

Overall, the book is an excellent introduction to the many and varied strands of thought in recordkeeping. The thorough bibliographies provided by all authors will enable the reader to go on their own journey of discovery.

Rowena Loo

Queensland State Archives

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Tanya Zanish-Belcher with Anke Voss (eds), *Perspectives on Women's Archives*, Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 2013. 488 pp. ISBN 978 1 931666 67 1 (epub), 978 1 931666 66 4 (pdf), 1 931666 47 4 (print). USD\$69.95, member price USD\$49.95.

Links to Society of American Archivists publications page for this book:

<<http://saa.archivists.org/store/perspectives-on-womens-archives/3334/>>,

<<http://saa.archivists.org/4DCGI/store/PDFs/TOCs/BOOKSAA-0588.pdf>>.

Perspectives on Women's Archives is a book that anyone serious about archives, not just women's archives, should read. It provides a comprehensive overview of how, for over five decades, committed archivists applying their professional knowledge and working with other stakeholders have created the category 'women's archives' in the United States. Taking the history from below movement and the search for sources on women in the 1970s as its starting point, it makes a strong case for the sometimes disputed view that archivists and archives benefit from a close connection with historians. This book may not appeal to those who dismiss the need for archivists to be content experts or who think that access is primarily about providing online descriptions of holdings or digitising collections. On the other hand, if you are curious about archives relating to black women's history, lesbian archives, the archives of women's religious activities, the role of regional collections or zines in archives, among other things, then this book has something to offer you.

This book is a reader in the Society of American Archivists tradition. It is authoritative and informative. It admirably combines classics with newly commissioned pieces, and it encompasses discussions of theory and individual institutional practice as well as empirical surveys of women's archives. There are four sections: Reclaiming our Past; Locating Women in the Archives; Documenting Women's Experiences; and, Conclusion. The reader starts and concludes with pieces by the historian Gerda Lerner, the first published in 1975 and the second in 2009. In the latter, Lerner notes that, despite the many achievements in the field of women's archives, much remains to be done to document and interpret the lives of American women, notably rural women, women from ethnic immigrant groups, working-class women and women in unpaid work (p. 425). Many of the other contributions demonstrate how archivists are continuing to strive to ensure that the records of the experience of American women are collected, documented and used.

One of the threads running through the book is whether 'women's archives' should be treated as a separate category, including whether they should be housed and managed as discrete collections. In chapter 7, 'A Room of One's Own: Women's Archives in the Year 2000', Kären M Mason and Tanya Zanish-Belcher, having presented a

comprehensive survey of US women's archives at the turn of the century, sum up their position on the location of women's archives:

We believe that woman-centred repositories will continue to flourish and play an important role in the archival landscape. But women's repositories are not enough and they cannot do it all alone. Mainstream repositories still have a responsibility to document the experiences of women and, just as importantly, provide access to their holdings by and about women. (p. 139)

Readers in other countries may not be familiar with the story of the relationship between women's history and the emergence of women's archives in the United States, but there is much to learn in the chapters about how sources for women have been located, how women's archives have been established and how stories of women and archives connect to wider contemporary archival preoccupations. One of these is chapter 8, 'Tacitly the Work of Women: Personal Archives and the Public Memory of Families'. Here Susan Tucker documents how over the centuries women (often, but not exclusively, grandmothers) have been the memory keepers in families, while they have suffered from gender disadvantage in the public world of archives. In chapter 11, "A Culture of Concealment": Revealing the Records of Human Reproduction', Tanya Zanish-Belcher gives a compelling account of the many challenges involved in discovering and documenting the records of a part of everyday life not considered 'a topic for polite society' (p. 252). Zanish-Belcher reviews the scholarly literature and uses search data to illustrate the unevenness of finding aids on different aspects of human reproduction. She then gives an overview of the breadth of records discoverable in many institutions (if you think laterally) and concludes by invoking one of the book's recurring concerns, the need to enhance accessibility through improved description. She writes that:

One can hope that as description or metadata and the linked data structures that provide them become more robust, archivists will be able to share more detailed and accurate information about what is in their collections. This could provide new outlets for collections documenting human reproduction. (p. 256)

Perspectives on Women's Archives is a scholarly addition to the literature about archivists and their partnerships in achieving their professional goals, as well as the past and the present of women's archives in the United States. It is recommended reading for students and for experienced practitioners alike.

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Richard J Cox, *Archival Anxiety and the Vocational Calling*, Litwin Books, Duluth, MN, 2011. xv + 355 pp. ISBN 978 1 936117 49 9. USD\$35.00.

When it comes to the archival profession and its mission, what are you most anxious about? Maybe you do not have any anxieties. After all, we can see many examples of