

REVIEWS, BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Antoinette Burton, *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2005, 396 p.

Archive Stories is a collection of essays that attempts to outline not only the impact of archives on individual people but, conversely, the impact of individual people on archives. While some of the essays are well written and fit together smoothly, others struggle to find their place in the overall theme.

The editor of *Archive Stories* is Dr. Antoinette Burton, a professor in History at the University of Illinois, Champaign Urbana. There are fifteen other contributors to this book, four of them also teach at the University of Illinois. Dr. Marilyn Booth is one of these contributing University of Illinois instructors; she is also the Books Editor for the "Journal of Women's History", which Antoinette Burton is a co-editor. It would seem that this is a rather incestuous grouping of people with seven of the contributors being linked directly to Antoinette Burton either as colleagues or co-writers of past articles/books. Each of the writers in *Archive Stories* are instructors at the college level with all but a few teaching in history departments. None of the contributors appear to have a library or archival background and are writing from a historical perspective and/or of their attempts to use archives around the world.

Archive Stories is divided into three distinct parts, although how those relate to the essays within is debatable. The first part is "Close Encounters: The Archive as Contact Zone", and begins with Durba Ghosh's (History Department, Cornell University) "National Narratives and the Politics of Miscegenation". Ghosh describes her attempt to research relationships between British/European men and native Indian women in India between 1760 and 1840. She has distinctly different experiences while researching in India and England. Indians deny that 'pure' Indian woman ever had relations with British men and actively argue against Ghosh's research while the archivists in England are not only accommodating in regards to access of records, they want to talk about their own distant Indian relatives.

The second chapter of this book is written by Jeff Sahadeo (Department of Political Science, Carleton University), "Without the Past There is No Future: Archives, History and Authority in Uzbekistan". Sahadeo relates his repeated attempts to use the archives for research in Uzbekistan – an Uzbekistan that was under Russian rule at the beginnings of his research and is independent towards the end of Sahadeo's research. Craig Robertson (Communication, Northeastern University) writes the third chapter, "Mechanisms of Exclusion: Historicizing the Archive and the Passport". While attempting to research the history of the passport between archives in Maryland and Washington D.C., Robertson comes up against one James E. Schwartz. Schwartz is the pseudo-archivist who hordes the historical passport information in his possession at the Passport Office. Schwartz has gone so far as to create his own finding aid, to organize the

collection to his own liking, and astonishingly, hidden the paperwork at an undisclosed location in Washington, D.C. and no one but the author seems to mind.

Tony Ballantyne (Department of History, University of Otago) writes of a tea planter/naturalist/anthropologist in Northern India. The chapter “Mr. Peal’s Archive: Mobility and Exchange in Histories of Empire”, addresses Ballantyne’s rediscovery of Peal’s papers while researching a comparison of the British Punjabi and the Maori of New Zealand. “A Living Archive of Desire: Teresita la Campesina and the Embodiment of Queer Latino Community Histories”, by Horacio N. Roque Ramirez (Chicano and Chicana Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara), is the story of a male-to-female transsexual singer/entertainer in San Francisco. The author argues that the records of this woman document a segment of the popularity that is rarely heard from – that these types of records need to be preserved as singular voices for much larger populations that are often ignored in archives.

Renee M. Sentilles (History/American Studies, Case Western Reserve University) rounds out this first section of the book with “Toiling in the Archives of Cyberspace” which relates her experience of not only doing research on the internet, but gaining insight and ideas from other people in the electronic world interested in her research topic.

The second section of the book, “States of the Art: ‘Official’ Archives and Counter-Histories”, begins with Jennifer S. Milligan’s (History and Literature, Harvard University) “What is an Archive in the History of Modern France?” Milligan relates the history of the modern archive as it began in France and how it morphed in to the archival ideas that are still in use today. Moving from France to Germany, Peter Fritzsche (History, University of Illinois) writes “The Archive and the Case of the German Nation”. This entry tells of the German people’s reaction to their own history and archives before, during and after the major world wars. An excellent quote from Fritzsche’s essay: “at the most general level, archival production rests on the premise that the past is no longer the business of the present and must be handled carefully in order to retrieve its fragments and reveal its differences” (p. 186).

This section of the book then moves from Germany to Russia with “On the Biography of the Bakunin Family Archive” by John Randolph (Russian History, University of Illinois). The Bakunin Family archives were controlled by the women in a very progressive and liberal family of 19th century Russians. Randolph shows how these archives were shaped by women who would not have normally had a voice in this time or place. The reader then travels via these stories from Russia to Britain with “Creating the Suffragette Spirit: British Feminism and the Historical Imagination” by Laura Mayhall (History, Catholic University). The writer calls this a ‘master narrative’ of the violent and aggressive suffragette battle during Edwardian times, but it is difficult to see how this relates to archival stories.

Another essay that does not seem to fit with the overall theme, is the United States entry for this section of the book, “Archives of the Unbuilt Environment: Documents and Discourses of Imagined Space in Twentieth-Century Kohler, Wisconsin” by Kathryn Oberdeck (History, University of Illinois) which addresses a utopian-type village attempted by the Kohler company for their employees. Unfortunately, the last story of this section is also confusing for its inclusion: “Fiction’s Imaginative Archive

and the Newspaper's Local Scandals: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Egypt" by Marilyn Booth (Program in Comparative and World Literature, University of Illinois). Booth relates the story of a female author in Egypt and her stories of fiction that appeared in local newspapers. An archival theme or tie-in is not readily apparent.

The last section of Burton's book, "Archive Matters: The Past in the Present," contains three essays all focusing on native people and their histories being left out of 'official' history. Helena Pohlandt-McCormick (History, St. Olaf College) writes of the corrupt archive system in Africa during Apartheid while Adele Perry (History, University of Manitoba) explores the Native North Americans in British Columbia in "The Colonial Archive on Trial: Possession, Dispossession and History in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*" and Ann Curthoys (History, Australian National University) addresses the Aboriginal Tasmanian's fight against colonization in Australia with her "The History of Killing and the Killing of History".

This is a very unevenly edited book. Roughly half of the essays are exceptionally well written and pertinent to the theme of the book, which the author states to be "questions about the relationship between evidence and history" and "telling the truth about history". It is easy to understand how essays regarding access to archival information or the rewriting of certain histories by archives or government institutions fit under this general heading of the quest for truth in the retelling of history. Ghosh, Sahadeo, Robertson, Milligan, Fritzsche, Randolph, Pohlandt-McCormick, Perry and Curthoys all write well on their respective topics of restricted access and/or the molding of history by certain individuals or institutions.

It is much more difficult to understand how other essays managed to be included in this volume. Roque-Ramirez starts off with a promising theme in that he believes that many histories of 'alternative lifestyles' are not being included in archival materials. However, Roque-Ramirez is so strident in his assertion that *this* transsexual, *her* stories, *her* records, *her* history, needs to be told that he actually fails to make his point about the larger history of transsexuals in society and their lack of documentation.

Another weak essay is that of Oberdeck. While reading her essay of a town that was never really built, the reader wonders how this fits in with archives or the molding of history. Mark Greene has this to say about the essay: *The author asserts that drawings of proposed but never built buildings "escape the conventional archival mandate of proving something 'that actually existed', in favor of unfolding what might have been". What "conventional archival-mandate" is this? Archives, and historical writing, are filled with examples of what might have been—book manuscripts never finished, planning proposals never acted upon, letters never sent, actions directed but never taken*¹.

Tellingly, the most poorly written and most disconnected from the theme at hand is that of Booth. Her essay addressing a female Egyptian writer and her fictional romances published in local newspapers not only fails to engage, it fails to fit in with any type of archival topic. Readers of this essay will be hard-pressed to find a connection with archival practices, truth in history, access to archives, or any other topical sub-

¹ Mark Allen Greene, *Antoinette Burton, ed. Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, "Biography" 30 (2007), 3, p. 397-400. Academic OneFile. [Online.] Gale.

category. It is difficult to ignore the fact that the one essay with a blatant tone of being an afterthought is that of the close personal colleague of the editor of this volume².

Further tainting the impact of this collection is the fact that each of the essays refers to others in the same volume. For instance, Craig Robertson, in his "Mechanisms of Exclusion" writes 'the previous essays by Durba Ghosh and Jeff Sahadeo highlight other ways [...] Horacio Roque Ramirez's chapter provides a critical example [...]' (p. 69). It appears as if a stipulation to being published in this collection includes a passing mention of at least two other authors and *their* essays. Did the editor mail each of the essays to each of the authors so that these cross-references could be made prior to *Archive Stories* going to press? This peculiar practice is especially annoying when an essay is referenced out of order and has not yet been read.

The value of this collection lies primarily in its ability to enlighten the reader to the actual experiences researchers have within varying archives and in a few instances, to the singular personalities that have molded specific records. However, it is the reader's job to mine for the few useful gems in the collection.

Holly Stevens³

Guardians of Memory. Essays in remembrance of Hella Jean Bartolo Winston, [Rabat, Malta], National Archives of Malta, 2008, xxviii+474 p.

Guardians of Memory. Essays in remembrance of Hella Jean Bartolo Winston was edited in 2008 by Charles J. Farrugia from the National Archives of Malta and unfortunately it marks the passing away of one of the best specialists of the above mentioned organization.

Considering that scientific activity was a major concern for Hella Jean Bartolo Winston the editors thought that it would be proper and in conformity with her wish to edit a volume of studies and articles as a possibility for the people whom have known her to express their sorrow. This volume should also fill a *hiatus* of the Maltese archival theory.

Hella Jean Bartolo Winston became interested in records management after she graduated a training course in United States and obtained a Master's degree in Records and Archives Administration at University College in London.

She applied her expertise working at Central Bank of Malta or in her own company, the first of such locally managed company in Malta. She also was a deputy chair of the National Archives Advisory Committee, first president of Friends of the National Archives and a lecturer of records and archives management for the Diploma for Information Studies at the University of Malta or member of Maltese National

² Andrea Lynn, *Journal of Women's History finds new home at University of Illinois*. "News Bureau". Available from <http://www.news.uiuc.edu/NEWS/04/0830journal.html>. Internet; accessed March 24, 2008.

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