

Because many units consist of single items or of material which can be made accessible by brief descriptions, the catalogue card has been retained as the basic means of description. The information on the cards is similar to that which appears on a Union List of Manuscripts form. Title cards, mimeographed so that subject headings based on the Library of Congress list can be added, are interfiled with subject cards. In the case of larger collections, subject cards direct users to a specific volume or finding aid page. Shelf list cards, identical to the title cards, are filed in numerical order and provide a straight listing of PABC holdings. Eventually, these cards could be reproduced for distribution to researchers.

Each unit bears two numbers: when material is received, an accession number is assigned and entered in an accession book by an archivist; an Add. MSS. number is assigned when catalogue cards are prepared by a typist. This use of two numbers provides two levels of control. The accession number, which can be used for preliminary listing and for temporary shelving, is especially useful for dealing with a backlog. The Add. MSS. number brings together units which were separated under the old system and is used for final shelving. Since material is not necessarily catalogued or shelved in the order of receipt, shelving by Add. MSS. number provides for more efficient storage.

As material is recatalogued, the old cards are withdrawn. The old numbers are entered on the new accession control records, and Add. MSS. numbers are entered on the old shelf list cards. The old subject and main entry cards are retained to ensure that material cited under the old system can be found easily in the new catalogue.

The recataloguing of the whole collection will undoubtedly be a lengthy process and researchers may be inconvenienced during the period of transition. We hope they will feel amply compensated, since they should find the new system easier to use, the descriptions of units more helpful and the citing of PABC materials more straightforward.

Fran Gundry
Public Archives of British Columbia

Microforms and Their Application to Map Collections

Microforms may provide the only solution to the problem of conserving our cartographic heritage. Large maps and documents are the least likely to survive of all archival material on paper. Because of their size, storage is difficult. It is virtually impossible to remove many maps from any type of storage facility without damaging them. The high cost and rare expertise

required to repair maps properly leave few institutions in a position to make any attempt at restoration. Furthermore, because both map librarians and users are as a rule insensitive to the special problems of conserving maps, the inexorable process of deterioration is accelerated.

If very fine and crucial detail on maps is to be preserved on film, it is essential to use that microform which produces only the very highest resolution. The Cartographic Records Division of the National Archives in the United States conducted a thorough investigation of the comparative advantages of various microforms. They concluded that for large documents such as maps, the 105 mm format proved greatly superior to the traditional 35 mm format. Similar tests undertaken by the National Map Collection of the Public Archives of Canada have certainly confirmed these results. Because the larger format utilizes much smaller reduction ratios, enlargements made from 105 mm negatives were of startling clarity.

The tests conducted by the National Map Collection demonstrated that the 105 mm microform has great advantages compared to the photostatic technique now used. Not only was the resolution much superior, but also the compact size of the 105 mm negative would result in a large saving in storage space and filing time. Photostatic negatives are bulky and awkward. The physical processing of these large and fragile paper negatives is a costly business.

Another advantage of the 105 mm format is the capacity to reproduce on one frame all but the largest cartographic documents. The bed of the camera used in the test could accommodate a map of 45'' \times 67''. If a document of these dimensions were reproduced either on the 35 mm microform or by photostat, it would be necessary to photograph the item in many sections. A copy of a document in sections lacks the aesthetic integrity that an original possesses, and is most difficult to use.

The 105 mm negative is also a very convenient reference aid and consequently a conservation tool of immeasurable worth. The negatives are not kept on rolls, but rather are cut into single frames, placed in transparent sleeves, and filed in compact 5'' \times 8'' drawers for rapid access. With such a system, the researcher does not need to view many originals. He simply examines the 105 mm transparencies on a standard microfiche reader, or on the large screen reader (22'' \times 30'') now available, until he finds exactly what he requires. Since needless withdrawal and refiling of the originals is avoided, staff time spent on reference services and the wear and tear of the maps are reduced. In many cases the researcher will not need to use the original at all. An enlargement can be made from the reference negative by a photographic process or with a 105 mm reader-printer. These considerations point to a very large reduction in the handling of maps. Many experienced map archivists consider handling to be the principal source of deterioration,

surpassing the more publicized problems of residual acidity, light levels, and other environmental factors.

The 105 mm hardware is expensive, probably too expensive for archival map collections. However, it should be realized that the initial cost represents but a small fraction of the ultimate cost of restoring original documents. Moreover, in some engineering and architectural offices, in some municipal, provincial, or federal government departments, 105 mm equipment is already operating. If this equipment is not being used twenty-four hours a day, could it not be made available for the microfilming of maps? Surely agreements can be achieved to make this equipment available for the preservation of Canada's cartographic heritage.

James W. Knight
Public Archives of Canada

Atlantic Conservation Centre Course

A course and seminar on basic conservation and care of historical and artistic work on paper was given by the Atlantic Conservation Centre at Moncton from May 20th to 29th, 1975, under the direction of the regional director, Mr. Roger Roche. In a series of lectures and workshops, staff technicians from archives, galleries and museums in the Atlantic Provinces were introduced to the fundamental principles and applications of conservation methodology. The course lasted six days and was followed by a three-day seminar attended by archivists, curators, librarians and management staff who were informed of the techniques and services of conservation and the role of the conservator in their institution.

The lecturers consisted of two resident conservators, Mr. Roger Roche and Mr. Bill Brydon; four members of the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa, Ms. Mary Lou Florian, biologist, David Dudley, conservator, Ms. Michele LaRose and Glen Sisk, second year students in training; Louis Nadeau, photographer with the New Brunswick Archives, and Mr. Tom Duncan, conservator with the New England Documentation Centre in North Andover, Massachusetts.

The course commenced with a tour of the Conservation Centre facilities which included familiarization with the equipment and techniques used by each department of conservation, Fine Art, Archaeology, Ethnology and Paper. Each participant was provided with literature to supplement the lectures and a basic working kit for use during and after the course. The six-day programme was designed to give those in attendance a general history of paper, its composition and fabrication, factors affecting