

work to be built upon. Even so, we tend to concentrate too much on the organization represented by the archival material rather than the activity; we need to know more about what actions are implied by the records if our patterns are to be more fully informative.

Seven levels of description are recognized, from the union list to the item (but why not the piece also?). Again, each archival medium should develop its own descriptive standards, using AACR2 where possible as a means of identifying levels of description. Only a few of the thirty-five recommendations, which also include ways and means to hasten success, have been alluded to here. A useful select bibliography with comments covers the field well. Altogether this report is shot through with the light of much honest common sense. It not only deserves to be read, it should be required reading for all who call themselves Canadian archivists.

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Reference Services in Archives. LUCILLE WHALEN, ed. New York: The Haworth Press, 1986. 210 p. ISBN 0-86656-521-3 (Also available as *The Reference Librarian* 13, Fall 1985/Winter 1985-1986).

One of the rewards for archivists working in smaller archives is the gratification provided by reference service. The archivists have the satisfaction of knowing that someone is using material that they have spent days and even months arranging and describing. A researcher can deal directly with a person who has knowledge of the material and who can offer suggestions and shortcuts. In larger institutions this contact between custodian and user may have been completely eliminated.

It is therefore not surprising that almost all of the sixteen essays on reference service found in this volume are written by archivists in small institutions. Many types of archives are represented: a bank, an advertising firm, a regional history centre, two religious archives, several special collections within universities, and a board of education. Unfortunately this diversity, which should allow viewpoints of the reference process from several angles, becomes one of the problems of the volume. The authors seem to be using the book as a chance to put their own institution "on the map" and consequently spend an inordinate amount of space on the history of their particular archive. What is usually left out is any useful consideration of reference service. Susan McGrath uses almost all of the fifteen pages on the archives of the Toronto Board of Education, describing the holdings of the institution and providing a capsule history of the Board. She offers some statistical information on the number of users and the areas from which they come, but aside from asserting that the archive provides reference service she tells us little about it. Most of the other essays in the volume suffer from the same fault.

There is, however, some material of interest here. Philip Mason, archivist of the special labour collections at Wayne State University, points to the usefulness of reference statistics in "establishing collecting priorities, appraisal, conservation and restoration needs, and in determining the order in which collections are processed." He also raises the problem of the lack of preparedness of younger scholars, a phenomenon to which most archivists have been exposed. An article on the archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston discusses the importance of the reference interview. The chapter in the volume that comes closest to the treatment one might expect from the book's title concerns the role of

reference service in the Salvation Army archives in New York. Archivist Thomas Wilstead keeps the background to a minimum and discusses the setting of reference policies, the development of finding aids, the encouragement of the use of reference service, and the evaluation of the service provided.

In her introduction the editor decries the lack of attention paid to reference service in the *American Archivist*. The situation is not different in Canada with *Archivaria* being almost, if not totally, devoid of writing on the subject. If the volume under consideration is an example of the best writing available in this area, then editors on both sides of the border have used their discretion wisely.

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Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology: A Guide. JOAN K. HAAS, HELEN WILLA SAMUELS, and BARBARA TRIPPEL SIMMONS. Boston: Institute of Technology, 1985.

One of the most important consequences of the Second World War was the elevation of science and technology to the privileged and influential position which they enjoy today. It was during the war that scientists were enjoined by their respective governments to apply their powers to the solution of frequently critical national problems. In this most dramatic of circumstances, and to this most urgent of challenges, the scientific community responded with often spectacular success, and in the process, removed any doubt about the practical value of their knowledge. Since that time, some have said, scientists have been well rewarded for their performance. Although the setting of priorities may be a matter for debate, the basic principle of providing generous support for scientific research and technological development now seems well established in our society.

Meanwhile, the role of science and technology in society has become the object of extensive investigation. Tracing its roots to the 1920s, the Study of Science, Technology, and Society (known as SSTS) has since the war expanded into a far-flung network of disciplines which includes the philosophy, history, sociology, and ethics of science; the administration, organization, and management of research and development; technological forecasting and futurology; and the legislation of science and technology. Today SSTS centres may be found in universities, government agencies, business, industry, and myriad other privately and publicly funded institutions. Taken together, this rapidly burgeoning interest in scientific activity and the enormous volume and prodigious variety of scientific and technological records resulting from this activity certainly merit the serious attention of archivists. The appearance of a publication on the appraisal of the records of science and technology, therefore, has not come too soon.

That *Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology* is an intelligent and useful guide makes it all the more welcome. In seeking the advice of historians of science, scientists, and engineers, as well as archival colleagues, to prepare the guide, the authors have set an example of collaboration for other archivists working in the field to follow.