

## *Book Reviews*

**An Ounce of Prevention: a Handbook on Disaster Contingency Planning for Archives, Libraries and Record Centres.** JOHN P. BARTON and JOHANNA G. WELLHEISER. Toronto: Toronto Area Archivists Group Education Foundation, 1985. x, 192 p. ISBN 0969204108 \$17.95.

Once in a while a book comes along that can be recommended without reservation; *An Ounce of Prevention* is such a book. Recognition of its excellence has been swift. Last summer, its editors received the Waldo Giffard Leland Prize, awarded by the Society of American Archivists for an "outstanding contribution in the field of archive history, theory or practice."

Meant to assist the archivist or the librarian in the preparation of a suitable comprehensive disaster contingency plan, this volume outlines the emergency planning process, suggests an outline for the plan, lists common pitfalls in emergency planning, and summarizes emergency procedures. Thoroughly researched and well organized, it includes easily understood information on preventive conservation measures and salvage methods for the whole range of archive and library materials: paper, books and their bindings, photographic materials, microforms, motion picture film, and magnetic media. The names and addresses of Canadian organizations, institutions, and individuals that can provide information and assistance in planning, are listed geographically, as well as a list of Canadian suppliers of emergency facilities, services, and materials. Also featured is an excellent bibliography some thirty pages in length; it is to be hoped that Barton and Wellheiser will issue supplements updating it periodically. Ready reference is possible using the index, but the user should not rely solely on this approach. While the index is good and the book is clearly written and easy to understand, the text is dense. *An Ounce of Prevention* should be carefully read and reread, the information thoroughly digested and considered, and used for the purpose intended — the preparation of a disaster contingency plan.

This handbook was briefly out of print. A new edition printed in a number of copies sufficient to supply the archives and library community is now available. Those involved in planning should also acquire the companion to this handbook: Nancy Wilson, ed., *Proceedings of An Ounce of Prevention: a Symposium on Disaster Contingency Planning*

*for Information Managers in Archives, Libraries and Record Centres* (Toronto: Toronto Area Archivists Group Education Foundation, 1986).

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**The Management of Oral History Sound Archives.** FREDERICK J. STIELOW. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986. XVIII, 159 p. illus. ISBN 0-313-24442-1 \$35.00 (U.S.).

This book provides a well written, up to date, and practical manual for archivists entering the world of computerization and deserves to be read throughout the archival community. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to happen since the author has chosen to articulate these computer insights within the small and specialized area of sound archives. As such, this book must be reviewed first as a book on sound archives and then as a book on automation.

To understand the purpose of this book, one must first understand its title. For its author, an American librarian with a folklore background, the inclusion of the word "sound" in the title simply indicates his preference for collecting oral history on tape rather than the usual American penchant for complete transcripts. Thus, *The Management of Oral History Sound Archives* translates as the archiving of oral history and folklore collections on tape within a library environment. This explains why the author's theory of sound archives draws heavily on folklore references, why his section on processing and cataloguing reflects a library orientation, and why his chapter on legal and ethical concerns is framed within the American experience. It also explains why this book will have limited value to Canadian archivists for whom sound archives also means radio broadcasts, speeches and talks, proceedings of meetings, and other varied documents in addition to oral history.

Stielow does, however, share common cause with Canadian archivists in his preference for tape over transcript and it is in this area that his remarks are most useful. The chapter on conservation management is a detailed, yet readable, rendition of the pertinent information needed by archivists in this field. The section on acquisition wisely suggests that archivists can save time and resources by both rejecting outright those collections which do not meet identification, technical, or accessibility standards and at the same time arranging to have worthwhile collections described in advance of deposit by the donor. His call for archival scholarship, based not on the role of the interviewer but on the study of existing archival oral history collections (to ascertain questions of memory, interviewing effectiveness, and validity of evidence), posits a much welcomed and positive intellectual role for archivists in the field. Yet much of the information on oral history, while significant, can also be found in other sound archives literature. When this fact is added to his highly specialized definition of sound archives and the price of the book itself (\$45 Canadian), it is easy to advise Canadian readers to consult the Province of British Columbia publication, *Voices*, as a definitive book on oral history collections.

If this book does not succeed in addressing the small universe of sound archives, it does succeed in addressing the much larger universe of archivists interested in automation for it is precisely these sections of the book that represent a new and valuable addition to