

be difficult to convince a qualified records manager that "burdening some clerk with keeping inventory records on a current basis of what is coming in and out of the [records centre] serves no purpose per se." An offhand comment that "those few records which have to be kept permanently could similarly be fenced off," which incidentally is his very first remark in the manual that even remotely relates to archives, is discouraging to say the least.

Mitchell is at his best in delineating and interpreting the myriad government regulations which dictate retention periods, but unfortunately in the concluding chapter he does not exhibit a comparable level of expertise in discussing the design and implementation of a records scheduling programme. I realize that this manual is limited in scope, but his view of what constitutes a records retention programme is narrow and unbalanced. He seems to ignore the fact that records retention is an integral component in a coordinated records management system. Furthermore, his approach reveals an alarming lack of awareness and appreciation of the business archivist's role in such a programme. This is not to say that all his ideas and proposals about who should perform the records management function, where it should be situated in the organizational structure, how it should develop and what it should encompass, should be completely disregarded. On the contrary, some of his suggestions are quite sensible, especially those in connection with tailoring the program to suit the size of the business. What is good for General Motors is not necessarily good for Shapiro Brothers corner grocery.

Mitchell insists that programme costs should not exceed benefits, but ironically two paragraphs later he rejects the value of statistics on space and equipment released through scheduling, which is perhaps the most reliable means of quantifying savings that offset programme costs. Some of his comments are anathema to archivists and records managers. For example, he casually dismisses the need to compile an inventory of inactive records. "To be thorough, the contents have to be examined. What point is there in such an exhaustive task, when half the material will subsequently be disposed of?" He also contends that "once 80% of the facts are known, the other 20% must be assumed and action taken. Otherwise, the person responsible will trivialize the programme into oblivion." It is evident from the tenor of these remarks that Mitchell has adopted the stereotyped business attitude of getting on with the job without taking into account the consequences and long-term requirements. His true colours are clearly shown: "Certainly old records will be uncovered; they will be quaint and interesting and in some remote way have some use, . . . but what cash value is really at hand?"

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Archives and Other Special Collections: A Library Staff Handbook. SISTER MARY JANE MENŽENSKA. New York: School of Library Service, Columbia University, 1974. viii, 87 p. forms. \$3.00 (Available from the School of Library Service, Room 516, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027).

The purpose of Sr. Menženska's volume is "to provide guidelines for the staff of a small college library with special collections," with an emphasis on archival materials. On the assumption that most small libraries will have few professional librarians to spare for the organization, cataloguing and preservation of special holdings, Sr. Menženska posits the inevitable remedy: the professional librarian in charge of these collections must wear three hats—librarian, curator and archivist. Furthermore, part-time, usually untrained students,

clerks and secretarial assistants will be employed to do much of the work normally undertaken by professionals at larger institutions. The non-professionals presumably lack imagination and initiative. Hence, the chapters of the manual concerned with policy-making and decisions on retention/disposal of accessions are to be used primarily by the professional-in-charge; the remaining chapters, more practically oriented, are for the non-professionals.

Whatever the particular case, from "Rare Books, Manuscripts, Archives—can you identify them?" through "Handling and Care," "General Policies and Practices," "Acquisitions and Accessioning," "Evaluation, Retention, and Disposal," "Arrangement and Boxing" and "Control, Access and Publicity," Sr. Menženska writes at a brisk pace, leaving little room for archival laggards. Any doubt about what constitutes a manuscript is swept away in an alphabetical listing of ninety-three types of manuscripts. Sixteen rules cover the handling of special library materials. The author concludes her crisp description of archival procedures with the suggestion that one keep a year-long "office diary of daily events and running notes with draft sections of the annual report. . . ."

Each of the seven sections of the manual is filled with concise directions and recommendations for bringing acquisitions into an orderly, accessible form—the common goal of archivists. Appended is a useful section on "Samples of Finding Aids," all of which are pertinent to the topics covered by the various sections of the manual. The appendixes concerned with bibliographic tools, as well as the relatively lengthy bibliography, are slightly dated, yet can lead the interested neophyte as well as the seasoned professional to more current books and articles. The appendix entitled "Vendors of Supplies and Equipment" and "Book and Document Restoration Shops" is confined to American firms. "Useful Abbreviations" and a glossary round out the contents of the handbook.

Sr. Menženska ends her Introduction with the caution that "these guidelines are not intended as a definitive statement on the policies and practices of manuscript and rare book departments. . . . Deviations approved by the librarian-curator-archivist should be noted in the appropriate place with the date and the revised practice." This is sound advice, for the compressed format of the handbook allows for no discussion of alternatives. From details such as collating pages with the rubber tip of a pencil, and filing index cards above the rod until they have been revised, to basic philosophy about the position of the college archivist within the college hierarchy, the author's authoritative, structured approach to the topics imparts a sense of finality to the suggestions and directions. This reviewer, for example, questions the following prescription concerning the college archivist: "Appointed by the President after consultation with the Archives Committee, the archivist is considered a member of the library staff and responsible to the Director of the Library. The position shall be part-time." Users of the manual should not assume that there are no other structures suitable for a college archives. The danger here, of course, is that handbooks of this nature are used most frequently and uncritically by those working in special collections, and having, for various reasons, little contact with alternative information. Thus the legend of "the archives must be in the library" is perpetuated, even by well-meaning authors such as Sr. Menženska.

This manual more than adequately meets a real need of those working with small, college library's special collections, especially in those areas where practical and technical aspects of archival work are discussed. Nevertheless, the strong library bias of both the author and publisher must be borne in mind, particularly before accepting the policies and administrative structures suggested for the archival area of special collections.

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