

I can categorically state that no manuscript has ever been refused because an editor disagreed with its theme or interpretation — what a thin journal we would have had! Manuscripts were rejected only if the research was not complete, the subject was not thoroughly explored or was not explored from an archival perspective, the subject conversely was already well explored elsewhere, or the writing and organizational style were beyond rescue. Editors have often taken promising but unpublishable manuscripts and, working with the authors and archival evaluators right across the country, have had them revised to meet the standards expected of a scholarly journal, standards I am pleased to report more and more archivists are now achieving relatively unaided. But it was not always so, and that cumulative raising of standards is the substance of Dodds' paragraph on editorial discretion which Garay so badly misinterprets. The "editorial portcullis" operates solely on scholarly merit, never personal whim or "in-house" interpretation.

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Archivists Need Visual Aid

I attended and gave a paper to the 1984 Annual Meeting of the Association of Canadian Archivists in Toronto. I would like first of all to compliment the conference coordinators and the Local Arrangements Committee for their exemplary work, both in arranging the agenda and in providing a programme and a theme which was provocative, far-ranging, and most informative. As a non-textual archivist, however, I should be forgiven for asking the question: why don't more speakers at these conferences utilize audio-visual tools or other aids in delivering papers which can be, quite frankly, somewhat lacklustre and boring, especially when delivered in monotonous drones? Several participants criticized the sessions as being too long and difficult to sit through — but is the length of the session really the problem, or is it the presentation? I do not wish to criticize the speakers, however, since all of them had really quite valuable things to say. Instead I would like to urge the use of visuals such as slides, overheads, and video-cassette recordings in such presentations, not only because the subjects of several of the papers dealt with visual material, but also because a picture (put into its proper context, of course!) is worth a thousand words, and God knows, a thousand less words might have sometimes helped. Presentations are enhanced by such aids — teachers have known this for years — why not get archivists to wake up to the possibilities as well?

Lest I sound too petulant in this regard, I must say that I was pleased that the ACA Toronto meetings included no less than four papers dealing with either the visual record, photography, or television, a higher proportion of non-textual presentations than I can ever remember. And why not? We live in an electronic age, and a visual age — not only are we collecting the stuff, but all of the

wonderful gadgetry of modern technology is around to help us. Why don't we use these tools to make clearer the subjects about which we speak and to add a little pizzazz to the proceedings?

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Archivists, Historians, and Conferences

I do not know quite how to state strongly enough my dismay that next year the ACA will again meet in glorious isolation, separate from the Learned Societies. My position hardened after a most remarkable performance by three archivists who spoke at the Canadian Business History Conference in Peterborough that immediately followed the ACA meeting in Toronto.

There, in what was admitted to have been a long-planned event, the three mounted a spirited, self-interested attack on historians and how they have failed to respond to the needs of archivists, both morally and logistically. That was fair enough: after all, some archivists have the distinct feeling they are an endangered species, and we probably have not been getting the support we would like from our users in the way of public commendation.

However, one of those archivists then unwittingly put his finger on a large part of the problem, when he rhetorically asked: "Where were the historians at our ACA meeting in Toronto?" (Although he had been heard earlier in the week to remark that there were too many historians around!) Well, they were *not* in attendance largely because they were scheduled to meet some two weeks later in another city, and they are *not* going to be there in any greater numbers next year, because we will be meeting at different ends of the country.

I cannot reconcile this attack on historians' non-involvement in our plight with our insistence on congregating at ever-farther points from their meetings. I shall not be going to Edmonton next year because of this. Indeed, I am willing to arrange an informal meeting of archivists and users to coincide with the CHA meetings in Montréal in 1985 to discuss what seems to me an unfortunate divergence of our paths.

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