

Ward, Christine. "Preservation Program Planning for Archives and Historical Records Repositories." *Preservation: Issues and Planning*. Eds. Paul N. Banks and Roberta Pilette. Chicago: American Library Association, 2000. 43-62.

Christine Ward is the State Archivist and the Director of Operations at the New York State Archives and is the acting Executive Officer for the Archives Partnership Trust<sup>1</sup>. In one year alone (2002), the New York State Archives and the Archives Partnership Trust won eight major awards. Ward also proved her leadership skills and expertise in preservation planning when a flash flood hit a storage facility, endangering many records that were irreplaceable.

In her chapter, "Preservation Program Planning for Archives and Historical Records Repositories," from *Preservation: Issues and Planning*, edited by Paul Banks and Roberta Pilette, Ward endorses the fact that all archives and historical records repositories should have a preservation program/plan in place, because, after all, preservation was, traditionally, the "raison d'être" (43) for archives.

Archives face many problems when it comes to preservation and managing its collections. One problem is that records come in all shapes, sizes, and media, and in many differing conditions of preservation need. Knowing all the needs is difficult and attending to all of them simultaneously can be,

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<sup>1</sup><<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/2003Meetings/November2003/1103bra6.htm>> date accessed, 4 Aug. 2005

sometimes, impossible. Another factor to further complicate matters is that these records, depending on their content or nature, may be used consistently/frequently, and such concentrated use advances the damages to the already fragile materials. One of the last concerns (although this chapter was published in 2000 and research may have come out since then) is that methods/guidelines/procedures need to be developed for preserving information in electronic/machine readable formats. These problems are not insurmountable, according to Ward, provided a preservation plan/program is in place. Furthermore, successful preservation programs are ones that are integrated (preservation is a part of every archival function), proactive, and flexible,

Throughout the chapter, Ward stresses that preservation is everyone's (staff, users, administration) concern and priority. Administrators set example and provide leadership (by encouraging planning, ensuring staff and resources are adequate, supporting preservation activities); staff should know the basics, at least, of archival preservation and should consistently exemplify those practices; and users/researchers need to be apprised of proper use of archives through public relations materials and proper signage. Ward also states that a policy for preservation needs to reflect the mission, goals, and priorities of the parent institution (if any) and that it (the policy) should support the preservation of information over artifact "except when intrinsic value is a factor" (49). I thought this was an interesting point, since it seems that the reason an item is in

an archive is because of its inherent value—otherwise, a facsimile of it (and its information) would be just as good and worthwhile. But my opinion is probably from a collector's point of view, rather than an archivist's, and Ward's assertion (information over artifact) seems to coincide with Schellenberg's theory that "principles and techniques should be developed. . . to make the archivist more effective in servicing his material [because] methodology has a value only if it is useful in making documentary material available"<sup>2</sup> (74). No matter the difference in topics, both Schellenberg and Ward agree that the primary concern of the archivist is to make the records usable (47, Schellenberg 105).

Planning and implementing a preservation program seems customary in archives, but I guess it isn't necessarily a given. The archives everyone in class has shared probably incorporate preservation practices but (much) smaller archives, like neighborhood and church and sometimes even personal endeavors, may not, so her point is well put forth. It was interesting to note one of the state archivists here in Hawaii mentioned the need for more concentrated preservation/conservation practices on certain items in the Hawaii State Archives since they were being requested/used more after the Manoa flood obliterated the collection normally utilized in Hamilton Library.

When Ward emphasizes that preservation is the responsibility of administrators, staff, and researchers, that point seems a little out of place for Hawaii and its archives since the archives here are on a much smaller scale

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<sup>2</sup> Schellenberg, T.R. *The Management of Archives*. Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1965.

compared to the one she works in, so many, if not all staff members are the archivists who probably follow preservation practices for the records they handle. I guess that is why Ward states that many graduate programs in archival administration must incorporate preservation program management .

The one critique I had of the article was that the only differentiation between preservation and conservation Christine Ward made in her "Preservation Program Design" was that "the first three elements [needs assessment, stabilization/protection of holdings, staff and user training] constitute a core preservation program" while the last two elements [conservation treatment of material of intrinsic value and reformatting] were steps toward a "more comprehensive program" (54). I know there are more concrete differences than those she so minimally stated. The Library of Congress defines preservation as "all of the activities that minimize chemical and physical deterioration and damage and that prevent loss of informational content" and conservation as ". . .binding, reformatting, rehousing, physical support, cleaning, environmental stabilization and related technical and facility issues that work together to provide for longevity of an institution's collections."<sup>3</sup> Why else, also, would our LIS program here at the University of Hawaii at Manoa offer two separate courses—LIS 619 (Conservation of Library Materials) and LIS 620 (Preservation Management)<sup>4</sup>. She also may have glossed over the differentiation because her point that the information in the record is paramount

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<sup>3</sup> <<http://www.loc.gov/preserv/history/careamer.html>> date accessed 5 Aug. 2005

<sup>4</sup> <<http://www.hawaii.edu/slis/courses/descriptions.html>> date accessed 5 Aug. 2005.

to the record (item) itself, is key. (The Library of Congress does state that conservation is one aspect of preservation—which is the same as what Ward asserts.) Other than that, I had no other critique, as her chapter was fairly straightforward. The information she put forth was useful to librarians and archivists, especially to those who 1) did not have a preservation program in place and 2) worked in an archive with a parenting/overseeing institution.