing at the time of Watergate. Virtually all of the major figures in Watergate, including Nixon, have written memoirs and Emery compares and contrasts these various versions of the events surrounding the break-in and subsequent cover-up. The comparisons are interesting both for what they agree upon and what they disagree upon.

Emery makes extensive use of documents from the time period, such as office memos, transcripts, and administrative notes which are preserved at the National Archives. These

archival records frequently take the sheen off of the memoir versions of events, and help us to get an objective picture of who knew what when, and what they proposed to do about it. Cases of documents with both evidential (here used with the double meaning of archival evidence and judicial evidence) and informational value that contradict later verbal or written testimony are frequent in Emery's work. Most of the office records relating to Watergate were destroyed in the post-break-in shredding frenzy, but even the few that remain dramatically illustrate the importance of such records in documenting the workings of an agency or institution—much to the chagrin of Nixon and his co-conspirators.

But the most important archival material utilized by Emery, with the most fascinating effect, is the tapes of the Oval Office conversations. It is these records, impartial and objective in their testimony, that finished Nixon and his administration, and it is these as well that make Emery's work more authoritative and thorough than many previous writings on Watergate. Without the tapes, we would never have known for sure what transpired when Nixon, Haldemann, Ehrlichman, Mitchell, and Dean were debating various ways of keeping the lid on their cover-up. Without the tapes, John Dean's testimony that Nixon and his top aides knew about the break-in and cover-up from the beginning would have been hearsay. As it was, the tapes offer an impartial, and objective, record that could corroborate Dean and implicate the President and his aides. In addition to their evidential value, the tapes also contribute to the authenticity of Emery's writings and conclusions, and give the reader a sense of having been there.

As a sidelight, it is interesting that two missing tapes and the gaps in several others were almost as damaging to Nixon as those tapes that were complete. An important conversation late on April 15, 1972 was not recorded by Nixon's taping system. Nixon always maintained that because of the large number of conversations that day, the tape simply ran out. This may or may not have been the case, but the lack of that tape, which had been subpoenaed along with eight others, cost Nixon credibility with Congress and the public, and heightened the investigators' suspicions that he had something to hide. Similarly, several tapes have long sections that are unintelligible due to a loud buzzing noise. Whether accidental or not, these omissions and "gaps in the record" strongly illustrate that if an institution wishes to keep a record of its operations, its evidential history as such, it must do so in a systematic and careful manner.

Emery's book was a pleasure to read. It is well-written and well-researched and has the advantage of being removed enough from its subject to avoid the emotional immediacy of Watergate writing that occurred during and shortly after the scandal. Emery also benefitted from archival sources that were not available to previous writers on the subject. Their inclusion helps to make the book more authoritative, definitive, and enjoyable.

Nicholas P. Weber
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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