

# Book Reviews

## *Waldo Gifford Leland and the Origins of the American Archival Profession.*

Ed. Peter J. Wosh. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011. 397p. alk paper, \$62.95 (ISBN 1931666407). LC2011-028500.

As any professional in the field of archival (or library) science can attest, our field is in flux, as globalization, automation, digitization, and other forces of progress loom on the horizon. With so much transformational change coming so fast, it's tempting to believe that no one has witnessed as much tumult in one lifetime as we have. But reading this volume may offer a palliative view. The book, with its illuminating and probing look at the development of the field of archival science and the impact one man had on it and other fields of intellectual study, proves that others have seen (and participated) in even more dramatic transformations. While offering us a vista into the past, the book also provides connections to the present, demonstrating in a clear-cut manner how changes affecting archival science today were really set in motion and begun a generation or two before. We truly are standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before as we continue their work.

By examining the life of Waldo Gifford Leland, Peter J. Wosh introduces us to a man who has been eclipsed by other more famous leaders and developers of the discipline, as well as affording readers a peep at the "big bang": the birth of the archival profession in our galaxy of the United States, at least. After a brief preface, in a steadily paced and brisk narrative, the author outlines his subject's personal and professional life, explaining the intellectual currents of his particular time and place, born as he was into a genteel family in Newton, Massachusetts, in 1879. Wosh examines and explicates the intellectual stream into which Leland entered as he pursued his college and graduate studies

in Ivy League New England, and the crosscurrents of history and archives to which he dedicated himself the rest of his life. Working for, and with, various private agencies such as the Carnegie Institute, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the American Historical Association, Leland was at the epicenter of interlocking movements that were, in an era long before the Internet, trying to foster scholarship across the country, the globe, and multiple disciplines.

The obstacles he faced were diverse. Leland, along with serious scholars of American history he and various agencies were trying to help, was, in many ways, adrift in a wilderness without a map. In this country in particular, there were few central repositories holding records. If their location was known at all, papers were more often than not just warehoused in substandard locations, prey to not just vermin and the elements, but autograph hunters, avaricious collectors and librarians who did not understand archival needs, which no one did, in fact, there then being no professional archivists as we understand the term today. And it was not just a map they lacked: in some respects, they even had no alphabet or grammar to pose questions or answer them. Basic archival principles such as *respect des fonds*, original order, series- or even collection-level descriptions and the like were not known. The archival records of this country (on national, regional, state, and local levels) were in a chaotic state when Leland began his work. By the time of his death in 1968, however, a national archives had been established (1934), various new state archives had been built, an organization for professional archivists (The Society of American Archivists) had been established, international and national conferences on the topic staged, guidelines developed



and manuals for archival procedures published, and practicing archivists were on the job bringing order out of chaos. While Leland humbly claimed that he was not a professional archivist, Wosh, his champion, clearly demonstrates the impact he had on all these developments.

Wosh achieves much in this book, making no claims that he can't substantiate, demonstrating a deft and scrupulous scholarship in the process. While praising Leland for his accomplishments, he never aggrandizes him and explains that other leaders have deserved the attention and acclaim they have received. Wosh notes Leland's elitism and racism (typical of his day) and frankly admits the deleterious impact such factors historically have had on the profession. But in a very canny way, he proves the importance of archives by including primary materials, such as correspondence, that explicate his thesis in a way no footnotes could. And speaking of footnotes, they are uniformly helpful, along with the short prefaces that introduce many of the texts. An index and bibliographic essay also are of great use.

Some of Leland's writings, as well as that of others germane to the topics under discussion, are included, and Wosh, who holds a PhD in history and who is an honored Fellow of the Society of American Archivists, explains why some more readily available materials are not present. The images imbedded in the text are crisp and appropriate; and what is especially noteworthy in an edited volume of various articles is the lack of redundancy or overlap. The reminiscences and oral history of Leland's that end the volume, for instance, bookend the opening biographical essay in a most appropriate manner. While Wosh writes of Leland's tours of various repositories in Washington and the American South, he lets Leland give us the glorious details of the treasures he came across. It made this archivist feel as if he was accompanying an explorer on an Indiana Jones type of adventure, eavesdropping on an archival adventurer who came across abandoned buildings housing

national treasures. Manuscripts of great intrinsic and informational value were literally at his feet as he fought his way through cobwebs and dripping chambers with teetering piles of paper. Meanwhile, his 1908 essay on using camera technology to provide preservation and access for rare materials may show digital archivists that their field may not be as new as they think.

In significant ways, this superbly edited and overly modest volume achieves much of what Leland himself did in his lifetime. It skillfully blends scholarship, historical inquiry, and archival science into a seamless whole, something archivists, scholars, and writers often attempt to do but do not achieve as neatly as Wosh does here.

This book, published by the Society of American Archivists, will be a valuable addition to any academic institution with information, library, and archival science faculty and students. Professional archivists of long standing and those just entering the field will learn much here, as will researchers interested in the development of the intellectual history of the United States in the first half of the twentieth century.—*Harlan Green, College of Charleston.*

***International Students and Academic Libraries: Initiatives for Success.*** Eds.

Pamela A. Jackson and Patrick Sullivan. Chicago: American Library Association, 2011. 234p. alk. paper, \$54.00 (ISBN 9780838985939). LC2011-040762.

Academic librarianship for international students has seen dramatic increases in the last decade. As the academic world becomes globally diverse, librarians and campus service personnel are more and more exposed to students from countries around the world, whether the academic campus is in the United States, Australia, China, or any other country. The data on international students have been continuously updated and changed in recent years. Peterson's, known as the college study guide publisher, as well as other agencies that gather such data, have been reporting this increase for many years. Indeed, the editors site data from the Open Doors 2010