

Developing a Premier National Institution: A Report from the User Community to the National Archives. PAGE PUTNAM MILLER. Washington: National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, 1989. 39 p.

The National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History is composed of some fifty member organizations in the United States, among them the American Historical Association and the Society of American Archivists. This report, prepared by those who consider themselves friends of the National Archives and Records Administration of the United States, gives advice to that institution in the form of recommendations for future goals for the National Archives.

It is not surprising that users should encourage the Archives to devote attention to their needs. However, the report goes further to suggest that the Archives must develop a plan to become a premier research institution, document the resources needed to accomplish its work, and urge Congress to supply necessary funds to make it happen.

The report is not just a plea for more money; it also offers pragmatic solutions. The National Archives should know its clientele better, distinguish between different users, and employ staff wisely in providing its services. Users such as genealogists requiring the use of specific archival sources can be well accommodated by the creation of sophisticated finding aids to their particular records. Another category of researchers, the traditional "multipliers" of Archives who publish or otherwise present their findings to a wider group of persons, wish at once to search more widely and delve more deeply. This group is not so easily accommodated. Given the quantity of documentation available in archives and the impossibility of ever describing it adequately to allow this type of research to proceed unaided, the writer argues that it is more efficient and effective for the National Archives to promote some subject specialization by archivists. One third of the recommendations, in fact, concern the necessity to "encourage and maximize" staff's knowledge of records.

We have heard these arguments before. They gain weight in this instance because they are presented by an influential community. Informally, it has been learned that almost all of the recommendations have been accepted by the National Archives and Records Administration. This is a provocative little publication; given the nature of the analysis and the degree of acceptance of its findings, the report is worth reading.

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Guide to the Archives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Member States, of the European Communities and of the Secretariat of European Political Cooperation. Commission of the European Communities. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1989. ISBN 92-825-9725-3.

This handy publication is the product of a group of archivists responsible for the records of the foreign ministries of the twelve European Community member states, the Commission of the European Communities and of the Secretariat of European Political Cooperation. Some two years in the making, this work is intended as a

“practical guide” for researchers providing details on such matters as the location of services, and access conditions. That there be some degree of consistency between the national entries speaks well for international cooperation among the European Community’s archivists; the differences reflect continuing national autonomy. Yet, the annoying feature of permitting the misspelling of a word such as “practical” within the United Kingdom entry can only be attributed to the misplaced sense of responsibility on the part of the volume’s editor. One hopes that such flaws will be eliminated in future editions which should be forthcoming, if the information is to be kept up-to-date and the publication to have continuing value.

North American researchers will find this guide useful, if for no other reason than they will know whether letters of introduction are required in order to use a particular archives before embarking on a European junket. For those working in archives, particularly archives administration, the guide provides in a convenient format comparative data on the archives involved, for example, the hours of operation (including the intriguing note that the archives of Italy, Greece, and Spain are closed for the entire month of August!); the cost of the reproduction of documents (from as low as 5 cents per page in Greece and Italy to a \$4.50 minimum charge for copies sent by mail by the European Parliament); and the time period after which foreign affairs archives are available for public access. Keeping in mind that all twelve member states of the European Community participate in the International Council on Archives which in 1968 adopted the thirty-year rule as an international standard for researcher access, it is interesting to note, more than twenty years later, the wide variation that appears to continue to exist among the countries involved. While some of the national archives have adopted the thirty-year rule, unfortunately, several still retain periods of closure of fifty years and longer. One hopes that, as the dream of the single internal European market becomes a reality in 1992, there will be a corresponding freer flow of ideas, particularly those with an historical dimension.

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One Hundred Years of Sci-Tech Libraries: A Brief History. ELLIS MOUNT, ed. New York and London: The Haworth Press, 1988. 193 p. ISBN 0-86656-745-3 \$24.95.

One Hundred Years of Sci-Tech Libraries: A Brief History originally appeared as the Fall 1987 issue (Volume 8, Number 1) of the library journal *Science & Technology Libraries*. Ellis Mount, the book’s editor, is also the editor of *Science & Technology Libraries* and Senior Editor for the book’s publisher, The Haworth Press. In 1984, Mount received the Special Libraries Association’s John Cotton Dana Award in recognition of his service in the field of special librarianship.

Unfortunately, Mount has chosen a somewhat misleading title for this particular collection. The volume does not really provide a history — brief or otherwise — of science and technology (“sci-tech” according to current library jargon) libraries. Instead, it includes six short essays, comprising less than half the book, which deal unevenly with the development and future of such libraries in the United States,