

original contribution to the plan. There is even space on the page to have done so. But most of the explanatory process occurs in the text which introduces each of the seven sections.

The concluding cartobibliographical essay by Joan Winearls is the last of a series of triumphs scored by *Ontario's History in Maps*. With the aid of 106 references, Winearls organizes her encyclopaedic knowledge of the sources by major archival collections and then, parallel to the book's arrangement, by topic. However it is here that one could hope to see mention of surveys and the resultant maps that did not meet the criteria for reproduction in this atlas. Three major elements of the process of "Delimitation" escape mention: the almost geodetic survey of the north shore of Lake Erie from the Grand River to Kingsville by O.J. Klotz in 1896; the surveys of the high water mark on the shores of the Great Lakes contracted out by the Department of Lands and Forests (now the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources) starting in 1934; and the Ontario Basic Mapping programme initiated in 1978 and continuing to date. Nor is there any mention of the considerable volume of original field notes preserved by survey firms throughout the province, an integral part of the documentation of most cartographic exercises. These comments aside, this essay is a major contribution to the cartographic literature on Ontario and should not only encourage greater use of cartography by researchers but also help improve the quality with which cartography becomes incorporated into our understanding of Ontario's history.

Ontario's History in Maps deserves to be a success. Running as it does on the coat-tails of the province's bicentennial, its future seems assured. Get yours while they last. With printing costs running around \$1,000 a page, the public and private financial subsidies may not be available for a well-deserved second, and revised, edition.

Dugald E. Stewart
Historical Consultant
Toronto

Les instruments de recherche pour les archives. LOUIS CARDINAL, VICTORIN CHABOT, JACQUES DUCHARME, GILLES JANSON, and GEORGES LAPOINTE. La Pocatière, Quebec: Documentor Inc., 1984. 123 p., illus. ISBN 2-89123-102-3. (Available from Documentor Inc., 100, Avenue Painchaud, La Pocatière, Quebec. G0R 1Z0.)

This book is the product of a special working group headed by Victorin Chabot and set up by *L'Association des archivistes du Québec* to report on the preparation of archival finding aids for research purposes. The authors begin their introduction with the familiar lament that the literature on the subject is limited and offers no single systematization as a model; the result contributes to isolated and eccentric practice. They believe that archives must systematize the preparation of finding aids so that their users may understand the programmes of description established within single repositories and from repository to repository. Quite so. A measure of uniformity is surely the *sine*

qua non of intelligibility in archival descriptive work, just as it is in other aspects of information control and retrieval. This concise little book takes a mighty stab at the formidable task of bringing some measure of systematization to the preparation of finding aids created in Quebec. Given its aim, it is a singular success in the history of Canadian archives for no volume like it exists for English-speaking Canada, and none quite like it can be imported from the United States or elsewhere to serve Canadian archivists.

To reach their goal, the authors set out to define a uniform terminology, to establish a conceptual framework of different levels of description and the class or classes of finding aid pertaining to each level, and to standardize (*normalizer*) the elements of description and, to an extent, the format for each class of finding aid. The authors acknowledge their large debt to archival practice in France, yet it is interesting to see how often they can fit examples, at least published ones, of English North American practice into their schematization. One suspects that such concomitance happens rather more by accident than design; for the flavour of conceptualization, categorization, and prescription found in France and reflected in this volume is unknown and almost unimaginable in the rest of North America where precision gives way to the sort of pragmatic compilations of current practice done, for example, by David Gracy II. By contrast, Chabot and company decided against using actual examples of finding aids in their illustrations and, instead, contrived fictional examples in order to highlight the elements of standardization they wish to put across. They are rewarded for their inventiveness, particularly by the way readers can trace relationships between the various types of finding aids by careful examination of the illustrations. Seeing may not always induce believing, for the contrived examples are virtually without the sort of anomaly that one encounters in real archives, but freedom from anomaly allows the authors to make their illustrations serve their purpose and therefore the reader's understanding.

The authors offer us an overarching principle to guide descriptive work. It is perhaps useful to provide their statement of the principle since it buttresses everything they recommend:

Tout la théorie des instruments de recherche repose sur ce principe fondamental: l'ensemble de la documentation archivistique d'un dépôt, et non une seule ou quelques-unes de ses parties, doit être décrit. Ce principe d'*universalité* trouve son application pratique dans ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler 'la notion du général au particulier.'

A nice elucidation of principle and its practical outcome. One might paraphrase the authors by saying that the archivist ought to ensure that all documents fall under a measure of descriptive control by proceeding from summary description of all fonds in general finding aids before describing their particular constituents in detailed finding aids, the degree of detail being ultimately determined by a judgement of utility. As much as this makes good sense, and even reflects an emerging consensus in North America, it goes too far to say, as the authors do, that conscientious implementation of the principle offers archivists and researchers alike a pledge of efficacy (*un gage d'efficacité*). Even if we assume we have the resources to describe all our archives in the detail to which

they deserve to be described, we are still left with our own and the researchers' questions about the utility of a methodology based primarily on listing things. This nagging reservation limits the otherwise wholehearted praise this volume can be offered, and will perhaps loom large in the minds of archivists who wish to observe the authors' principle and yet provide effective intellectual access to archival holdings.

The main body of the book is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, on general principles and definitions, the authors rest their work on the organic unity of archives, which, derived from practice in France, leads them to discuss what they call "*les unités de description des archives*." In the phrase "*les unités de description*," the authors are searching for some way to rationalize the entire process of description which has as its aim bringing archives under intellectual control. To do this, they define six levels of description (*dépôt, groupe de fonds, fonds, série, article, pièce*) to which finding aids may be geared. The levels and the types of finding aids related to each level may be seen at a glance in a marvellously informative diagram. (p. 20) There is, of course, a close relationship between levels of arrangement and levels of description — that is indeed the basis of archival methodology in this area — but it is rare to see the link between the two as clearly delineated as it is here. This is a tricky business which has tripped up more than one writer and certainly scores of practitioners. The authors pick their way through the minefield of conceptualization and definition with consummate skill and clarity.

The second chapter, on what the authors call finding aids of the first order, lays out in detail the types of finding aids which can be produced at each of the six levels. Interested readers can absorb themselves in trying to see how the patchwork quilt of finding aids they know might fit into the authors' categories. The third chapter, on finding aids of the second order, describes tools which give access to specific information contained in a large body of documents — as in alphabetical or chronological indexes and subject or thematic guides. The authors quote a translation of the words of Michel Duchein: "It is no longer a question of describing the total fonds of a repository . . . but rather of choosing to describe from within fonds of one or several repositories the documents interesting for a given subject." It is not surprising that the authors rein in their prescriptive zeal somewhat in this area by saying that no firm rules guide archivists in the production of second order finding aids except the need for uniformity and internal consistency of description. They might also have said that some of the most inelegant and flawed finding aids produced by archivists fall into this category.

This is a complex book which cannot be done full justice here. It bears reading by archivists concerned about developing standards for descriptive work, for it cogently illustrates several distinctive facets of the very great problem archivists face in making their holdings intelligible and accessible: that archival description is rooted in principled conceptualization about the very nature of archives; that precise terminology must be developed and then consistently applied to the practical specifics of archival description (this many archivists have barely

admitted); and, perhaps most appositely in the context of this volume, that archivists must be prepared to lay out patterns or guidelines to which they conform in their descriptive practices.

Finally, it may be said that this volume stands in stark contrast to the sort of work done by the National Information Systems Task Force in the United States. There will be those who will regard the efforts of this working group as old-fashioned. Such a judgement would be unwise. The difficulties archival agencies have in leaping into the computer age are as much a product of the ragtag and bobtail nature of the finding aids they produce as it is a matter of defining elements of description and feeding them into a computer in a standardized format, as agencies which try to translate existing descriptions to machine readable form quickly discover. Even more do the difficulties trace back to weak methodological conceptualization in the first place. Such a rigorous taxonomy of finding aids as is offered in this volume ought to ease the transition and present the opportunity for some inventive applications of new technology. At any rate, there is something immensely satisfying in reading a book which gives so little quarter to the sort of manic individualism which seems to rule our descriptive practices. The authors and *L'Association des archivistes du Québec* are to be applauded for the very high standard of professional publication this book delivers.

Terry Eastwood
School of Library, Archival and
Information Studies
University of British Columbia

The Role of Archives and Records Management in National Information Systems: A RAMP Study. JAMES B. RHOADS. Paris: UNESCO, General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1983. iv, 256 p. (PGI-83/WS/21)

Development of Records Management and Archives Services Within United Nations Agencies: A RAMP Study. MARIE CHARLOTTE STARK. Paris: UNESCO, General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1983. iv, 215 p. (PGI-83/WS/26)

Records Management 7. Society of Archivists, Records Management Group, 1984. ii, 36 p. ISBN 0-902886-10-2 £1.80.

Records Management 8. Society of Archivists, Records Management Group, 1983. v, 38 p. ISBN 0-902886 11 8 £1.80.

La gestion des documents administratifs. MICHEL ROBERGE. La Pocatière: Documentor Inc., 1983. 216 p. ISBN 2-89123-101-5 \$19.50.

Archivists and records managers are becoming increasingly aware of the common threads linking their two professions. Some even go as far as proclaiming the existence of one profession containing the two disciplines. The usual model is that of a "life cycle" or, more appropriately, a continuum that provides for management of recorded information from its birth to its death — or forever, if that information is of sufficient value to be retained permanently. The archives