they need a commentary to relate them to the issues discussed in the main text. This absence of connection is noticed by contrast with the introductory study guide. Rather than provide a simple bibliography, Craig gives a twenty-page summary of recent appraisal writing, highlighting key pieces, and placing them succinctly in context.

In summary then, this is a valuable book, providing an accessible and current overview of appraisal, and is highly recommended for anyone seeking an up-to-date summary of thinking in this area.

John Roberts
Archives New Zealand

No Innocent Deposits. RICHARD COX. Lanham, M.D.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004. 304 p. ISBN 0-8108-4896-1.

There are likely few archival topics which provide archivists with a greater sense of thrill and at the same moment greater trepidation than appraisal. With the opportunity to glimpse into the past tempered against the responsibility of shaping the past with their decisions, archivists involved in appraisal face a difficult task. In his book, *No Innocent Deposits*, Dr. Richard Cox, professor at the School of Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, allows the reader to journey with him through the evolution of some of his thinking on the topic. The book, whose title is gleaned from an oral historian's perception of archives, is a compilation of essays and papers written by Cox over the past six or seven years. It presents the author's argument that archives "do not just happen" but rather are the constructs of archivists, records creators, individuals, and institutions (p. 12). Cox does not pretend to offer a how-to volume on the subject of appraisal but rather a series of reflections on various facets of the appraisal function such as collecting, the role of records management programs, evidential value, and the impact of the digital age.

Each chapter in the book is well documented with many examples and it is immediately obvious that Cox has read and researched extensively on the topic. The breadth of his own readings is evidenced by the wide-ranging list of sources at the end of each chapter. Hans Boom, Luciana Duranti, Terry Cook, David Bearman, Richard Brown, T.R. Schellenberg, and Margaret Cross Norton are just some of the prominent scholars referenced by Cox; however the myriad of authors, periodicals, and volumes listed in the sources is impressive, and for this reader slightly intimidating. For archivists interested in the subject of appraisal, the volume provides a comprehensive reading list.

In the introductory chapter, Cox outlines the nucleus of his thinking on the subject of appraisal, sets a societal backdrop for the rest of the book, and briefly introduces each of the subsequent chapters. The title of the chapter,

"Treasures Everywhere" ably describes the cultural context in which Cox sees the modern archivist working. Everything has value and there are indeed treasures everywhere. Archivists have always had to accept the truth that everything cannot be collected and yet everything will have value to someone. Nonetheless, with approach of the end of the twentieth century and now into the twenty-first century, Cox contends that the challenge of appraisal and determining which records or blocks of records will prove to be desirable and historically significant in the future has added new complexities. "We watch the *Antiques Roadshow* in rapt attention, perhaps hoping that a hidden treasure will appear that is also sitting on a shelf in our own living room" (p. 3). Burdened with a history of having to acquire whatever was available because there was so little, archivists have developed a "culture" that still clings to the "better get what we can" attitude. This has been bolstered by a pop culture that values everything old, from John F. Kennedy's cigars to virtually every kind of antique. Cox notes that the attention paid to financial value often blurs the cultural or historical value of materials: "The fact that one can sell practically anything at eBay or at a flea market does not convey historical value" (p. 9). Yet archives are forced to operate in an environment where financial value is almost invariably equated with historical significance. Through his examples, Cox demonstrates the plight of cultural agencies such as museums and archives. The expectation that these institutions are tasked with safeguarding every interest group's past is a perception held by many people, and many archivists. It's a perception that Cox suggests must be re-evaluated by all parties, particularly in a digital world that has made a difficult job impossible.

Following the introduction, the next few chapters are dedicated to an examination of collecting, what its role has been in the past, the psyche of the collector, and some possible implications of following an acquisition strategy that depends primarily on collecting. The notion of collecting and its role in forming the archives is never far from the surface in most of the chapters. In Chapters Two and Three, respectively entitled "The End of Collecting" and "The Archivist and Collecting," Cox tackles the thorny issue of collecting as an acquisition strategy, advocating purposeful acquisition versus collecting. He uses ample examples to illustrate the difficulties inherent in collecting and yet acknowledges the practical pressures brought to bear on the current archivist. "It is easier to simply sign off and receive records whenever they arrive than to argue about whether they fit into an institution's mission or hold up against some appraisal criteria" (p. 25). Cox fears that a penchant for collecting versus appraisal based on a clearly documented mission, may make the archives as a collecting agency more interesting to scholars than the records collected. The archives, by virtue of what it collects, will become a reflection of society rather than the records reflecting the past.

In Chapter Four, Cox wonders how archives can continue to be collectors in a digital world. How does the new digital age change the archival mission?

Cox suggests that archives need to redefine themselves in order to succeed in their missions: "archives must become the repository of last resort and not the housing of first choice" (p. 96). Archives must encourage the growth of institutional archives, rather than focus so much on acquisition for themselves. In a digital world, where billions of records are created daily, "... it is absolutely necessary that there be a broader appreciation of the purpose of archives in society" (p. 99), and he contends that there should exist a collective societal responsibility. Reading this chapter from a Canadian perspective caused me to reflect on the Canadian model and the infrastructure that the Canadian archival community has built over that last generation of archivists. It would seem that the Canadian Council of Archives has been effective in promoting the archival collective mission of "preservation" that Cox endorses.

One of the challenges I had with the volume was my sense that Cox was writing primarily from an American perspective with examples that tended to focus on what might be characterized as an American model. He contends that the historical society was the "prototype of the traditional archival repository and the precursor of any modern records repository ..." (p. 88). The development of historical societies and their mission, I think, would be more characteristic of the American experience than the Canadian experience. Another question that regularly rose to mind was how to discern to whom Cox was writing. While the archives community would logically be the audience, I occasionally felt that his arguments in favour of collective responsibilities for preserving the past and his explanations of the archival missions might have been meant for a broader audience. Perhaps historians, private corporations, and other segments of society who are responsible for creating the documentation and setting the priorities of public memory might also be the targets of Cox's musings.

Progressing through the book, Cox encourages his readers to ponder acquisition in the digital age, the relationship between records management functions and the archives, the balance between evidential and informational values, the responsibility of archives to document acquisition decisions, and the role archives play in the preservation of public memory. While Cox has plainly spent substantial time contemplating the function and purpose of appraisal and demonstrates the extensive reading he has done on the topic, I found myself more engaged by the first four or five chapters than the latter chapters. The introductory chapter does an excellent job presenting the context for Cox's discussions and in itself was very thought-provoking. The first chapters on collecting and the psyche of the collector immediately caught my imagination and spawned substantial reflection. In some of the later chapters, however, I felt I was beginning to read some of the same arguments and my interest began to wane. This should not be viewed as a criticism of the volume, as each chapter was originally written as an essay or paper with the intention of standing alone. It is therefore reasonable, for example, that the

author would discuss the importance of records as evidence in successive chapters.

Despite these small concerns, people interested in the topic of appraisal should not be deterred from reading this book. Cox does not aim to offer any solutions; however, occasionally he hints at some notions of how the archival community might re-examine its collective mission versus institutional missions. It is clear that his primary concern is an examination of why we acquire, how we have historically gone about acquisition, how that has influenced where we are, the impact of the digital world, and where the current trends in popular culture may lead the archival profession. "Collecting has been connected to all sorts of human instincts and interests, from the personal to societal consumerism" (p. 127). The current archives community is burdened by its own culture and heritage. The mission archivists have historically set for themselves and the practices to achieve that mission are under assault by the changing nature of records and the society archivists are attempting to serve. Records are produced too quickly. They are less durable and yet at the same moment more easily replicated and/or altered than ever before. A more educated and literate population has greater access to information and means of communication than past generations have enjoyed. Archivists face a client base more culturally diverse than ever before and interest groups intent on connecting to their past and understanding their place in the current world. The notion of what is collectable and what has value, either in a cultural or financial sense, has taken on new meaning and Cox directs our attention to these new challenges and encourages the archival community to develop a new appraisal paradigm.

Ian Moir
Northwest Territories Archives

Ethics and the Archival Profession: Introduction and Case Studies. KAREN BENEDICT. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003. 91 p. ISBN 1-931666-05-9.

Karen Benedict's *Ethics and the Archival Profession: Introduction and Case Studies* is a good primer for anyone new to the archival profession. It is also an excellent source for the experienced professional who wishes to re-establish the role of ethics in his or her organization. The scope of the work incorporates the full spectrum of archival repositories from the smallest historical societies to the largest government organizations.

Benedict introduces her work with an interpretation of what constitutes professional ethics. Rather than supplying a simple, facile definition, she opts to quote a series of questions developed by John Kultgen, professor of philoso-

phy at the University of Missouri, whose current research in the field of ethics stems from his career as a teacher of the philosophy of science and professional ethics. These questions outline the challenges that arise in the creation of an effective professional code, in a world where there is frequently a mismatch between workplace reality and the appropriate courses of action. It is because of these contradictions, Benedict argues, that professional codes have been developed.

The book's premise is that to be professionally useful, codes of ethics must be fleshed out. It incorporates case study after case study in which reasonable responses to ethical dilemmas are developed through the filter of ten principles derived from various codes of ethics that exist around the world. (In a related vein, there is an interesting footnote about the development of the various ethical conventions that have been established, including those of the Association of Canadian Archivists and the Association des archivistes du Québec.)

These ten principles are similar to the precepts identified in the Society of American Archivists' code. The ethical archivist should: treat users fairly; preserve and protect the integrity of records; never change data or distort facts; provide access to the greatest degree possible to all reasonable applicants without discrimination; maintain privacy; never personally profit from archival information; appraise records impartially; not disparage other archivists or their institutions; not compete for records; and accept the obligation to work for the betterment of society. Benedict implies however, that though useful, this list is not operationally rich. It is for this reason that she formulates her text using a wide variety of case studies to elucidate and give substance to these guiding principles, tacitly demonstrating the need for a more robust ethical formulation for the profession. While devoting a chapter to the ten principles, Benedict extends her analysis to very specific issues including, among others, copyright, competition for collections, ownership of records, and privacy.

Most of the case studies are accounts fictionalized in order to protect the privacy of individuals or the institutions that may have generated the illustrations. One poignant example involves the ethical problem of theft. A professor at a university archives is believed to have removed items from a specific collection in order to advance his own research interests. Although the professor denied the theft, all missing items were from folders that he had perused. Since the claim could not be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, the suggested plan of action was to issue a notice on a local listserv for other archival repositories to monitor this individual's behaviour carefully and examine any and all records both before and after his contact with them. Benedict argues that this approach identifies the professor as being a potential risk to an archival institution, without specifically suggesting that he was responsible for the missing items. At the same time, though, this example raises questions – is it ethical to call this individual's reputation into question in this public manner?

Another problematic example involves the case of a bank archivist who dis-