

Archival Education

Edwin Welch, in his article "Archival Education" in the previous issue of this journal, states that "the University of British Columbia has seriously proposed to train archivists by offering them six courses in history (providing knowledge which should have been obtained before training), six courses in library science (providing knowledge they will never use) and six courses in archives to be taught by any archivist living near the university." Dr. Welch, formerly a member of the Education Committee of the ACA, was presumably referring to proposals for a diploma course in archival studies sent for comment to the Education Committee of the ACA by Roy Stokes, Director of the School of Librarianship of the University of British Columbia, in the summer of 1976.

As the British Columbia member of the Education Committee of the ACA I would like to clear up misunderstandings which might arise as a result of Dr. Welch's brief reference to the UBC proposals. At no time, to my knowledge, was it ever proposed that "six courses in archives be taught by any archivist living near the university." Furthermore, Dr. Welch appears to have confused numbers of courses with numbers of units and failed to distinguish required courses from optional courses, thereby rendering his description of the UBC proposals quite invalid.

More important than the above, however, is the fact that the proposals cited (and inaccurately described) were withdrawn some time ago. In December 1976, I informed the chairman of the Education Committee of the ACA that the UBC Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee had sent the proposals back to the UBC Department of History/School of Librarianship joint planning committee with the recommendation that a two-year master's programme be developed. A letter, dated January 1977, repeating that information and adding that the UBC planning committee was meeting with local archivists and using the ACA "Guidelines," was circulated to all members of the Education Committee of the ACA. In June 1977, the Education Committee of the ACA discussed the *new* UBC proposals and agreed that they followed the ACA "Guidelines," and surpassed them in several areas.

As I reported at the Annual General Meeting of the ACA in June, there is no guarantee that the master's programme in Archival Studies at UBC will get off the drawing board, as it still has to be examined by several committees and be funded adequately. However, it should be emphasized that this programme has been developed in consultation with archivists and more than meets the standards of the "Guidelines" of the Education Committee of the ACA.

Laurenda Daniells
University Archivist
University of British Columbia

Archival Education — Welch Replies

I was pleased to see that my article aroused interest and some corrections from Laurenda Daniells and Janet Fyfe. I wrote the piece about a year ago and had not seen the latest University of British Columbia proposals. They are a great improvement on the original suggestion and clearly the ACA Education Committee's recommendations have been carefully considered and adopted by the Library School there — an indication of our progress as a professional organization.

I am not quite so sure about Janet Fyfe's comment on my right to criticize the University of Western Ontario programme. I received my academic training as an archivist almost thirty years ago and had "entered the archival profession" before that.

If she will admit that the Western Ontario Library School was not training archivists in 1948, I will agree that my grey hairs do not give me any additional right to criticize archival training.

In a more serious vein I would like to reiterate that my article was not intended as a scathing attack on any Canadian institution, but rather was an attempt to show that the problems we face in training here are very similar to those in other countries with similar cultural backgrounds. The article suggested that we could learn not only from the successes of other archivists, but also and especially from their failures. Often at ACA meetings I suffer from an attack of *déjà vu* — “Twenty years ago British archivists made this same decision with disastrous consequences. Can we not avoid this mistake?” At the time I forget that Cassandra is never a welcome visitor at any meeting.

My comments on archival education in library schools were related to England and Australia as much as to Canada, and should be so understood. I hope that we are all agreed that since librarians inevitably handle manuscripts and archives, they should have some training in the field. On both sides of the Atlantic I have tried to help librarians to understand my own work. However, I cannot agree that archivists should be trained in this way and I do not think that either commentator would agree. As long as we in Canada have several library schools training librarians in archival science and no institution training archivists as archivists, it will be difficult to maintain that we have separate professions. Archivists have a responsibility to the community to keep the records of the past securely. Unless we insist on adequate training for all archivists, we are not discharging this responsibility.

Edwin Welch
Ottawa City Archives

ACA Annual Meeting, 1977: A Personal View

Another year, another city, another opportunity to demonstrate to each other and a sceptical world that our profession is growing up. This year it was Fredericton, a treat for the walking visitor whose enjoyment was only slightly marred by the incessant rain. The wetness, however was more than offset by the splendidly complete local arrangements made by Mike Swift and his colleagues. But on leaving Fredericton after three days of good company and stimulating conversation, I felt a certain dissatisfaction with what had ultimately been achieved.

There are three main purposes for our annual meeting: to develop a sense of a national archival community, to exchange professional information and ideas, and to debate, reach conclusions and make decisions concerning the advancement of the profession within the wider national community. Personally I have been more than satisfied on the first count, less than happy on the second and not happy at all on the third.

Most of my positive feelings about the ACA are the direct result of personal relationships made possible by attendance at the annual meeting. To discover that the archival profession has attracted in large numbers the kind of people with whom I enjoy spending time is a stimulating experience most conducive to the development of a real sense of community, and alone is sufficient justification for our annual meeting. Contrary to the popular stereotype, I have found most archivists to be both gregarious and enthusiastic, qualities present at least since the Kingston meeting in 1973 when the inevitability of independence from the Canadian Historical Association (CHA) was clearly sensed. We must be very careful not to allow this spirit to dissipate. I was gratified to see con-