

subtitle is from the museum as a "collection-driven" institution to "visitor-centered." The five subsections derive from this shift: the challenge to remain relevant, understanding visitors, the role of public service in exhibits, responsible stewardship of collections, and leadership.

Most of the essays have been published during the past decade, but the first is the 1917 classic "The Gloom of the Museum" by John Cotton Dana. The articles that follow are all critical of museum traditions such as the dominance of curatorial expertise, elitist attitudes toward audiences, and ghettoizing museum educators in the hierarchy. However, all point to new directions, often with specific examples of success stories.

Aside from allusions to museums in Davenport and St. Paul and high-powered museums in Chicago, there is nothing immediately relevant to the Midwest, or, for that matter, to state and local history. Yet I heartily recommend this volume to all museums, historical societies, and collegiate history programs because of "big picture" issues. Museum staff members often are stifled by the day-to-day minutiae of their work, while many college programs still ignore material objects. Using almost any one of these articles for in-service or seminar discussion could prove both informative and refreshing.

Starting Right: A Basic Guide to Museum Planning, by Gerald George and Cindy Sherrell-Leo. Second edition by Gerald George. AASLH Book Series. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004. 160 pp. Illustrations, bibliographies, index. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer Jerome Thompson is state curator for the State Historical Society of Iowa. He directed the State Historical Museum for 18 years and is past president of the Iowa Museum Association.

When the first edition of *Starting Right* was released in 1986, the count of museums in the United States numbered more than 6,000. Today there are more than 10,000. This primer on starting or reinvigorating a museum aptly lays out what is involved. In a very readable and logical fashion, George presents the case for the importance of local historical museums and what must be done to make one a successful and viable community resource. It provides direction on where to find help, texts, and references for subjects related to exhibit planning, collections management, and governing a local museum. Additionally, it provides sample organizational charts, board responsibilities, by-laws, budgets, gift agreements, and cataloging records.

There are two major changes to the second edition. The stark reality of the reduction in funding for museums in the past ten years is

reflected in a new chapter titled "Support is the First Consideration." It challenges readers to consider what level of financial support they need, not only to get a museum started but to sustain it. Another new chapter is "And If You Are Planning a Historic House Museum." This chapter asks readers to consider if there are too many house museums. Planners should consider what would make a new house museum different from another in town or up the road. It suggests alternative ways of saving a historic structure and converting it to uses other than a museum. This particular chapter reflects some of the published articles and conferences held during the past few years by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the American Association for State and Local History.

I have recommended the first edition for years. The second edition is just as sound in its guidance, but more timely.

Organizing Archival Records: A Practical Method of Arrangement and Description for Small Archives, by David W. Carmichael. Second edition. AASLH Book Series. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004. xi, 85 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. Includes CD-ROM. \$69.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

Reviewer David McCartney is University of Iowa Archivist. He designed and maintains the Web site for the Carrie Lane Chapman Catt Childhood Home Restoration Project.

For all their differences in size, scope, and level of staffing, archives and manuscript repositories share at least one commonality: They are responsible for the collections of documents entrusted to them to be used by future researchers. Accepting these materials is not to be taken lightly. The donor assumes and expects the institution to properly preserve and maintain the collection and to facilitate access to the materials. To accomplish this, repositories attempt to manage their collections by arranging and describing them through the use of guides, or finding aids. The guides may be general and brief or highly detailed and extensive, often a consequence of staffing availability, collection complexity, or other factors.

Many repositories encounter their greatest obstacles at this crucial stage in collection management. Volunteers or staff workers who are the backbone of local historical societies, public libraries, and other repositories are, unfortunately, often expected to arrange and describe collections without adequate guidance. David W. Carmichael, director of the Georgia Division of Archives and History, recognized this need

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