

**Guide to the Smithsonian Archives.** Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978. xxviii, 298 p. (Archives and special collections of the Smithsonian Institution; no. 2).

**Guide to Manuscript Collections in the National Museum of History and Technology.** Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978. xiv, 143 p. (Archives and special collections of the Smithsonian Institution; no. 3).

**Historical Records of the Government of Canada; Public Records Division, Public Archives of Canada.** TERRY COOK and GLEN T. WRIGHT. Ottawa: Public Archives Canada, 1978. v, 59 p. ISBN 0 662 50113 6 Catalogue no. 5A 2-98/1978 Free. Available from the Information Services Division of the Public Archives. (Text in English and French, each with separate title page and pagination).

**Sound Archives Section: Inventory of Main Holdings.** Compiled by JACQUES GAGNÉ. Ottawa: Public Archives Canada, 1979. xi, 66 p. ISBN 0 662 50151 9 Catalogue no. 5A 2-101/1978 Free. Available from the Information Services Division of the Public Archives. (Text in English and French, each with separate title page and pagination).

**Répertoire numérique détaillé de la série CC (Finances).** Dressé par RICHARD-GILLES GUILBAULT et YVAN CARON. Sous la direction de FRANCE B. SIROIS. Québec: L'Association des archivistes du Québec avec le concours du Gouvernement du Canada, 1978. xxi, 72 p. (Les Archives de la ville de Québec, Publications; no. 5) Free, Archives de la ville de Québec, Hôtel de ville, Québec, Qué. G1R 4S9.

**Répertoire numérique détaillé de la série FF (Cour du Recorder).** Etabli par CLEMENT LABRECQUE. Sous la direction de FRANCE B. SIROIS. Québec: L'Association des archivistes du Québec avec le concours du Gouvernement du Canada, 1978. xix, 64 p. (Les Archives de la ville de Québec, Publications; no. 4) Free. Archives de la ville de Québec, Hôtel de ville, Québec, Qué. G1R 4S9.

The widely varying nature of these six publications confirms that even large institutions continue to forge descriptive programmes idiosyncratically according to the nature of their holdings and availability of staff time, as indeed one might well expect. But it is a striking fact that in most cases archives do not appear to build the components of *published* finding aids to their holdings directly from cumulative in-house descriptive and analytic work. Rather, a decision is made to produce a guide for the purpose of a particular publication. As these volumes show, the level of description and analysis can vary greatly, but the convention of producing guides that are comprehensive for the whole repository, for larger institutions or for major divisions, usually dictates that depth is sacrificed for breadth.

The Smithsonian guide, an expansion of an earlier edition, impressively lays out the scope of the Institution's archive, and includes description of the private papers of a few select officials, its special manuscript collections and an oral history project. The guide has an index by form, a graph showing the date span of each record unit and an index to headings with select cross references. The description of each unit is fulsome. Major offices and officials are identified providing a narrative account of scope and special subject content of the records. The guide also gives details of form, extent, arrangement, finding aids and access regulations. In many cases, the guide makes clear the connections between record units, or brings out special problems that may be encountered in using the records. The result is a handsome volume that does much to open up the hidden treasures of one of America's foremost research institutions.

The National Museum of History and Technology, whose institutional records are kept by the parent Smithsonian, holds important manuscript collections, graphic material, trade literature and internally created information files on subjects as diverse as numismatics and military history, the history of science and postal history. Its guide sketches an outline of the provenance of each unit and gives all the standard information on form, extent, arrangement and finding aids. The index provides references to select names and subjects found in the units described. The holdings of the Museum have apparently been collected to "illuminate the social and intellectual setting of [the Museum's] most important objects," and the director draws attention to the often neglected value of documentary materials associated with artifacts. Museums need documentation, much of it of a highly specialized nature, to understand and manage their collections. Larger ones, at least, have felt virtually impelled to accumulate their own documentation, because many materials of curatorial significance have been ignored by archives and libraries. There should be nothing disquieting in this for archivists, particularly when archival duties are taken up with the professionalism exhibited in this guide.

The Public Archives of Canada's Public Records Division has produced a summary guide to its holdings. For some reason, the editors preferred not to call the publication a guide, but rather resorted to a majestic, if enigmatic, title. The guide gives only the barest information. Record groups are listed by inclusive dates and extent, and sub-groups by inclusive dates only. Record groups are listed numerically and an alphabetic index is provided. The introduction gives a valuable overview of the system of handling records and accessions up to August 1977 are included. Such a summary guide has obvious limitations, but for a quick appreciation of holdings it is a compact and useful publication. Researchers interested in the historical records of the government of Canada will be well advised to begin here.

The *Inventory* of the Public Archives' Sound Archives is really a selective guide, with listed recordings in excess of two hours in length. Units are listed alphabetically—"according to the name of those who deposited them," we are told. This decision has resulted in certain eccentricities. For instance, interviews are sometimes listed under the name of the interviewer (no. 14), sometimes under the name of the person interviewed (no. 208), and sometimes under the name of the person whom the interviews are about (no. 150). Choosing headings for the purpose of listing sound recordings in a guide obviously creates special problems, but these are complicated by the creation of "collections" on the basis of what appears to be an accident of deposit and can hardly be surmounted by the application of such curious rules. If in-house description and analysis make up for the deficiencies of listing in this fashion, the index to this publication does not make it plain.

The two Quebec City inventories are meticulously constructed. It is interesting that both were compiled by non-archivists under the direction of archivist France B. Sirois, and even more revealing that the project was supported by the Government of Canada and L'Association des Archivistes du Québec. Each inventory is prefaced by an administrative history and accompanied by an index. The strength of this traditional archival form lies more in displaying a picture of the agency's creative life as record keeper than in subject and other analysis of the various series of records. Inventories as well done as these are desirable elements in any descriptive programme, but they cannot be relied on for many search purposes. Again, if other search instruments exist at the Quebec City Archives, we are not told about them. It will, for instance, take some other instrument to make connections between records described in separate inventories.

Comments in this vein are not meant to demean efforts to publish finding aids that alert researchers to the breadth of holdings. Even in the machine age archives will probably continue to disseminate information about holdings in published form, but they will as assuredly miss an opportunity if they do not find ways to incorporate the fruits of several in-house levels of descriptions and analysis in those publications. The use of machines to

store and manipulate information and present it for publication is what awaits us, but, except for the Smithsonian's mechanised sort for the index to its guide, none of the publications here appears to have taken advantage of these possibilities.

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**A Guide to the Holdings of Queen's University Archives.** Kingston, Ont.: Queen's University, 1978. 132 p. \$4.00.

**A Guide to the Charles Avery Dunning Papers, 1913-1958.** Kingston, Ont.: Queen's University, 1978. 58 p. \$2.00.

Two University Archives in Ontario recently published guides to their holdings: Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario and sandwiched between them is the first volume of *Ontario's Heritage. A Guide to Archival Resources*. All three deal primarily with regional archival records. It is surprising therefore that the third, the *Queen's Guide*, learned so little from the errors and omissions of the first two.

A cursory look through the *Guide* indicates the tremendous wealth of regional, business and literary records housed at Queen's. Rightly or not, in the absence of provincially funded regional archival repositories, university archives in this province often collect material unrelated directly to their own "academic community". This surrogate acquisition safeguards archival resources from possible destruction, and institutions such as Queen's, UWO and Trent perform a useful role in this regard. At the same time, a university archives should be charged with responsibility for the academic and administrative records of the university. Where such a mandate exists, I would expect that any guide to the holdings which result from it would clearly demarcate those which are the records of the university community and those which are not. And, in addition, such a guide to a regional collection should reflect the variety of jurisdictions from which records have been received. The *Queen's Guide*, unhappily, does not fulfill either of these expectations.

A guide should not require a researcher to read from the A's on page 1 to the Y's on page 120 in order to prepare a list of records of banks, or legal firms, or Women's Institutes which are found in that repository but are not identified by jurisdiction. It would have been far preferable to have followed one of two other options. The *Guide* could have been organized by different jurisdictions of records, whether religious, municipal, educational, medical, legal or literary, all of which apply to Queen's holdings, and it could then have been tied together by a personal name and subject index. On the other hand, such a method might have been used in the construction of the index itself. In the present *Guide*, the index is clearly incomplete and does not reflect, as I assume it was intended to, the range of records found in the alphabetical listing.

The presentation of the *Guide* at first glance seems well considered, providing a map, locational information, and a good introduction on how to use the Archives. The actual listing, however, suffers from inconsistency and a puzzling and irritating method of entry. We are faced with an alphabetical listing of entries which can be personal, corporate, thematic, or conforming to some sort of subject entry. "Ledger", "Death Records" and "Fenian Raids" are found beside "CANADIAN WRITERS' CONFERENCE", "ENTERPRISE, Ont.—*Police Records*", "HUDSON'S BAY Co.—*Mattawa Record Books*" and "QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY—*Administrative Officers*." (Incidentally, is a subject approach to classes of university records the best way of identifying the range and type of records generated in a university community?) Nowhere is there some indication or rationale as to how rules of entry have been established. This is very obvious not just for