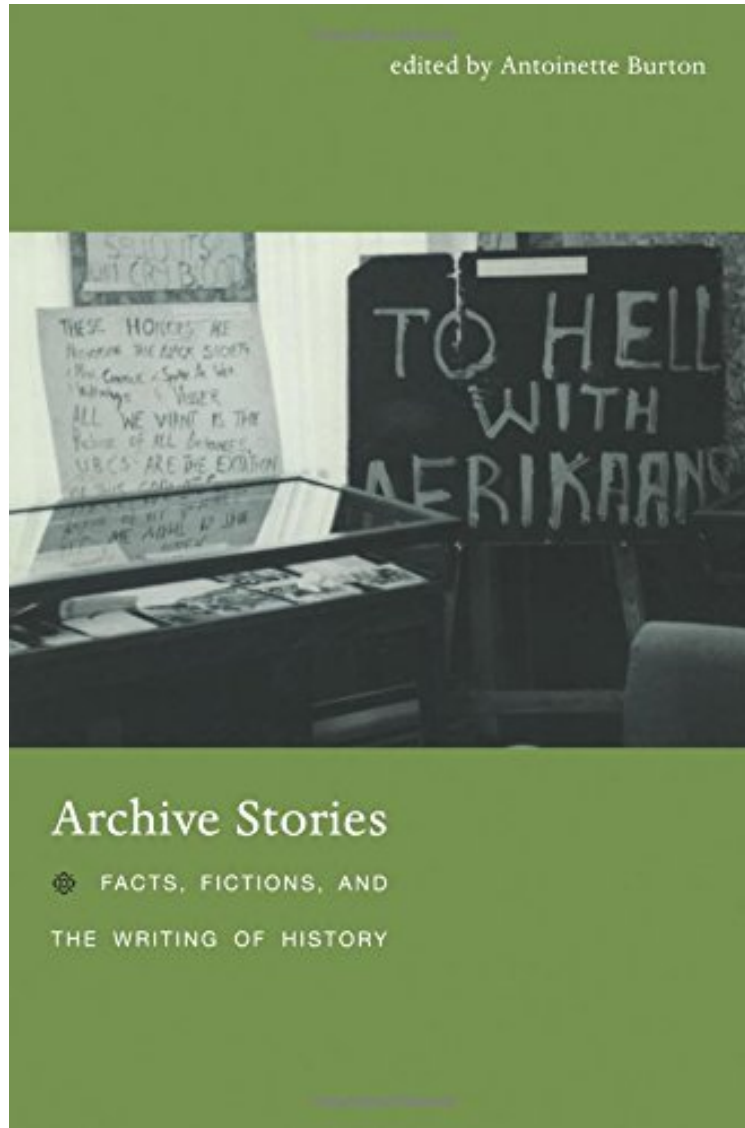


Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History

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From Brand: Duke University Press Books : Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Why Becoming a Real Historian Might Be Harder Than You Think By Frank Bellizzi As the title suggests, this book is a collection of essays written by historians who have, to use the expression, been there and done that. Although these stories come from all over the world and take up a wide

variety of topics, they are held together by a common theme: it is unrealistic to think that any archive contains merely the raw materials of history. Why? Because even the archive itself has a history, a history that dictates factors like what the archive contains, how its contents are arranged, how items are labeled, access to materials, and the unpredictable experiences of researchers. A second and related theme is that historians these days are bound to sense a tug-of-war being waged. On the one hand are those positivist ideas about the high level of precision one can supposedly achieve as a result of archival research. (Perhaps such notions have been inspired by recent advances in forensic science popularized by television crime dramas). On the other hand is a postmodern view according to which not only history but even the archive itself is understood to be an interpretation. People who aspire to become historians, and armchair historians who want to know what it's like to dig around among the primary sources, should read this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Jeremy Wong A critical piece for any interested in historiography. 0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Did your professor make you buy this? By Karl Krotke Any graduate student of history should read this book.

Despite the importance of archives to the profession of history, there is very little written about actual encounters with them about the effect that the researchers race, gender, or class may have on her experience within them or about the impact that archival surveillance, architecture, or bureaucracy might have on the histories that are ultimately written. This provocative collection initiates a vital conversation about how archives around the world are constructed, policed, manipulated, and experienced. It challenges the claims to objectivity associated with the traditional archive by telling stories that illuminate its power to shape the narratives that are found there. *Archive Stories* brings together ethnographies of the archival world, most of which are written by historians. Some contributors recount their own experiences. One offers a moving reflection on how the relative wealth and prestige of Western researchers can gain them entry to collections such as Uzbekistan's newly formed Central State Archive, which severely limits the access of Uzbek researchers. Others explore the genealogies of specific archives, from one of the most influential archival institutions in the modern West, the Archives nationales in Paris, to the significant archives of the Bakunin family in Russia, which were saved largely through the efforts of one family member. Still others explore the impact of current events on the analysis of particular archives. A contributor tells of researching the 1976 Soweto riots in the politically charged atmosphere of the early 1990s, just as apartheid in South Africa was coming to an end. A number of the essays question what counts as an archive and what counts as history as they consider oral histories, cyberspace, fiction, and plans for streets and buildings that were never built, for histories that never materialized. Contributors. Tony Ballantyne, Marilyn Booth, Antoinette Burton, Ann Curthoys, Peter Fritzsche, Durba Ghosh, Laura Mayhall, Jennifer S. Milligan, Kathryn J. Oberdeck, Adele Perry, Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, John Randolph, Craig Robertson, Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, Jeff Sahadeo, Rene Sentilles

Archive Stories is path-breaking in its subject matter, methodology, and up-to-date reflection on the status of historical knowledge. It is hard to see how anyone can avoid using this important anthology in methodology and historiography courses. Bonnie G. Smith, author of *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice*