

interdisciplinary study of surveillance and repression via knowledge production, archival thinking takes hold in the historical field as well as it did in Guatemala. For archivists who may not be as familiar with Latin American Cold War history and the U.S. government's complicity in and support of repressive, authoritarian dictatorships, *Paper Cadavers* is a sobering account that illustrates how, in Latin America, the Cold War was anything but cold.

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Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University

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- ¹ Alice Royer, "Warming Up Records: Archives, Memory, Power and Index of the Disappeared," *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 6 (2010), <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5j76z82c>.

The No-Nonsense Guide to Archives and Recordkeeping

By Margaret Crockett. London: Facet Publishing, 2015. 224 pp. Softcover. \$115U.S., £54.95U.K. ISBN 978-1-85604-855-2.

As evidenced by the title, the goal of *The No-Nonsense Guide to Archives and Recordkeeping* is to provide a practical "how-to" approach to records management and archives. It is the work of Margaret Crockett, British archival consultant and codirector with Janet Foster of The Archive-Skills Consultancy Ltd. (TASC). Crockett's twenty years of archival experience in practice and education provide the foundation for this volume, which draws from her extensive consulting experience in Great Britain and internationally. She has served on the International Council of Archives (ICA) Section for Archival Education and Training, and, in cooperation with ICA, organized with Foster a 2001 conference for archival educators and trainers in Marburg, Germany.

The author clearly states at the outset the volume's purpose is to provide a practical, comprehensive summary of records management and archival practice that includes all record formats. While relying more heavily on British practice for examples of records management and archival professional groups, institutional types and policies and procedures, Crockett does reference international organizations and approaches, particularly those in Canada and the United States. She defines the audiences for this volume as individuals working in archives and records management, particularly those without formal training; managers to whom archival programs report; and related professionals with whom archival

programs work closely, such as librarians, museum curators, and information technology staff.

The volume consists of five parts: “Concepts and Context,” “Managing Current Records,” “Records Management,” “Archives Management,” and “Archival Preservation.” A range of tables and charts supports and provides helpful examples illustrating the content. Each section offers links and citations to resources, standards, and related guidance or information. A very brief select bibliography of four sources concludes the book.

The initial section on concepts and context efficiently introduces core concepts and terminology ranging from the definition of archives, what constitutes a record, and discussion of authenticity, to principles such as provenance and original order. Crockett reviews types of archival repositories, with emphasis on the archives of organizations, including national archives, state and local government archives, business archives, and school archives. The book gives less attention to archives of families, individuals, and nonprofit and religious groups, and only briefly refers to “collecting archives.” This results in minimal attention paid to some of the collections and records of current concern among U.S. archivists, such as African American, Latino/a, and lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender archives, and labor, environmental, and medical archives. Consequently, the book does not address some of the unique challenges and opportunities posed by the archival records of such groups and topics, including different approaches and challenges in collecting, description, and access/restrictions.

The section continues with overviews of “the archives and records scene,” providing information on a range of international archival groups and initiatives (ICA, the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, and others), as well as on national professional associations that non-European archivists may find a useful quick summary. It further addresses archival and records management education and training, along with challenges and issues such as space, access, legal situations, and advocacy; it then outlines basic records management and archives functions. In some cases, such as in the summary of advocacy, these overviews are so briefly stated it may limit impact or understanding. The section ends with some discussion of records creators and users. Crockett provides a useful chart on “How organizations create and manage records” that compares the different functions/roles, typical organization, common retention periods, and legal issues of records created by governments, businesses, and individuals or families (p. 38). It is a clear and quick reminder of (or introduction to) both the major and subtle differences in creation that affect the management of records from different creators. However, another chart, “Archive users and their perspectives,” speculates on the “motivation and characteristics” of users with some overly generalized statements (p. 39). Users and archivists may take exception to some of these statements, such as the observation that personal history

researchers (e.g., those seeking adoption information) are “probably anxious or stressed,” or that academics are “usually highly educated, organized, focused” (p. 39). In reality, users may come with any combination of the perspectives listed, regardless of their status or reason for seeking information in the archives.

The subsequent two sections, “Managing Current Records” and “Records Management,” compose nearly half of the volume and provide a strong focus on records management that archivists with limited training or exposure to records management may find particularly helpful. Regarding the management of current records, this section addresses creation of both analog and digital records, along with basic practices relating to filing systems, classification schemes and hierarchies, and file naming conventions, as well as filing documentation and guidelines. “Records Management” provides a useful list of the goals of records management, and Crockett reflects on the risks of ineffective records management. She notes the effectiveness of making strong arguments to records creators that stress the value of records management. This section also emphasizes legal considerations regarding privacy, finance, and transparency that archivists and records managers must be cognizant of in a records and archives setting.

The fourth section “Archival Management” provides a whirlwind tour through archival functions and considerations in thirty-nine pages. Crockett provides an overview of collecting policies, acquisition and appraisal, intellectual property rights, accessioning, arrangement and description, and the development of finding aids of several types. Charts summarizing principles, international standards, and examples of practice accompany each of these functions.

The final section focuses on archival preservation. Again, the author summarizes core functions and concepts beginning with the development of preservation policy and strategies, and discussing preservation surveys, storage conditions and equipment requirements, and handling of records. Security receives only modest mention, and, given the increases in archival theft, some references to resources and a stronger emphasis would be useful. Disaster planning and prevention are also noted as preservation management concerns. Finally, Crockett underscores the parameters and needs for digital preservation and digital repositories.

Crockett has efficiently and clearly reduced records management and archival functions to their most basic tenets. The main question, however, is whether this approach will result in effective learning or understanding by the audiences for which it is intended. Will it provide sufficient content and context for volunteers or “accidental archivists” with little training, for librarians assuming archival duties, for managers of archival programs, or perhaps for information technology colleagues as the author suggests?

Anyone considering the use of this volume for those undertaking archival functions with little or no training should pay serious attention to this. Learning theory asserts that “hands-on” experiences and interactive learning work best

in educating adults. One effort employing this approach to educating nonarchivists is the Basics of Archives Continuing Education (BACE) program developed by the states of Michigan, New York, and Ohio on behalf of the Council of State Archivists and the American Association for State and Local History.¹ It consists of an online course and workshop that walk attendees through core archival functions using practical exercises to demonstrate core principles. The Georgia Archives Institute and the Western Archives Institute provide one- to two-week-long instruction mixed with practical application. These institutes and the BACE program have both operated for decades and continue to be well attended. A similar textual effort in the U.S. is Dr. Gregory Hunter's *Developing and Maintaining Practical Archives* (Neal-Schuman, 2003). Hunter's volume presents a summary approach as well, but offers extensive examples, case studies, and charts and has received sufficient use since its introduction in 1997 to warrant a third edition now in process. Crockett and her partner in the Archive-Skills Consultancy also provide on-site training sessions, and her volume may work best as a companion to those direct experiences. These approaches have not undergone formal evaluation to provide hard data to assess learning accomplished, so I am only discussing their impact impressionistically.

For the other audiences defined for this volume—managers to whom archival programs report, or associated professions such as information technology—the efficacy of a summary text highlighting core principles is untested. One might wonder whether a library director, the head of a museum, or a chief information officer is likely to sit down to read even a 193-page volume to prepare him- or herself to manage the archives function. A second consideration is whether the overview of those functions and basic principles provides “the right stuff” for educating a manager to provide effective support and direction.

The No-Nonsense Guide to Archives and Recordkeeping is a well-written volume, but also a reminder of the real limitations in our understanding of the effectiveness of our attempts to educate others about the work of our profession. Would archivists find this volume of value in their efforts to provide education to the defined audiences? The answer at this point is a firm “maybe,” “it depends,” or “I’m just not sure.”

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¹ “Online Course: Basics of Archives,” American Association for State and Local History, <http://resource.aaslh.org/view/basics-of-archives/>.