

committee, will mean that there will be few quality archival records to consult for the next generation of researchers. This little volume, I repeat, is worth the read.

Eldon Frost
Federal Archives Division
Public Archives of Canada

A Manual of Archival Techniques. ROLAND M. BAUMANN, ed. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1982. ix, 133 p. ISBN 0 89271 020 9 \$5.75 pa.

It should come as no surprise to learn that the majority of those working in archives are not archivists at all. Many of the records of the nation are being tended by librarians, museum curators, and staff and volunteers of local historical societies. It is (or at least should be) a bit of a surprise to find how seldom the question of training of these archival practitioners is raised. Archival training has received more than its share of discussion at ACA conferences, in *Archivaria* articles, and in funding proposals, but it has been almost without exception "higher education." In most parts of the country there have been some workshops and lectures but often the professional response to requests for basic education has been a disdainful "archivist, train thyself."

This can be daunting, even for the most dedicated, for until recently there have been few materials available. Kenneth W. Duckett's *Modern Manuscripts* (1975) has become the standard text. The Society of American Archivists' series of manuals, now running to thirteen volumes, has been popular and effective, but the cost of the entire series is now in excess of one hundred Canadian dollars. One should remember that many small institutions would find this cost a major expenditure.

A Manual of Archival Techniques is an inexpensive primer which grew out of a series of Pennsylvania workshops in which some 225 individuals participated. The workshops were aimed at institutions with non-professional staff and limited resources and the speakers were asked to discuss basic techniques and inexpensive solutions.

With the exception of a fifteen-page section on "Where to go for help," which features state and federal U.S. agencies, the entire volume will be useful to small Canadian institutions. Unlike Duckett's volume, which makes a strong distinction between archives and manuscripts and addresses the latter, the *Manual* acknowledges that many smaller institutions end up with records of municipal governments and agencies and so attention is paid to the problems of large volume and low interest which such records often generate.

In addition to the "Where to go for help" section, the *Manual* has four sections. Within each there are essays authored by experts from institutions ranging from the National Archives and Records Administration to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The authors have by and large successfully managed to scale down their not inconsiderable knowledge and apply their skills to the problems of smaller institutions. The tone of the volume is set by an overview article by Peter J. Parker in which he posits the existence of a Yahoo County Historical Society which has decided to create an archive. Parker successfully creates an attitudinal framework for the sections on methodology, planning, and conservation which follow.

It is the last of these sections which is the strongest. Most authors of archival primers try to steer their readers well away from any active conservation efforts on the principle that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. In so doing they either terrorize the would-be archivist with a litany of things that pose a danger to his papers or create a reckless disregard and a fixed notion that nothing can be done. Norvell Jones's article, "First Steps in Preservation for Small Archives and Historical Societies," presents a rare exhibition of common sense and a preventative approach which does not presuppose the existence of perfect temperature and humidity controls and a six figure conservation budget. This section of the volume also includes articles on disaster planning and conservation of bound material, both of which reflect Jones's common sense approach.

Where the volume does not succeed as well as it might is in the articles on two of the foundations of the archival process, arrangement and description. Part of the problem is that these two areas do not lend themselves well to coverage in ten and six pages respectively but the authors have not improved the situation with frequent quotations from *American Archivist* articles. Essays of the same general length on cartographic and photographic records are much more successful.

The volume is rounded off with good, although brief, coverage of reference and security concerns and an uneven article on "Storage, Space and Equipment." In a volume so well directed towards small and relatively poor repositories it is somewhat jarring to find reference to computer output microfilm. Several appendices provide forms and checklists which appear quite useful and there is a select bibliography.

This volume is a primer and is not intended to be a complete course in archival education. For the most part, however, the authors do realize that many persons handling papers may go no further and so it does provide a good grounding in most aspects of archival operations. This small volume would be an excellent suggestion the next time the volunteers of the Upper Rubber Boot Historical Society ask what they should do about the records in their museum.

H.T. Holman
Ottawa

Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance. NANCY E. PEACE, ed. Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1984. 163 p. ISBN 0-669-05354-6 \$23.00.

At first glance, *Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance* appears as yet another contribution to the burgeoning body of archival literature on the subject of appraisal. Upon closer examination, however, one discovers that the book transcends the question of archival selection in its attempt to address the problems facing archives and archivists in an age of archival proliferation.

Prompted by a workshop on processing contemporary collections at Boston's John F. Kennedy Library in 1980, Nancy Peace decided there was an urgent need for a publication which addresses the difficulties posed by contemporary records. Although the book was originally to have restricted itself to the vexing issue of archival appraisal, the solicited chapters convinced the editor that the book's focus must be expanded to include such archival questions as de-accessioning, pre-archival control, records management as an appraisal tool, and archival networks, among other issues.