

## **Community Archives, Community Spaces: Heritage, Memory, and Identity**

Edited by Jeannette A. Bastian and Andrews Flinn

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The concept of community archives has always been at the centre of debates when it comes to a common definition and the activities which should be included in their operations. This is partly because they collect records about a community of people in a specific context. Since contexts differ, the practice of community archives is diverse and their operations, just as challenging as its definition, making any discussion about it difficult to reach common definitions.

Today's societies increasingly engage with records and with people whose lives and histories have often seemed to exist outside conventional practice. As a result, archives professionals have an ongoing need to discuss community archives as an important aspect of archival practice. The discussion becomes more and more interesting not only to archives professionals, but also to diverse groups including researchers and academics. This is because today's community archives are vigorously attempting to address critical activities of archiving that are situated within the areas of cultural power and authority in a fast-developing digital world, where space, heritage, memory, and identity are all becoming more complex. Thus, the importance of a clear understanding of the meaning, purpose, and functions of community archives in modern society cannot be over emphasized.

For this reason, Jeannette A. Bastian and Andrew Flinn's edited *Community Archives, Community Spaces: Heritage, Memory, and Identity*, is a must-read for every practitioner and stakeholder of archives, especially those with a focus on community archives. Both Bastian and Flinn are highly esteemed in the Information Science and Heritage fields respectively. Bastian is a Professor Emerita in Information Science, and at the time of publishing this book she was at the School of Information Science, Simons University, at Boston, Massachusetts. She

has directed many Archives Management programmes and held respected positions in the Information Science field. Flinn is a Reader in Archives Studies and Oral History at the University College of London and has also held many respected leadership roles in the Archives and Heritage field. The authors of the various chapters carry similar authority in their fields. It is therefore not surprising, that the book is so rich in ideas about community archives, which are presented with clarity and expertise.

The book expands and clarifies the definition of community archives to explore all that the concept encompasses in the modern world. The diverse range of contributors effectively explore the relationships that exist between community archives and their various manifestations. The content of the book is laid out in two parts. The three chapters in Part 1 contain analytical essays that challenge the reader to move from archival optimism to focusing on how to sustain a community archive. They also look at what community archives can teach other mainstream institutions and reveal the relationship between community archives and conceptual models, with special reference to the records continuum theory. Part 2 of the book presents the remaining seven chapters as case studies on community archives in diverse contexts. They include examples of archiving for indigenous language and cultural revitalization in New Zealand; reflections on self-documentation of Thai communities; popular music, community archives, and *public history online*; *documenting housing displacement and gentrification in a Latino community* and a community-based archiving in Croatia, among others. The book is broad in perspective and very useful in its discussion of the scope of community archives.

This is a book with fresh ideas that will appeal to all archives and records management practitioners. It is highly recommended to historians, librarians, researchers, teachers, students, and professionals in the archives and records management community and the cultural heritage field.

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