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From the Ashes of History

Loss and Recovery of Archives and Libraries in Modern Latin America

Edited by

Carlos Aguirre

&

Javier Villa-Flores

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Introduction

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Historical research depends on sources, written and otherwise. When confronted with a lack of evidence, historians usually refrain from pursuing a given topic and either look for other, better-documented historical issues to tackle, or try to approach the same topic from a different angle. Sources (or their absence), as we all know, shape our research projects in ways that are at times unpredictable but always important. But a "lack of sources" usually contains an interesting and quite important story in itself, since it is generally the result of specific power struggles that stem from political, social, cultural, and institutional tensions. Often the lack of historical evidence is the consequence of the partial or total destruction of archives and libraries due to the cumulative effect of negligence or shortsightedness on the part of the state or private institutions; the absence of effective official policies of record preservation; the prevalence of other economic priorities; or intentional acts of destruction by insurrectional movements, competing forces in internal and foreign wars, or social agents trying to cover up their crimes (such as military forces intentionally destroying records of human rights violations). Accidents and "natural" disasters are also to blame for the loss of valuable archival and library collections. In recognition of the real possibility of confronting tragic losses, there is an ongoing effort by various academic institutions and collaborative groups to digitally preserve what remains of endangered ar-

chives and to make those valuable materials available to researchers around the world via the web. Such projects are making it possible to research even the least powerful and least visible members of communities, such as enslaved Africans, and to produce innovative accounts of the past. In other cases, "lost" archives have been "recovered" and made available to scholars as well as ordinary citizens. There are numerous instances of documentary collections that were considered either lost or inaccessible and that, due to chance, good fortune, or to the perseverance of different actors, are now part of both efforts to reconstruct the past and struggles over collective memories and even judicial battles.

Archives and libraries, thus, not only help us reconstruct the past: they have their own, quite eventful history, one that involves instances of loss and destruction as well as cases of recovery and reconstruction. This volume seeks to explore selected cases of archive and library stories that illuminate the counterpart between them and the writing of historical narratives, the shaping of collective memories, and the outcome of social and political conflicts.

A brief history of archives and libraries in Latin America

The creation of the first archives and libraries in the new world was closely connected to the conquest and colonization of new lands across the Atlantic. Following strict injunctions by the Catholic Kings, authorities were expected to document every conceivable aspect of Spanish colonial administration.[1] From ordinances and official appointments to petitions, trials, testaments, and protracted litigation of all sorts, a wealth of documentation made evident the obsessive and incessant accumulation of minute detail required of representatives of the crown. High courts (Audiencias) and other tribunals also generated their own archives comprising both administrative documentation and lawsuits, trials, and other legal business. While ecclesiastical courts presided over matters related to the church –including marital disputes, annulments, and legitimate and illegitimate births–, criminal courts dealt with a

1 Roberto González Echevarría, *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1-19.

wide variety of offenses from arson and abduction to theft and murder.[2] Similarly staggering was the documentation generated by the tribunals of the Inquisition set up in Mexico (1570), Lima (1569), and Cartagena de Indias (1610), which relied heavily on a steady harvest of denunciations and self-denunciations for crimes ranging from Protestantism, Judaizing, and blasphemy to divination, astrology, or possession of heretical books. For most colonial institutions, however, the creation of archives responded to the pressing need of defending rights and social prerogatives.[3] Churches, convents, hospitals, municipal corporations, confraternities, haciendas and even indigenous communities created their own archives to keep track of lawsuits and other legal actions. The necessity to file and initiate legal actions of all sorts was a constant source of business for scribes and notaries, whose extant archives remain a rich source of information on the social, economic, and religious life in the colonies.[4]

2 Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts over Marriage Choice, 1574-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Silvia M. Arrom, *La mujer mexicana ante el divorcio eclesiástico: 1800-1857* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1976); Charles C. Cunningham, *The Audiencia in the Spanish Colonies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1919); Pilar Arregui Zamorano, *La Audiencia de México según los visitadores, siglos XVI y XVII* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1985); Colin M. MacLachlan, *Criminal Justice in Eighteenth-Century Mexico: A Study of the Tribunal de la Acordada* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

3 Solange Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571-1700* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988); Joaquín Pérez Villanueva and Bartolomé Escandell Bonet, eds., *Historia de la Inquisición en España y América*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos: Centro de Estudios Inquisitoriales, 1984-2000); Fermina Álvarez Alonso, *La inquisición en Cartagena de Indias durante el siglo XVII* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1999); Pedro Guibovich Pérez, *En defensa de Dios. Estudios y documentos sobre la inquisición en el Perú* (Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú, 1998); Paulino Castañeda and Pilar Hernández Aparicio, *La Inquisición de Lima*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Deimos 1995) and vol. 2 (Madrid: Deimos 1998); René Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición de Lima*, vol. 3 (Madrid: Deimos, 1998); Henry Charles Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1908); Richard Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969); John Chuchiak IV, *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536-1820* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

4 Kathryn Burns, *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Tamar Herzog, *Mediación, archivos y ejercicio: los escribanos de Quito, siglo XVII* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klosterman, 2010).

In the aftermath of the wars of independence, most Latin American countries formed national archives as symbols of national pride and modernity, as well as tools for state –and nation-building. The first national archives were founded in Argentina (1821), Mexico (1823), Bolivia (1825), Brazil (1839), and Cuba (1841), followed by Haiti (1860), Peru (1861), Colombia (1868), Paraguay (1871), Honduras (1880), Costa Rica (1881), the Dominican Republic (1884), and Nicaragua (1896). Other nations waited until the first half of the twentieth century to open a national archive, as was the case of Panama (1921), Venezuela (1914), Chile (1927), Uruguay (1927), Guatemala (1937), and Ecuador (1938). Located in the capital cities of the new republics –which had been sites of viceroyalties, high courts, and other important colonial institutions– national archives were organized with papers from the colonial era that survived the bitter struggles for independence.[5] Years of protracted conflict and political instability had resulted in the destruction or loss of precious papers, while others had been transferred to the metropolis or sold to private collectors. Yet, an enormous amount of colonial materials survived, making possible the study of this era from the wars of conquest down to independence. As modern nations undertook ambitious projects of public order, control of the territory, and surveillance of the population, a staggering amount of new documents was created. The prodigious paper trail ranged from basic statistical, demographic, and cartographic information to the implementation of modern forms of identification of citizens and criminals through photographs and fingerprinting.[6] Judicial archives are among the largest repositories of documents and have proven to be invaluable for historians and other scholars interested not only in the history of law, crime, and punishment, but

5 See Roscoe R. Hill, *The National Archives in Latin America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945).

6 See, inter alia, Raymond Craib, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Julia Rodríguez, *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine and the Modern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Carlos Aguirre, *The Criminals of Lima and their Worlds: The Prison Experience, 1850-1935* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Diego Galeano, *Escritores, detectives y archivistas: La cultura policial en Buenos Aires, 1821-1910* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Teseo, 2009).

also in the social and cultural dimensions of human experience.[7] In some countries, social reforms such as literacy campaigns and land reforms generated their own archives.[8] Following official injunctions, administrative offices were expected to transfer records to national archives periodically, but not all departments complied; others, of a more secret nature, were not available to citizens because of strategic reasons. This is the case of police and military archives, which became essential tools of surveillance and repression during an unprecedented era of state terror in the second half of the twentieth century. With the transition to democracy, some of these records have been finally made available for public scrutiny or discovered by chance as in the cases of Guatemala, Argentina, Mexico, Paraguay, and other nations, although in some cases they have been kept outside the direct administrative control of the National Archives.[9] Created as crucial institutions of state formation and governmentality in Latin America, national and other types of

7 For an overview of these issues see Ricardo D. Salvatore, Carlos Aguirre, and Gilbert M. Joseph, eds. *Crime and Punishment in Latin America: Law and Society since Colonial Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001). For an interesting discussion of the production of legal documents, see Leticia Barrera, "Más allá de los fines del derecho: expedientes, burocracia y conocimiento legal," *Íconos*, no. 41 (2011): 57-72.

8 Mark Abendroth, *Rebel Literacy: Cuba's National Literacy Campaign and Critical Global Citizenship* (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2009); Humberto Rodríguez Pastor, "El archivo del fuero agrario," *Latin American Research Review* 14, no. 3 (1979): 202-206; Lawrence Douglas Taylor, *Revolución mexicana: guía de archivos y bibliotecas: México-Estados Unidos* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1987).

9 *From Silence to Memory: Revelations of the Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional,* foreword by Carlos Aguirre, preface by Kate Doyle (Eugene: University of Oregon Library, 2013); Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers. The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Carlos Osorio and Mariana Enamoneta, eds., "Rendition in the Southern Cone: Operation Condor Documents Revealed from Paraguayan 'Archive of Terror' (December 29, 2007). http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB239d/ [accessed June 20, 2014]. The recently discovered secret archives of the Argentine dictatorship are now available at www.archivosabiertos.com administered by the Ministry of Defense. For a discussion of the methodological challenges and promises of the recently released secret police reports in Mexico, see Tanalís Padilla and Louise Walker, eds., "Spy Reports: Content, Methodology, and Historiography in Mexico's Secret Police Archive," Special dossier of *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research* 19, no. 1 (July 2013): 1-10.

state archives have thus evolved into important tools for advancing democracy and accountability, and for crafting new futures for the region's past.

Private, communal, and non-governmental archives have had an equally adventurous evolution in the post-independence period, too complicated to be adequately summarized here. Among them, the best preserved and most widely used by historians are religious archives contained in archbishopships, convents, parishes, and other religious institutions and jurisdictions. The reconstruction of religious practices but also of social relations, family life, distribution of wealth and property, mentalities, and many other such topics have been greatly advanced by the abundance and accessibility of religious archives. Much less preserved and accessible are the archives of private businesses, labor unions, political parties, peasant communities, sports and recreational clubs, and literary associations.[10] Finally, personal archives of prominent members of the social and political elites (political leaders, intellectuals, businessmen) as well as a variety of other observers and recorders of daily life (amateur and professional photographers, for instance), although generally scarce and of difficult access (due to concerns with privacy or to lack of interest on the part of relatives and custodians of those records), have also provided a wealth of information that has been used by historians and other scholars to reconstruct various aspect of Latin American societies' pasts.[11]

In contrast to archives, libraries in Latin America were neither created nor initially supported by the state, but had their roots in privately held collections. Although books accompanied some of the early explorers and settlers in the New World, most books were imported from Europe by Catholic monastic orders –espe-

10 For a short but useful discussion of the challenges to access and use private business papers see Vera Blinn Reber, "Archival sources for Latin American Business History," *Business History Review*, no. 59 (1985): 670-79.

11 Photographic archives are being increasingly recovered, preserved, and used in historical, anthropological, and cultural studies. Some of their pitfalls are discussed in Silvia Spitta, "On the Monumental Silence of the Archive," *e-misférica* 9, no. 1-2 (2012); Deborah Poole and Isaías Rojas Pérez, "Memories of Reconciliation: Photography and Memory in Postwar Peru," *e-misférica* 7, no. 2 (2010); and Marion Gautreau, "La Ilustración Semanal y el Archivo Casasola. Una aproximación a la demitificación de la fotografía de la Revolución Mexicana," *Cuicuilco*, no. 41 (2007): 113-142.

cially the Jesuits and Franciscans.[12] As expected, most of the earliest book collections in the New World were established in convents and monasteries to aid the friars in the task of evangelization. The holdings covered subjects such as theology, philosophy, and morals, until the eighteenth century, when books on secular history and science claimed some shelf room.[13] The early establishment of local presses in Mexico City (1539) and Lima (1581) had a significant impact in the development of a lettered culture –and thus, of library formation– as they produced an important amount of catechisms, dictionaries, grammars, and religious literature needed by the friars.[14] But the wealthy, both secular and ecclesiastic, craved more than pietistic literature. Indeed, in spite of colonial censorship, a lucrative black market of book traders flourished in the New World, with Mexico and Lima as the most important distribution points for imported books.[15] In 1646 the Bishop of Puebla Juan de Palafox bequeathed 5.000 volumes of his personal collection to Colegio de San Juan y San Pedro with the condition that the books

12 Irving Leonard, *Books of the Brave: Being an Account of Books and of Men in the Spanish Conquest and Settlement of the Sixteenth-Century New World* (1949; repr. with an introduction by Rolena Adorno, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

13 Ignacio Osorio Romero, *Historia de las bibliotecas novohispanas* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública/Dirección de Bibliotecas, 1986); Teodoro Hampe, *Bibliotecas privadas en el mundo colonial: la difusión de libros e ideas en el virreinato del Perú, siglos XVI-XVII* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 1996); Agustín Millares Carlo, "Bibliotecas y difusión del libro en Hispanoamérica colonial: intento bibliográfico," *Boletín Histórico/Fundación John Boulton*, no. 22 (1970): 25-72; Pedro Guibovich Pérez, "Los espacios de los libros en el Perú colonial," *Lexis* 27, no. 1-2 (2003): 179-190; Hortensia Calvo, "The Politics of Print: The Historiography of the Book in Early Spanish America," *Book History*, no. 6 (2003): 277–305.

14 See José Toribio Medina, *Historia de la imprenta en los antiguos dominios españoles de América y Oceanía* (Santiago de Chile: Fondo Histórico y Bibliográfico José Toribio Medina, 1958); Magdalena Chocano Mena, "Colonial Printing and Metropolitan Books: Printed Texts and the Shaping of Scholarly Culture in New Spain: 1539-1700," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 6, no. 1 (1997): 69-90; and Pedro Guibovich Pérez, "The Printing Press in Colonial Peru: Production Process and Literary Categories in Lima, 1584-1699," *Colonial Latin American Review* 10, no. 2 (2001): 167-188.

15 On book censorship and circulation in late colonial Peru, see Pedro Guibovich Pérez, *Lecturas prohibidas. La censura inquisitorial en el Perú tardío colonial* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2013).

be made available to any literate person, thus establishing one of the first public libraries of the Americas.[16] The foundation in 1762 of the Real y Pontificia Universidad de México brought to light the first non-private library in Mexico City, whose collections grew significantly in 1767 with the incorporation of former Jesuit libraries. Few years later, in 1804, heirs of Luis Antonio de Torres, chanter of Mexico's Cathedral, opened a second public library, the Turriana library, right next to the Cathedral.

With the rise of independent states, liberals planned on the creation of national libraries, which often took as a point of departure collections recently seized from religious and private hands. In 1810 Argentina and Brazil opened the first national libraries, which were later followed by Chile (1813), Uruguay (1816), Peru (1821), Venezuela (1833), and Mexico (1833). They were followed, in the second half of the nineteenth century, by the Dominican Republic (1869), El Salvador (1870), Guatemala (1879), Costa Rica (1889), and Panama (1892). In other nations in the Caribbean and Central America, the development of national libraries had to wait until the 1920s or even later.[17] Libraries offered visible symbols of national pride, but it would take a long time before they became true cultural and research centers. In addition, many of them suffered from various forms of sacking, looting, theft, and destruction. Emphasizing preservation over wide use and circulation, most libraries restricted access to their collections to small enlightened elites, which belied their mandate as public libraries.[18] With few exceptions, national libraries suffered from meager budgets, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of professional/modern catalogs and classification techniques. Following the principle of legal deposit, many of these institutions received free copies of recently published books, but a

16 Michael M. Brescia, "Liturgical Expressions of Episcopal Power: Juan de Palafox y Mendoza and Tridentine Reform in Colonial Mexico," *The Catholic Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (2004): 497. See also *Artes de México*, no. 68 (2003), special issue on "Biblioteca Palafoxiana."

17 José G. Moreno de Alba, et al., *Historia de las bibliotecas nacionales de Iberoamérica: pasado y presente* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1995).

18 Rosa María Fernández de Zamora, "La historia de las bibliotecas en México: un tema olvidado," 60th IFLA General Conference Proceedings, 1994. http://archive.ifla.org/IV/ifla60/60-ferr.htm [accessed June 20, 2014].

perennial lack of funding hindered significantly the growth of their collections. By the second half of the twentieth century, as a new wave of nationalism and populism swept the region, governments poured new resources into cultural institutions. Like national museums, public libraries have experienced a sort of renaissance that translated into increasing professionalization of librarianship, sustained growth of collections, new or more functional premises, and inclusion of new materials such as photography, film, audio, and other media.

Private libraries (in the hands of both individuals and private institutions) also constitute important repositories of books, journals, and other types of printed materials (maps, photographs, and engravings). Book collectors –typically, either intellectuals or members of the social and economic elites– competed with public libraries in the acquisition of valuable materials. In some cases, private libraries ended up integrated into larger collections (national or university libraries, for instance), but in others they were either disintegrated or sold to foreign institutions.[19] There are also cases of valuable libraries formed by social, cultural, and economic institutions (social clubs, labor unions) or by local governmental units (municipalities) which, although much less comprehensive in terms of their holdings, could provide access to valuable materials sometimes difficult to find in national and research libraries. Many, if not most, of these smaller, private, or local libraries have suffered from destruction, loss, or looting. How much has been lost, in terms of the cultural and social memory of a given society, by not preserving these types of collections? It is difficult to know, but we will probably agree that each case of disappearance or dismembering of one of these libraries has further limited our ability to preserve each country's cultural patrimony and to reconstruct its past.

19 Felipe Meneses Tello, "La problemática de las bibliotecas personales de insignes estudiosos mexicanos," *Omnia* 9, no. 27 (1993): 83-95; Carlos Aguirre, "Los intelectuales peruanos del siglo XX y sus bibliotecas" (paper presented at the colloquium on "Libraries of the Americas," Universidad Torcuato di Tella, Buenos Aires, August 19-20, 2014). For details about the libraries of two great private book collectors, see Rodrigo Martínez Baracs, *La biblioteca de mi padre* (Mexico City: Conaculta, 2010), a description of José Luis Martínez's library, and José Mindlin, *Uma vida entre livros. Reencontros com o tempo* (São Paulo: EDUSP/Companhia das Letras, 2001).

From Loss to Recovery

Archives and libraries everywhere, including Latin America, have constantly suffered from various forms of destruction produced by fires (accidental or intentional), natural disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes), civil and foreign wars, imperial looting, political repression, censorship, theft, or simply the lack of adequate forms of preservation. One of the first such acts of destruction was the burning of pre-Hispanic codices that took place in Texcoco, in 1530, ordered by the first bishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumárraga.[20] In 1562, Diego de Landa, Bishop of Yucatán, also ordered the burning of thousands of Indigenous "idols" as well as 27 Mayan codices.[21] "We found a large number of these books," famously recalled Landa in his *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* (c. 1566), "and, as they contained nothing in which there was not to be seen superstition and lies of the devil, we burned them all, which they regretted to an amazing degree and which caused them great affliction."[22] The Lima earthquake of 1746, to mention but one natural disaster, destroyed a large portion of the city, including convents and churches, thus seriously damaging their libraries and archives.[23] During the colonial period, there were instances in which riots or rebellions caused the destruction of important libraries and documentary collections. In some cases, it was random rage; in others, there was a conscious effort to destroy documents that the attackers saw (quite correctly) as instruments in the hands of their oppressors. As early as 1513, the personal library of D. Alonso Mano, Puerto Rico's first bishop, was burned to the ground during an Indian attack to the settlement of Caparra.[24] In 1692, in Mexico City, a popular riot sacked and burned the viceregal palace along with many files and

20 Fernando Báez, *Historia universal de la destrucción de los libros* (Barcelona: Destino, 2004), 130-131.

21 Báez, *Historia universal*, 131.

22 Quoted in Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquest: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan 1517-1570* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 70.

23 Charles F. Walker, *Shaky Colonialism: The 1746 Earthquake-Tsunami in Lima, Peru, and Its Long Aftermath* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

24 Ricardo E. Alegría, *Discovery, Conquest, and Colonization of Puerto Rico, 1493-1599* (San Juan, PR: Colección de Estudios Puertorriqueños, 1974).

documents of the municipal archive.[25] Several years later, fires destroyed a portion of the archives of the viceregal palaces of Lima (1769) and Cartagena de Indias (1786).[26] During the Túpac Amaru rebellion, the Haitian revolution, the Hidalgo insurrection, and the Wars of Independence, there were episodes of attacks against public and religious buildings that contained important documentary collections. In Guerrero, insurgents often made a point of destroying archives to make impossible the collection of taxes.[27]

In the post-independence period, similar episodes took place almost everywhere during the era of caudillo-led struggles. Foreign wars led to what could be considered imperial looting of the defeated country: Chileans took books and documents to Santiago de Chile.[28] During the Mexican Revolution, contending armies produced quite a bit of destruction that led to the loss of valuable private and public records. In 1916, for example, Carrancista troops destroyed the library and archive of the Casa del Obrero Mundial, an anarcho-syndicalist organization located in the popular barrio of Tepito, in Mexico City.[29] Years later, during the 1932 agrarian insurrection in El Salvador, Red Commanders ordered the destruction of municipal archives in every occupied town, as they were traditional repositories of land records.[30]

25 Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora, *Alboroto y motín de México del 8 de junio de 1692*, ed. Irving A. Leonard (Mexico City: Talleres gráficos del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía, 1932); Natalia Silva Prada, *La política de una rebelión. Los indígenas frente al tumulto de 1692 en la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2007).
26 Rafael Guevara Bazán, "Los incendios en la historia de Lima," *Revista Actualidad Militar*, no. 254 (1979): 14-15; José Manuel Groot, *Historia eclesiástica y civil de Nueva Granada*, 3 vols. (Bogotá: Casa Editorial de M. Rivas, 1889-1893), vol 2, 255.
27 Peter Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State. Guerrero 1800-1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 74.
28 See Pedro Guibovich Pérez, "La usurpación de la memoria: el patrimonio documental y bibliográfico durante la ocupación chilena de Lima, 1881-1883," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 46 (2009): 83-108, and Carmen McEvoy, ¨Guerra, civilización e identidad nacional. Una aproximación al coleccionismo de Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, 1879-1884," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 46 (2009): 109-135.
29 Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution, 2 vols* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), vol. 2, 433.
30 Jeffrey L. Gould and Aldo Lauria-Santiago, *To Rise in Darkness: Revolution,*

In the second half of the twentieth century, various forms of political repression led to the destruction or mutilation of valuable private and public collections. In April 1953, for example, groups of Peronist militants burned the building and library of the Socialist Party in Buenos Aires;[31] later, in the 1970s, military dictatorships in Argentina and Chile reduced to ashes thousands of books considered subversive and dangerous.[32] In Cuba, books written by opponents of the Cuban revolution have been purged from the National Library and do not circulate openly in the island.[33] When General Juan Velasco Alvarado, leader of the military junta in Peru (1968-1975) was removed from power, his successor, General Francisco Morales Bermúdez, ordered the destruction of all minutes of cabinet sessions held during the previous seven years.[34] During periods of protracted repression, on the other hand, military regimes systematically tried to destroy or conceal incriminatory evidence, leading to the disappearance (in some cases, only temporary) of police and military records. But not all the cases of archival destruction can be attributed to political violence and repression. Ignorance and disdain are behind the loss of valuable archives, such as the case of the ethnographic archive built by anthropologist Donald Pierson and a team of 22 researchers in the San Francisco River in Brazil in the 1950s, and that was disposed of as garbage in 1999 by the foundation that had it in custody.[35]

Repression, and Memory in El Salvador 1920-1932 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 193.

31 Richard J. Walter, *The Socialist Party of Argentina, 1890-1930* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 202.

32 Hernán Invernizzi and Judith Gociol, *Un golpe a los libros. Represión a la cultura durante la última dictadura militar* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2002); Báez, *Historia universal*, 258-260; "Libros quemados, escondidos y recuperados a 40 años del golpe," http://www.bibliotecanicanorparra.cl/exposicion-libros-quemados-escondidos-y-recuperados-a-40-anos-del-golpe/ [accessed on May 22, 2014]; "De la quema de libros de la dictadura a la imposibilidad de investigaciones en democracia," *El Ciudadano* (Santiago de Chile), October 20, 2013.

33 Rafael Rojas, *El estante vacío. Literatura y política en Cuba* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2009), 190.

34 Almost forty years later, copies of those minutes were found and are now deposited at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

35 Roberto Lima, "La historia en la basura: los archivos perdidos de Donald Pierson," *Desacatos*, no. 34 (2010): 107-118.

Simultaneously –albeit less dramatically– public and private archives and libraries were decimated by lack of interest or resources. Every archivist, librarian, or historian one could ask would tell us horror stories about how the papers of an institution or a public figure have been irremediably lost. Not everything can be attributed to state's indifference, however. Lack of "archival consciousness" is more common than what historians would like to see. "Old papers" do not always exercise the same kind of "allure" (to borrow Arlette Farge's term) that they generate on the historian.[36] And that is true even for solid institutions, such as political parties, that very rarely invest resources in building an archive. But when it comes to subaltern peoples –slaves, peasants, Indigenous communities, workers, domestic servants, prisoners– the shortage of sources (and thus, of archives) that record their lives and experiences is even more dramatic. As a result, there are extensive areas of social memory and history that continue to be on the margins of documentary collection, preservation, and access.

In his brilliant essay *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, the late Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot highlighted the imposition of silences in what he called the four moments of historical production that help us understand why certain peoples and events continue to exist "without history." First, there is silence at "the moment of fact creation," that is, the total lack of documentation, evidence, or even witnesses that could help us reconstruct a given event; second, there is silence at "the moment of fact assembly," that is, the fact that even if documentation or evidence was produced, it was lost or destroyed (some times intentionally) due to its supposed lack of interest or "importance"; third, there is silence at "the moment of fact retrieval": vast periods and regions of the human experience, even if they are well documented, do not attract the attention of scholars, again, because they are considered "less" important than others, thus are left out of historical narratives; and fourth, there is silence at the "moment of retrospective significance": even if one could write about those subaltern peoples and "minor" events, attention given to those products (and thus, their reverberation in public debates) is minimal or

36 Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), originally published in French in 1989.

non existent.[37] Needless to say, these four instances where "silence" is produced affect, for the most part, the poor, the darker-skinned, the powerless, the disposable. History is a terrain in which power and hierarchies shape the contestation of multiple accounts of the past; within that contest, the existence of, and access to, archives and libraries, become crucial. As Derrida put it quite eloquently, "there is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation."[38] Conversely, without "control of the archive" there is no possibility of writing history and building democratic societies.

Fortunately, several decades of interest in subaltern subjects on the part of social historians and anthropologists have resulted in the organization, recovery, or revaluation of multiple types of documents (written, oral, archaeological, visual, and others) that help us reconstruct their past. In some cases, their own initiatives are behind that recovery (victims of human rights violations, peasant and labor organizations); in others, NGOs, scholars, and activists have helped produce archival collections about various types of social actors; and in a few cases, state agents (librarian, archivists, and higher administrators) must be credited for pursing similar efforts. There are a few extraordinary cases –some of which will be discussed in this volume–, especially in the realm of human rights and memory, such as the discovery of the "Archives of Terror" in Paraguay in 1992 or the Guatemalan National Police Historical Archive in 2005; the recovery of the archive of Uruguayan photographer Aurelio González, comprised by 48,000 photos taken between 1957 and 1973, and that he hid in 1973, after the military coup. Thirty-three years later, after returning from a long exile, he was able to find the archive again;[39] or the 2013 discovery in the basement of an Air Force building of 280 documents produced by the Argentina military Junta (1976-1983) that contained details about counter-

37 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 26-27.

38 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 4.

39 See the documentary "Al pie del árbol blanco" (2007) and Aurelio González, *Fui testigo. Una historia en imágenes* (Montevideo: Ediciones CMDF, 2011).

subversive operations as well as blacklists of people targeted by the government.[40] Besides these high-profile cases of archival recovery, there are many other examples of local, private, and public archives and libraries that have been brought back, so to speak, to visibility and accessibility. Equally important, there is a long list of archives that have been formed from scratch: oral, written, and photographic archives produced by human rights organizations, for example. In a way, they also constitute "recovered" archives.

Our main goal in this volume is to present a few cases of archives and libraries in Latin America whose histories illuminate the complicated trajectories that repositories of books and documents have had over more than a century.[41] In some cases, it is a history of destruction and loss; in others, it is a history of recovery and triumph on the part of various social actors interested in the preservation of collective memories; yet in others, it is a much more nuanced history of how different types of interests collide in what Kirsten Weld has appropriately termed "archive wars." Altogether, the stories presented in these chapters contribute to our understanding of the relationship between power, history, and memory, a relationship that is mediated by the availability and accessibility (or not) of sources, evidence, documents, and printed materials. What Ann Stoler called "the politics of storage" is at work in all of the papers included in this collection.[42]

In the first essay, Pedro Guibovich tells us the eventful and at times tragic history of the archive of the Peruvian Inquisition. As the author points out, from the foundation of the Tribunal there was a great deal of interest in keeping exhaustive records of the norms, correspondence, administrative procedures, cases,

40 See "Hundreds of secret military junta documents found in Buenos Aires," *The Telegraph*, November 5, 2013; the documents have been published by the Argentine government as *Actas de la dictadura*, 6 vols. (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Defensa, 2014).

41 The origin of this collection is a two-session panel that the co-editors organized at the American Historical Association meeting in Chicago, in January 2012. The call for papers included both libraries and archives. Not all the papers presented there were offered for this publication, and later we added other contributions. Unfortunately, we only received two contributions that deal with libraries, which explains the greater coverage of archives.

42 Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science*, no. 2 (2002): 93.

sentences and other aspects of the functioning of the Tribunal. The efficiency of the Inquisition depended, to an important degree, on the thoroughness and effectiveness of these archival practices. By the end of the colonial period, as Guibovich emphasizes, the Peruvian Inquisition had a well-organized archive. The abolition of the Inquisition mandated by the Cádiz parliament led to intense struggles around, among other things, the fate of the archive, given the nature of the information it contained. Rioting crowds in fact destroyed and appropriated portions of the archive, although later the Lima archbishop was able to recover most of the items. After the proclamation of Peruvian independence, the new government issued a decree ordering the burning of those documents related to issues of "faith." What was left was transferred to the San Agustín Convent first, and later to the recently created National Archives. In the early 1880s, during the War of the Pacific, Chilean troops occupied the city of Lima and sacked the National Library and Archive, sending books and documents to Santiago de Chile. Although a portion of those documents were returned to Peru (part of which were destroyed during the 1943 fire that affected the Peruvian National Library and Archives), a rich collection of documents from the Lima Inquisition is still held at the Chilean National Archives. The various episodes of destruction and sacking of the archive of the Lima Inquisition, Guibovich concludes, have crucially affected the writing of that institution's history and have led to a series of myths about the functioning and effects of the Inquisition on Peruvian colonial society.

In Brazil, the history of slavery is not only one of the central preoccupations of social historians but is also one of the most contentious issues for human rights activists and Afro-Brazilian communities. Abolished in 1888, slavery left a legacy that can still be felt in the distribution of political and economic power, the complex configuration of racial relations, and the pervasive correlation between skin color and social status. Abolition in Brazil was both gradual and greatly contested. Slave owners resisted until the last minute, and when their cause was defeated, they pushed for reparations from the state for their "lost property." In that context, pro-abolitionist state officers ordered the destruction of all the records related to slavery held by some governmental agencies, most notably the Ministry of the Treasury. The author of this initiative, jurist Rui Barbosa, was a well-known abolitionist. Why would he

advocate the destruction of slavery records? While many commentators attributed that decision to his desire to "cleanse" Brazil of any traces of its slave past, Amy Chazkel demonstrates in her article that the main goal was to prevent former slave-owners from pursuing reparations. Although several intellectuals and historians took Barbosa's order as proof that no slavery records survived, the fact is that, first, his order was only partially fulfilled and, second, it did not include a variety of other records that have allowed historians of more recent generations to reconstruct slavery and slave life in Brazil in great detail. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that the historiography of slavery in Brazil is one of the richest and most sophisticated in the Americas. The case discussed by Chazkel illustrates a case of "archival destruction" motivated by clearly political –albeit rather "benevolent" –intentions: Barbosa was trying to eradicate the notion that human beings could continue to be treated as commodities on a balance sheet. But Chazkel's essay also highlights the fact that the sources for writing the history of slavery were, thankfully, much more varied and numerous than what was feared by those that misinterpreted Barbosa's order.

The history of the Peruvian National Library can be considered a succession of great and small tragedies. Among the former are the looting and destruction it suffered by Chilean troops during the occupation of Lima between 1881 and 1883 and the fire that almost destroyed the entire building and its holdings in May 1943. Among the latter are a myriad of acts including theft, mishandling of books and collections, lack of professional service, shortage of funds, lack of interest on the part of state officials, and more. Carlos Aguirre's chapter reconstructs the vicissitudes that surrounded the 1943 fire, looks at the various explanations offered about its causes and origins, examines the debates generated by the tragedy, and locates this fire within the long-term history of the institution. Rather than trying to solve the mystery of what or who caused the fire, Aguirre focuses on the conditions that made it possible: a director that resisted changing old and inadequate habits; a building that was totally inappropriate and unsafe to hold the National Library; and successive state administrations that denied the funding needed to modernize the institution. The story of the fire was, indeed, the story of a tragedy foretold. Reconstruction efforts took place in the context of World War II and the fostering of Pan-American cooperation. Not surprisingly, the United States was heavily involved

–both institutionally and financially– in those efforts. Reconstruction was also seen as an opportunity to both modernize the library and make it a central element in the building of a democratic society. Aguirre shows that although there were clear efforts towards the former, the library was never really a tool to build a democratic society, for it operated in a deeply exclusionary and authoritarian society. Finally, Aguirre also addresses the issue of the protection of Peruvian cultural patrimony: despite denunciations about recurrent practices of appropriation of Peruvian documents and books by foreign institutions, director Jorge Basadre and his peers made no effort to put pressure on foreign governments to acknowledge such situation and return stolen materials. This was, indeed, a lost opportunity to address an issue that, unfortunately, would continue to plague the institutions for decades to come.

While cases of disregard of precious collections are indeed numerous, it would be mistaken to assume the existence of a perennial policy of archival abandonment by the state. In fact, as Lila Caimari and Mariana Nazar remind us in their essay, the creation of modern bureaucracies is coeval to (and dependent on) the establishment of archives and the elaboration of sophisticated criteria for the selection, classification, and preservation of documents. Archives played a crucial role in the administration, surveillance, and control of populations and in the functioning of the state itself. Because official archives were not designed for public scrutiny, their accessibility is always a contentious issue. This is especially true in the case of archives of repression, where strict rules of confidentiality and secrecy articulate the conjoined acts of archiving and policing. Focusing on the recent opening of four police archives, Caimari and Nazar analyze the tensions and dilemmas brought about by the opening of these repositories and the changes in meaning and function it entailed, as such archives were now used to write histories of political repression, or activated to help in the painful task of identifying victims of state terrorism.

In his essay, Emilio Crenzel explores in detail the role of human rights activists in the creation of new archives in the aftermath of the military dictatorship in Argentina. Created in 1983 by Raul Alfonsin to investigate and document the fate of thousands disappeared during the military regime, the CONADEP (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons) evolved into an unprecedented archive of horror. By documenting systematically thousands

of cases of abduction, disappearance, and execution, the CONADEP became a privileged tool to pursue legal action against the perpetrators. Unfortunately, as Crenzel reminds us, it also failed to document the political lives and activism of the victims, thus missing a precious opportunity to understand the logic of repression. Things did not improve with the official creation of the Archivo Nacional de la Memoria (National Archive of Memory) in 2003, which gathered new documents of repression but offered limited access to its collections to researchers. More promising has been the creation of Memoria Abierta (Open Memory), a massive oral history project spearheaded by seven activist organizations. In clear contrast to CONADEP, Memoria Abierta has steered clear from the old tendency among human rights activists to depoliticize the victims by describing them merely as "casualties" of repression. In documenting the social and political life of the disappeared, Memoria Abierta has not only opened a more complex window into a radical political past, but also resignified the task of documenting repression itself.

Focusing on the destruction by fire in 1982 of the *Cineteca nacional* (which included both a film archive and a library), Javier Villa-Flores analyzes the complicated process of mourning for a lost archive by looking at the production, circulation, and consumption of competing narratives to explain its destruction. Founded in 1974 under President Luis Echeverría, the *cineteca* became the crowning achievement of new nationalist policies of production, distribution, and preservation of films that made possible a true revival of Mexican cinema. By 1977, however, the new government initiated a process of withdrawal from the film industry to inaugurate an era characterized by censorship, brutal inflation, and the dismantling of state support. As Villa-Flores shows, the capricious and arbitrary patterns of state funding had momentous consequences for the *cineteca*, for essential tasks of maintenance, refrigeration, and air conditioning of the vaults became nearly impossible. As lack of resources slowed down the process of transferring the *cineteca*'s nitrate film collections to acetate, more than two thousand cans accumulated in the basement in a dangerous mixture of negligence and improvisation. In the aftermath of the fire, actors, directors, intellectuals, and functionaries offered and received competing narratives to explain the fire. Villa-Flores analyzes the production, circulation, and consumption of such narratives not only in terms of their plausibility, but also as statements about the chang-

ing relationship between citizens and the state and the allocation of responsibility. In rejecting the official explanation of the fire as the result of spontaneous combustion, citizens refused to reify the risk entailed in any act of archiving. As an archive, the creation of the *cineteca* signaled the apex of cultural populism; its destruction, however, brought to the fore a growing discontent with the state's cultural policies and its proverbial authoritarianism.

In her essay, Kirsten Weld narrates the remarkable story of the reappearance and rescue of Guatemala's National Police Historical Archive in 2005. Found in a terrible state of preservation and organization, the archive became the project of a small team of activists who doggedly fought mold and dust to rescue the precious documents. By 2007, the project had evolved into an impressive team of more than 150 Guatemalans with the support of international funding, technical expertise, and archival training. The success of the project is a testament to the political shrewdness of human rights activists who had long battled the postwar regime over archival access to secret records. As Kirsten Weld shows, their efforts effectively transformed the national archival culture by professionalizing archival practices of rescue, access, and classification. Besides contributing to the creation of a new generation of archivists, the project made thinkable the possibility of one day declassifying military records for civilian use. Weld's paper is also a reminder of the intimate connection between efforts to reconstruct the past, struggles over memory and meaning, and the pursuit of justice in countries such as Guatemala, where, more than fifteen years after the signing of the Peace Accords, the "archive wars" are far from over.

Writing the history of rural populations constitutes a real challenge for social historians. Centuries of (relative) isolation, shortage of written records, the fragility and mutability of individual and collective memories, and rural people's distrust of lettered culture, all of that make the study of rural populations and, especially, the recovery of their own voices, a very complicated endeavor. Javier Puente addresses these challenges using the case of the San Juan de Ondores peasant community in Peru. The author, after an exhaustive (and relatively successful) search for documents to reconstruct the history of the community, realized that the hardest part of his project was going to be the recovery of the views and voices of the members of the community themselves. An unexpected

encounter (so common in every historian's archival experience), allowed him to find out that the community had kept minutes of their assemblies for more than seven decades, from 1937 to the present. After he asked the community permission to access those records, a fierce debate took place between those that approved and those that disapproved the granting of such permission. At the end, the former prevailed and Puente gained access to this very rich and hitherto untapped source to reconstruct the history of the community in a way that incorporated their own voices. This is a fascinating story of record-keeping efforts on the part of subaltern groups as well as of their accessibility, for the first time, by somebody external to the community. But there is more to the story: Puente realized that there were issues that he expected to be reflected in those records, since they registered deliberations among community members. In fact, they were not. When he asked why that was the case, community members told him that there were issues that they did not want to be written down since that could jeopardize individuals or the community as a whole, and thus, they preferred to keep them in their memories alone. Here we find a case of a conscious decision to "erase" from the record (although obviously not from their memories) important albeit arguably delicate matters that pertained to communal life. Here we have a case that shows both the acute political awareness of community members and the need for the historian to learn how to read those "silences" and "erasures" that are not created by state action (or inaction) but by subaltern peoples themselves.

Horacio Tarcus addresses in the final essay of this collection the structural and perennial disregard for the preservation of Argentina's cultural patrimony, which he attributes to the lack of interest on the part of state institutions as well as the absence of a culture of preservation among large sectors of Argentine society. Important collections of books, periodicals, manuscripts, maps, and other types of documents have been lost, destroyed, or sold to either private individuals or foreign institutions. What Tarcus calls the "Argentine Paradox" has to do with the rich cultural history of the country and the lack of interest in preserving and making available to the public the various artifacts that could help us reconstruct that history. The situation is even more critical when it comes to the history of working-class people, social movements, labor organizations, leftist parties, and other subaltern groups. For decades,

there was an ominous disdain for keeping the records that could help write the history of these groups. In the last couple of decades, however, efforts by social historians and archivists have partially filled that gap with the creation of CeDInCI, a remarkable collection of documents, books, pamphlets, periodicals, and ephemera related to the history of working-class and leftist organizations. It show that in the absence of state support, individuals and civil organizations could and should step up and both help create a culture of memory and allow us to reconstruct those silenced histories. Tarcus' essay is thus a fitting piece to close our collective volume: it reconstructs the painful situation that, more often than not, has characterized the history of archives and libraries in Latin America; at the same time, it offers a truly inspiring example of what can be done by archivists, historians, and memory activists who, in the face of institutional crises and the state's disregard for the preservation of cultural patrimony and memories, have made it possible to assemble an outstanding and unique archive, one that, in addition, challenges the logic of official and state-driven archives.

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