Identity Palimpsests: Archiving Ethnicity
in the U.S. and Canada

A medium cleaned for reuse, a *palimpsest,* retains a ghost image of the old content—whether the medium is parchment or a VHS tape. Likewise, ethnic identities are composed of layers, the old overlaid with the new. These layers may include membership in an ethnic group based on a shared cultural background as well as an externally imposed ethnic designation. The role archives play in preserving and acknowledging these layers is a dominant theme in this volume of nineteen essays. The well-written essays range from theoretical background on the concept of ethnicity and cultural memory to case studies of history preservation for ethnic communities.

Contributors to the volume are archivists, sociologists, ethnographers, political scientists, cultural anthropologists, and sociolinguists. Dominique Daniel and Amalia Levi are well suited to their role as editors due to the breadth of their scholarship. Between them, they hold degrees in American studies, archaeology, history, history of art, museum studies, and library and information studies from universities in the United States, France, Turkey, and Greece.

The authors provide a multidisciplinary perspective that allows archivists to "appropriate the memory tools already developed by other disciplines and add them to their existing archival toolboxes," says Jeanette Bastian in the opening essay (p. 15). The volume will be valuable to scholars and students in cultural heritage fields, particularly to those studying archives and ethnicity in the United States and Canada. Mark Stolarik's essay on the early years of ethnic archiving and the tensions between museum and archival collecting is appropriate for museum studies programs. Benjamin Alexander's chapter on palimpsests and Freedom Summer, one of this volume's strongest essays, should be considered for inclusion in undergraduate historical methodology courses as well as archival appraisal courses. Immigration studies courses will find Joel Wurl's discussion of emigration from the United States to be thought provoking.

Why form an ethnic archives? "Archives are mobilized to discover and recover evidence that has been lost or denied to communities seeking memory," according to Margaret Hedstrom (p. 228). The lack of a repository that documented Arab American history and culture led to the creation of the Arab American National Museum, according to Andrew McBride and Elizabeth Skene. Authors Beatrice Skokan, Yolanda Cooper, and Jameatris Rimkus find that a lack of materials available for curriculum on the black experience in south Florida

led to the creation of the Collaborative Archives from the African Diaspora. Mark Stolarik shows that the dearth of materials on ethnic groups in Minnesota's Iron Range led to the creation of the Immigration History Research Center, which influenced ethnic archives throughout the country.

Ethnic archives have an evolving role in reuniting communities. When the Leo Baeck Institute was formed in 1955, it was one of few repositories that collected materials related to German-speaking Jews and served to connect Jews around the world. Today, the Internet connects the Jewish diaspora. Mollie Hazelton and Frank Mecklenburg discuss the creation of the Leo Baeck Institute's digital archives to continue serving the diaspora. The institute is also adjusting its mission to reflect changes in the identity of "German Jews"; today 90 percent of all Jews in Germany are Russian speaking. Anduin Wilhide and Mustafa Jumale discuss the role of technology in stitching together a diaspora, but in the case of Somali youth digital projects, they caution that technology can also reveal cracks in the diaspora. Konrad Ng, in discussing Asian American digital life, sees that online life is as real as physical reality. Pedro Oriarzabal raises concerns about a diaspora relying on cyberspace to hold its cultural memories. He supplies the apt comparison of the ethereal nature of the Internet to Basque shepherds' social networking through tree carving.

Archives can strip away or create layers of truth in an ethnic community's history. Benjamin Alexander sees the "process of remembering, forgetting, and re-remembering" (p. 188) in palimpsests as a metaphor for archival reappraisal and a renewed emphasis on the context of record creation. Understanding the closed society in which Freedom Summer records were created is necessary to peel back layers of obfuscation. Noah Lenstra, in discussing community tensions around African American archives in Champaign-Urbana, posits that "ethnic communities also use archives to project, perform and contest particular visions of what constitutes an ethnic community" (p. 228). Several of the volume's Canadian authors discuss the ramifications of their government's creation of homogenized ethnic identities from diverse populations. For Raphael Costa, Emanuel da Silva, Gilberto Fernandes, Susan Miranda, and Anna Onge, the solution to the government's homogenized documentation of Portuguese Canadians was to create a community archives that would provide a more diversified narrative. In response to demands for an apology for eighty years of restrictive and punitive policies toward all Asian immigrants to Canada, officially identified as "Chinese Canadians," the government instead provided one-time funding for a digital archives. Despite use of the term "community based" (p. 213), government control of the program has stymied efforts by the Chinese Canadian community to provide a broader narrative of its history.

It follows from Bak and Chen's critique that successful ethnic archives require a long-term strategy for community participation in decisions about

how their histories are preserved. Michelle Caswell finds that independence from established repositories is necessary to retain community control of ethnic archives. For Krisztina Laszlo, building trust with the community is necessary for repositories in language preservation projects. Patricia Silver, in looking at Puerto Rican–centered collections at a Puerto Rican archives versus a primarily non–Puerto Rican archives, sees strengths in both. Kent Randell concludes a mix of types of institutions is needed to document ethnic communities.

Cautionary tales of past missteps in ethnic collecting are relayed by Jennifer O'Neal and Rabia Gibbs. O'Neal, in discussing the development of the *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials,* emphasizes the need to put archival practice in a cultural and historic context. Gibbs's essay, "If We Knew Then What We Know Now: Applying Lessons from Past Eras of Ethnic Archiving Collection Development to Contemporary Practice," is particularly compelling because its young author passed away earlier this year.

Authors including McBride and Skene recount creating ethnic archives out of new cloth. Archives organizers often had no model, no palimpsests, and frequently no archivists to guide them. Although most authors voice a desire on the part of archives creators to make their stories more broadly known, only the essay by Skokan, Cooper, and Rimkus mentions a plan to use the content in education. While space considerations could account for the gap, the needs of users is not a dominant theme in the volume. Caswell notes that while community archives can flourish without archivists, the profession should lend assistance.

Several recently published books that include essays on the intersection of ethnicity and cultural heritage professionals are potential "companions" to this text. For example, *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory,*[1] edited by Jeannette Bastian and Ben Alexander, is a rich resource that includes essays on ethnic-centered community archives and discusses how the United Kingdom supports community archives through short-term projects and best practice models. Also worth considering are *Through the Archival Looking Glass: A Reader on Diversity and Inclusion,*[2] edited by Mary A. Caldera and Kathryn M. Neal, which discusses ethnic archives and other diversity issues, and *Ethnic Historians and the Mainstream: Shaping America's Immigration Story,*[3] by Alan M. Kraut and David A. Gerber, composed of essays by historians discussing how their ethnic identities shaped their research.

Amid the themes of multilayered identities, community control, and diversification of group narratives, *Identity Palimpsests* also reveals an opportunity for archivists to provide support for ethnic archives to ensure that their carefully collected stories will be taught to future generations.

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Notes

1 Jeannette A. Bastian and Ben Alexander, *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory* (London: Facet, 2009).

2 Mary Caldera and Kathryn M. Neal, *Through the Archival Looking Glass: A Reader on Diversity and Inclusion* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2014).

3 Alan M. Kraut and David A. Gerber, *Ethnic Historians and the Mainstream: Shaping America's Immigration Story* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2013).

Keeping Time: An Introduction to Archival Best Practices for Music Librarians

By Lisa Hooper and Donald C. Force. Middleton, Wis.: A-R Editions, 2014. Softcover. $50.00. ISBN 978-0-89579-786-5.

This is the first publication in book form to address the practice of music archives in the United States. The book is part of the Music Library Association's *Basic Manual Series*, which aims to "assist the librarian in dealing with various aspects of the organization, administration and use of a music library."[1] Lisa Hooper is the head music and media librarian at Tulane University in New Orleans and has published in music librarianship journals on issues pertaining to sound recording collections, audio course reserves, and document delivery services in music libraries. Donald C. Force is an assistant professor at the School of Information Studies, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, and has published on records management practices and litigation processes. He has also been involved in international research projects, including the International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) and Digital Records Forensics projects at the University of British Columbia.

The book was written "to assist librarians with the organization and care of archival music materials." It is an ambitious project, intended to cover all possible aspects of the archival enterprise in 144 pages. The authors aim to serve the needs of music librarians and students, as well as archivists with no music background who are faced with working with music materials. The book is divided into eight chapters: "History and Development of Archives, Archival Practice, and Archival Theory"; "Acquisition and Accessioning"; "Appraisal"; "Arrangement"; "Description"; "Preservation"; "Digitization"; and "Funding."

In the interest of focusing on my appraisal of this work, I have chosen not to expand upon each chapter as the content should be familiar to *The American Archivist* readership. For nonarchivists, each chapter provides a brief overview of the topic at hand and then delves into a discussion of best practices to achieve the desired result, be it creating a finding aid or removing a staple. The