

already be a comprehensive or nearly complete filing order of personal value.

Millar often reiterates that a prospective donor should be in touch with an archivist or records professional before making drastic decisions, and she mentions that an author's personal archives would provide a broad basis for historical and biographical research, rather than only focusing on "writing-related documents." Yet Millar also makes specific suggestions to authors such as "records about local arrangements and guest speakers can be destroyed right away" (p. 147) because they are housekeeping records. Surely tracing the creator's role in activities involving others is integral to personal fonds as are the qualities of that interaction.

In summary, this book has gone far to reach prospective donors in a vital area of cultural archives production. The text is lively and engaging. Millar makes our procedures and processes clear to these readers. She provides extensive, useful advice of particular importance to this group while debunking myths and false expectations. She encourages these creators to value their records from an understanding of their archival value. This book is a first-stage intervention with literary and publishing communities, which encourages further discussions with archivists.

This work not only provides advice to creators, it also offers archivists the opportunity to debate particular latent issues in our field that are considered current fault lines in our profession. Such questions include: How do the fonds resulting from the application of records management procedures differ from the fonds that receive other types of pre-custodial intervention or none at all? How are conceptualizations of archives shifting toward records management with arguments for increased utility? How are issues surrounding personal archives being addressed in this environment? Although this work is strong in its comprehensiveness and in its utilitarian approach, I encourage its specialist readers to debate these underlying issues.

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**Thinking About Oral History: Theories and Applications.** THOMAS L. CHARLTON, LOIS E. MYERS, and REBECCA SHARPLESS, eds. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2008. 392 p. ISBN-13: 978-0-7591-1090-8.

Oral history became popular both as a practice and as an archival record with the arrival of the portable tape recorder in the 1970s. It has proven to be much more than a fad with ongoing archival acquisitions and, perhaps surprising to some, as a movement that has evolved into a separate discipline. This book is testament to the evolution of oral history as an intellectual activity, not just as a technique that creates archival records as a by-product. The book is intended for the oral history scholar and/or professional oral historians teaching oral

history within a university setting or in advanced workshops. It is divided into two sections: a section on theories and the other on applications.

Five essays that focus on the interpretation of oral history are included in the theories section: a review of literature on human memory and its impact on the question of the reliability and validity of oral history; an application of the gerontological concept of life review and life stages to analyze a set of community interviews; an analysis of the interview process itself from the perspective of the theory of communications dynamics; an exploration of the contributions of gender analysis to women's oral history; and a striking exposition on the use of narrative theory to derive additional meaning from recorded life histories.

The section on applications seeks "to carry the creator toward the goal of using it and sharing it" (p. 2). The section includes articles on innovative uses of oral history in publishing, biography, broadcasting, and performance art.

It may be surprising to Canadian readers that a book on oral history would not include a component on archives; in the United States, oral history is viewed more as a means to raise historical consciousness (and celebrate the American experience) than a technique that can make a significant contribution to the archival record. As the editors proclaim in their introduction, oral histories "are born to fly, to shine, to provoke. We do not go to all this trouble to hide history in the dark security of an archive" (p. 6). This significant slight notwithstanding, there are two articles worth noting for their implications for archival practice.

Valerie Raleigh Yow's essay, "Biography and Oral History," is useful for those situations when an archivist may need to interview family members in order to write a biographical note as part of a deceased individual's fonds. The author explains that she relied on oral history, extensively interviewing individuals who had known her subjects: "In the research on [the American writer Bernice Kelly] Harris, I had her collection of letters, manuscripts, and autobiographical writings available to me, at the University of North Carolina, and in another collection I was permitted to read her correspondence with a close friend, contained in the friend's family archives. But these written records became more meaningful when I recorded the oral histories of people who knew her" (p. 195). The archivist may also wish to conduct an interview for the purpose of gathering contextual information, pertaining, for example, to a particular book, diary, film, etc., created or collected by a donor or creator, and acquired by the archivist.

Yow also addresses the issue of the rights of the interviewee in editing his/her interview after the fact. For many archivists, transcribing interviews is not common practice as the usual focus is primarily on processing the acquired taped material. However, should an archivist need to conduct an interview with a donor, and no accompanying transcript is produced, asking the narrator to listen to the interview would be good practice to allow for any necessary

editing before it gets catalogued and made available for research purposes.

Charles Hardy III and Pamela Dean's article, "Oral History in Sound and Moving Image Documentaries," is also of interest to Canadian archivists who traditionally consider oral history as audiovisual documents. The authors lament the unfortunate prevalent practice in the broadcasting industry, where after airing an excerpt of an interview for a particular program, the full interview itself is subsequently taped over, completely overlooking the archival value of preserving it in its entirety. (One noteworthy Canadian example of early radio oral history that did survive – although not cited in this article – is the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's [CBC] radio documentary series on the First World War, *In Flanders Fields*, broadcast in the early 1960s. Research for the series included more than 350 hours of recorded interviews with more than two hundred veterans who served with the Canadian Expeditionary Forces.)<sup>1</sup>

Hardy and Dean also note that public sector radio networks outside the United States such as those in Canada, Britain, and Germany, have long used oral history interviews as a basis for their broadcast programs, particularly documentaries; the authors single out the innovative use of the oral history technique employed by internationally acclaimed Canadian pianist Glenn Gould in a radio documentary, *The Idea of North*, produced for the CBC Radio series *Ideas* on the occasion of Canada's Centennial.<sup>2</sup>

As Hardy and Dean explore the impact of the digital revolution on oral history, they state that the Web plays "a major role in stimulating oral historians' interest in moving images" (p. 310). Filmmakers have also been influenced by oral history because of the popularity and the availability of oral history on the Web. The authors note that the availability of inexpensive and effective digital audiovisual technology has enhanced the democratic potential of oral history; they cite the StoryCorps project in which members of the public are interviewed in a booth located in New York City's Grand Central Station. The interviews are then archived at the Library of Congress. The democratic appeal of oral history had a strong and innovative, if now abandoned, history in Canada. The Provincial Archives of British Columbia, for example, initiated a wide-ranging oral history program in the 1970s and 1980s in order to make its holdings more representative of British Columbian society. During the 1980s and 1990s the Provincial Archives of Manitoba commis-

1 The complete interviews and transcripts have been digitized to produce the website *Oral Histories of the First World War: Veterans 1914–1918*, available at Library and Archives Canada, [www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/first-world-war/interviews/index-e.html/](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/first-world-war/interviews/index-e.html/) (accessed 7 August 2010).

2 Gould interwove music with excerpts of interviews broadcast concurrently to create a multi-voice montage that he described as "contrapuntal radio" (p. 294). This radio documentary is part of The Glenn Gould Archive located at Library and Archives Canada.

sioned oral history interviews with rural, ethnic, aboriginal, and francophone communities to ensure the preservation of a record that reflected societal diversity. Nonetheless, the question of commissioning oral history to create a more representative record of society remains a contentious issue for many archivists.

As noted in its introduction, this book is intended to serve as a text for classroom use and for those interested in becoming an oral historian. As such, its up-to-date essays about theoretical aspects of oral history may provide a useful addition to the archival science curriculum. Those interested in archiving oral history in Canada, however, are advised to seek out publications and advice from the Canadian Oral History Association, as many have been doing for the last forty years.

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**Archives and Archivists in 20th Century England.** ELIZABETH SHEPHERD. Surrey, England/Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited/Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009. xiv, 245 p. ISBN 978-0-7546-4785-0 (hardcover).

*Archives and Archivists in 20th Century England* is an important and ambitious book that is both exemplar and a contribution to the recently burgeoning field of archival history. As Victor Gray, a former president of the Society of Archivists (UK), writes, “this book represents a coming of age for the archival profession in England. At last we have a route-map through the complex thicket of a century and more of initiatives, enthusiasms, false starts, and inspirations. Now we can understand not only what has been achieved but what still remains to be done” (dust jacket). To this could be added that now we have a splendid case study of the contingent, contextual nature of archives and archiving, written from the inside – the archives not as a passive storehouse of information for historical research on myriad topics, but the archives itself as the subject of historical research and contextualized understanding.

In Canada, we all know about Sir Hilary Jenkinson, the first great pioneer to articulate, for the English-speaking profession, the ideas and concepts of modern archiving as these had evolved – and been recorded – in French, German, and Dutch writing in the nineteenth century. But curiously, we know little (from the published literature at least) about the archival profession’s development in England – the context in which the famed Jenkinson became so influential – compared to that in the United States, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Australia, or even South Africa, about which articles and books have appeared in recent years. Considering that England sent us Hugh Taylor, Gordon Dodds, Alan Ridge, and Edwin Welch, among others, as immi-