

tional records management system for paper documents. Further qualifications are that a centralized information management culture exists in the organization and that the types of records maintained – as defined by function rather than format – are fairly standardized and limited. The book is a how-to manual for these kinds of institutions and a good reference of terms and concepts. For those institutions that do not follow this model, there is no discussion of theory or of other electronic records management models that can be adapted or applied to a diversity of organizational types.

For the archivist, there is no discussion of strategies for the collecting institution that is separate from the creator. Management of private records received on computer disks, for example, is not discussed anywhere in this book. This is not to say that important information cannot be extracted from this book. It most definitely can, but *Managing Electronic Records* should not be the sole source of information when considering the issue of electronic records. It should only be one of many reference works on the archivist's bookshelf.

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The ANLA Resource Binder for Small Archives. ASSOCIATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ARCHIVES. St. John's: Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Archives, 1998–1999. 272 p. ISBN 0-9697466-2-8.

Producing a beginner's text in archival theory and practice is a daunting process. It must be accessible and easy to read and also explain archival theory and the practices common to all archival repositories. If the publication is too academic, it risks losing the audience of volunteers and paid workers in small archives desperate for a simple, readable guide to caring for their archival records. If the volume is too simplistic, it may overlook some of the nuances of archival theory, method, and practice for the sake of clarity and brevity, with an equally unsatisfactory result for working archivists.

The latest effort to produce an introductory text in archival theory and practices is the *ANLA Resource Binder for Small Archives*, published by the Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Archives (ANLA). The *Resource Binder* is composed of three sections: "Basic Archives," the curriculum guide for the ANLA five-day workshop in fundamental archival practice; "Untangling RAD [*Rules for Archival Description*]," ANLA's guide to archival description; and "Special Topics," which currently includes an article on monetary appraisal and the United Church of Canada's guide to records manage-

ment for its congregations. The *Resource Binder* notes that management of photographic collections, *RAD* descriptions of graphic materials, and access points are planned as forthcoming special topics.

The “Basic Archives” section begins with an introductory chapter containing definitions, an insight into the Canadian archival tradition, and a small section on the administration and organization of an archival programme. It then explores the essential archival functions of appraisal, arrangement, description, and preservation. Each chapter has a different author, a format which will allow any section to be updated easily. Despite the multiple authors, the parts of the “Basic Archives” module work well together without much overlap or stylistic differences between sections. Each chapter concludes with a bibliography and, usually, examples of useful policy documents or forms adaptable to most archival programmes.

As this first section of the *Resource Binder* is used as the textbook for the ANLA five-day introductory workshop, it reflects the ANLA education programme and the Newfoundland experience. The examples of *RAD* inventories and institutional policies are standard archival examples with a Maritime flavour, including the use of a hypothetical Rick Mercer fonds to explain the concept. Although this approach is logical for the ANLA education programme, the regional origins of the “Basic Archives” section may hamper its usefulness in other jurisdictions. Because reference services, archival administration, and outreach programmes are separate ANLA workshops, this section examines these core archival functions only as brief segments within other chapters. Archival institutions and other provincial associations with different education programmes will require other resources for these issues to supplement the information in the *Resource Binder*. An example is the *Manual for Small Archives*, which, although dated and out-of-print, is available on-line at the Archives Association of British Columbia Web site <www.aabc.bc.ca/aabc>.

Other parts of the “Basic Archives” section may represent practices accepted regionally but perhaps not nationally. Chapter three on arrangement discusses the numbering of series and sub-series, a procedure not necessarily followed at all archival institutions. More noticeably, chapter two on appraisal and selection notes that “recently archivists have accepted that systematic, ongoing reappraisal of past acquisitions is essential in developing accessible holdings which reflect the archives’ mandate and which maximize scarce preservation monies” (p. 18). This statement is problematic. I am not convinced that the concept of reappraisal is as widely accepted as indicated; many archivists prefer to appraise an entire fonds once rather than revisit past appraisal decisions on an ongoing basis. As this publication is an introduction to archival practice, one has visions (admittedly, to an extreme) of a small archives reviewing their holdings on an annual basis because of the instructions in the *Resource Binder* and discarding materials simply because they

were not used extensively. Overall, the chapter on appraisal and selection seems rather brief, with no mention of legislative requirements or other factors which may affect the retention or destruction of records.

The remaining components, “Untangling *RAD*” and the two publications on special topics, vary in quality. “Untangling *RAD*” provides a succinct introduction to the basic rules necessary to produce fonds and series level descriptions, including guidelines for what information to include in each field. Unfortunately, one of the sample inventories is incomplete in this edition; despite its incompleteness, the example is still useful. At only three pages, the discussion of monetary appraisal is too brief for beginning archivists. A summary of the legislation mentioned (the *Income Tax Act* and the *Canadian Cultural Property Import and Export Act*) may have provided some useful context to those unfamiliar with the rationale and process of monetary appraisal. Finally, although specific to its context, the United Church’s guide to records management, “Managing Your Congregation’s Records,” is an excellent overview of the records management process and its link to an archival programme.

Management of photographic collections, *RAD* descriptions of graphic materials, and access points are noted as future special topics. The addition of a reference, outreach, and public awareness component as a special topic would improve the *Resource Binder’s* coverage of that issue. Another useful special topic would be a panoramic overview of Canada’s archival community, including an explanation of how the various provincial and national archival organizations interact. For the uninitiated, a concise explanation of the workings of the Association of Canadian Archivists, the Bureau of Canadian Archivists, and the Canadian Council of Archives would transform an alphabet soup of acronyms (ACA, BCA, and CCA) into a logical picture of the Canadian archival system as a whole and might broaden the appeal of the *Resource Binder* in other jurisdictions.

Overall, the *ANLA Resource Binder for Small Archives* fills a critical gap in current archival literature as one of the few up-to-date, inexpensive sources that explains the full range of archival functions. Although the *Resource Binder* leans toward the simplistic rather than the academic in most areas, this focus is appropriate for its intended audience, and the bibliographies provide ample direction for ambitious archivists seeking further reading. By its nature a publication constantly in the works, the *Resource Binder* in its current form provides the basic foundation in archival principles and practices. With new sections added and other revisions over time, it will evolve and mature into a standard textbook for small archives and beginning archivists.

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