

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.

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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-

covers architectural drawings of one of the company's older branches. A group of preservationists is actively looking for documentation that would advance their desire to obtain a special designation for this same branch. Meanwhile, the bank's board of directors vigorously opposes landmark designations for any of its buildings. Ultimately, Benedict's suggestion is that the archivist must preserve the recently found items, should advise the appropriate internal people, but is under no obligation to release information to the preservationists because the bank is a private institution. The only caveat is that if a lawsuit were to be initiated, full disclosure would have to be made. This illustration reveals the challenges an archivist faces in resolving disparate interests which commonly are at play in an archives. Certainly, there are those that would argue that the suggested course of action could have been argued differently.

One of the particular strengths of *Ethics and the Archival Profession* is the ease with which Benedict identifies terms related to the subject. A particular instance of this occurs when ethics are defined as an attempt to answer the question: what is right (or wrong)? Ethicists have traditionally replied with either a teleological or deontological approach: "Deontologies discuss actions or duties in terms of rightness or wrongness. Teleologies deal with the good or bad results from choices that are made" (p. 1). This brief description succinctly outlines the approaches that can be taken. For Canadian readers, this distinction provides insight into the rationale behind Québec's convention, known as the *Code de déontologie*. Benedict is equally successful in her chapter on "Law versus Ethics" in which she demystifies information relating to privacy and confidentiality, along with actions relating to the recovery of property. These include: *replevin*, the act of recovering personal property taken; *detinue*, the act of recovering personal property detained; and *trover*, damages for the wrongful taking of personal property.

My criticism of this work would focus on its lack of a Canadian context. In the United States, there is a wealth of private local organizations that actively support archives. The situation is different in Canada because of our greater reliance on government assistance to support our cultural institutions. This in turn produces a unique set of ethical dynamics that do not resonate in quite the same way as the examples provided in Benedict's book, predicated as it is on the American experience. Despite this criticism, the scenarios are all plausible and could arise anywhere.

The fact that almost all of the examples are situated at fictionalized institutions can be viewed as problematic. I feel that this book would have benefitted from additional examples like the one of the whistle-blower at the Union Bank of Switzerland. In this affecting case, a security guard hid documents scheduled for destruction that demonstrated the bank's complicity with the Nazis in confiscating Jewish property during the Second World War. The case is further developed with accounts of the reactions of the Swiss people to the story and the related fallout which ultimately forced the guard to leave the country.

This particular narrative, rooted in an historical event, was extremely engaging and brought the issue of ethical practice to life in a way that the fictional examples cited above could not.

Despite these minor shortcomings, *Ethics and the Archival Profession: Introduction and Case Studies* is a resounding success because it touches upon the central ethical issues faced by the archival community on a daily basis. It is an easy and quick read that readily supplies information that would be useful for both the novice and the seasoned professional. Karen Benedict has compiled a collection of case studies that merits the attention of the archival community.

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Undelivered Letters to Hudson's Bay Company Men on the Northwest Coast of America, 1830–57. JUDITH HUDSON BEATTIE and HELEN M. BUSS, eds. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003. 512 p. ISBN 0-7748-0974-4.

Among the treasures in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives is a group of records classified as "Section E – Private Manuscripts" which includes journals of explorers, papers and diaries of employees, and diaries of wives of the Company men. Among this varied collection, separated from the records directly connected with the business of the company, are two six centimetre boxes labelled E.31 containing "Undelivered and Unallocated Letters" dating from 1823 to 1898. *Undelivered Letters* provides readers with transcriptions of many of these letters augmented with others filed in the Archives under "Section C – Ships Records."

The Archives Department of the Hudson's Bay Company was established in 1931 under the direction of the first archivist, Richard Leveson Gower, and the classification system was a result of consultation with Hilary Jenkinson from the Public Record Office of the United Kingdom, whose *Manual of Archival Administration* had just been re-issued in a second edition. The Hudson's Bay Company Archives was transferred from London, England to Winnipeg in 1974 and a few years later, when the Archives had settled into the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, archivist Judith Beattie was instructed by the then Keeper, Shirlee Anne Smith, to re-describe the private material catalogued in Section E. When she starting working on E.31 Beattie found herself in an archivist's dream. Among the over 200 personal letters, which for one reason or another had been undeliverable and had been returned to the head office in London, were several that had remained unopened for, in most cases, over 150 years. Opening those precious seals suddenly immersed her in the