

chapters on approaches to the national organization of sound archives, the technical basis for sound archives, documentation, public access, and dissemination provide a survey of the realm of sound archives. The final eight chapters on broadcast archives, commercial releases, dialect, ethnomusicology, folklore, linguistics, natural history, and oral history describe special interests in the field. Each chapter has a bibliography which, alone, is almost worth the price of the book. The chapters are written by an expert in the subject discussed. Editor Lance, for example, is also the author of the chapter on oral history. The other authors include professional sound archivists from Australia, the United States, Britain, Austria, Finland, and the Netherlands.

Although the *Guide* is generally well written and thoughtful, there are some rough spots. The chapter on linguistics makes interesting reading, but has almost nothing to say to archivists. And the chapter on folklore, which is the weakest one in the book, shows little appreciation of archival practice or theory. These reservations aside, the *Guide* should find a prominent place on the reference shelf of any sound archives.

Derek Reimer

Sound and Moving Image Division

Provincial Archives of British Columbia

Inventory of the Collections of the National Film, Television, and Sound Archives. JEAN T. GUÉNETTE and JACQUES GAGNÉ, eds. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1983. xi, 227 p. ISBN 0-662-12438-3. (free)

This inventory supersedes *Inventory of Main Holdings* (Ottawa, 1979) issued by the Sound Archives Section of the Public Archives of Canada. The revised inventory not only includes sound recordings, but also films and videotapes acquired before 31 December 1980. The basic unit identified and described in the inventory is the "collection." Each entry includes the collection title, medium of the record, total duration, a brief content description with production dates, language, cataloguing level, and a reference to other material from the collection held by other divisions in the PAC. The physical description of the records is limited to the terms "film," "silent film," "tape," "cassette," "disc," and "videotape." Silent films are also distinguished from sound films when they are listed together. The collections are listed in alphabetical order. Each one is preceded by a reference number which also appears in the subject index. The subject index contains the names of personalities and titles identified in the text and subject headings based on the List of Subject Headings of the Library of Congress and List of Canadian Subject Headings. Only general series titles of radio and television programs are included in the subject index.

The arrangement of the inventory by collection title is a bit deceptive since some collections are amalgamations of material from other collections. Not all the material in the CBC English radio network collection, for example, was collected directly from the CBC, yet it would not have been wise to list every item donor-by-donor with cross references to collection titles. The collection title arrangement consequently includes collections identified either by the name of the donor, producer, or a name assigned by the NFTSA staff. The major deficiency in this type of arrangement is its uneven coverage of subject matter. Collections which

may have only one item or deal with one major subject are better indexed than collections which are more varied in content. Creativity is therefore required when using inventories. Production data of a news report series, for example, may suggest that an event is documented even though it is not mentioned in the content description. The running time of an oral history interview may hint of related subjects which could have been discussed, but which are not described. Effective use of this inventory requires that researchers read carefully the section which explains how the descriptions were devised.

The NFTSA inventory reflects the national acquisition mandate of the Public Archives. No explanation is offered, nor should one be required in an inventory, as to why the division acquired the films *Cabaret* and *Papillon* from Allied Artists Picture Distributing Company, but researchers may wonder what connection they have with Canadian culture. The NFTSA has also become, through its goodwill, the recipient of many provincial collections which do not appear to have national importance. That said, the mass of film and tape acquired by the NFTSA ought to excite even the most traditional historian. The NFTSA inventory should encourage greater acceptance of audio-visual materials as historical documents in their own right.

David Mattison and Allen Specht
 Sound and Moving Image Division
 Provincial Archives of British Columbia

General Guide Series 1983: Federal Archives Division. TERRY COOK and GLENN T. WRIGHT, eds. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1983. vii, 100 p. ISBN 0-662-52323-7. (free)

For some reason one doesn't think that archives have histories of their own; they merely seem to contain them. There is a need, among historians especially, to be reminded that our documentary heritage has not always been housed in accessible archival repositories. The birth of the Federal Archives Division of the Public Archives of Canada — an event briefly described in the introduction to this excellent guide to the Division's holdings — makes one aware of the difficulties archivists have had in preserving our most treasured records. Moreover, the story makes one doubly grateful for the professional manner in which Canada's federal public records are now managed.

Incredible as it may now seem, Douglas Brymner, the first federal Archivist, had no responsibility for federal government records when he took office in 1872. Thirty-one years passed before the Archives received that awesome and vital function. Even then, the Archives did not consider the preservation of public records a priority. It was not until the Massey Commission in 1951 strongly recommended the establishment of a genuine public records office that the Archives truly assumed the gargantuan tasks of evaluating departmental records and preparing them for use in historical research. In 1966 the Dominion Archivist formally received responsibility for the disposition of all federal public records. Less than 4 per cent of the records the government of Canada generates each year are retained by the Federal Archives Division, yet its holdings now fill about twenty-seven kilometres of shelf space. There is no better justification for a guide to these records than that coping with the