

# *Bringing Home Canada's Archival Heritage: The London Office of the Public Archives of Canada, 1872-1986*

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Several months ago, the CBC's "Sunday Morning" programme broadcast a feature on cultural repatriation from Great Britain and Ireland. The programme dealt with the Jasper Grant collection of Indian artifacts in the National Museum of Ireland, and the fact that these and other such treasures will never return to Canada.<sup>1</sup> There was no mention of the fact that Grant's letters from Upper Canada as an officer in the British Army, describing local conditions at the time of his collecting, are in the National Library of Ireland or of the fact that the Public Archives of Canada (PAC) is currently negotiating to copy that collection for return to and use in Canada. It was neither surprising nor pleasing that the radio programme focused exclusively on artifacts and fine art. The Museum of Man and the National Gallery were discussed at length. There was no mention of archives, despite the fact that the federal government's oldest cultural institution, the PAC, has been running a continuing copying and acquisition programme in Great Britain for 107 years, only six years less than its own existence. Copied documents admittedly do not have the immediacy, glamour, or visual impact of costumes or Indian weapons, but those with an abiding interest in understanding and interpreting the country's history might well argue that the PAC's British copying programme is Canada's most significant as well as its most enduring heritage retrieval programme. Because of its long history and the shifting focus of its collecting, the London Office needs to be understood within the context of its own history. What follows is an overview of the PAC's acquisition strategies in Great Britain, based upon its annual reports and upon information collated from its published and unpublished inventories. It is hoped that in the future more detailed studies of the personnel and functioning of the office based on the PAC's departmental records will be undertaken.

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\* I wish to thank Ian Wilson and Michael Swift for commenting on this paper. Others have been heavily involved in the survey of British documentation, notably Anita Burdett who was the second archivist working with me and who continues to work on the survey; Peter Bower, Gordon Dodds, Brian Driscoll, and Grace Hyam who were involved in the planning and early stages of the survey and in general the staff of the British Archives Section, Manuscript Division. Earlier versions of this paper have been given to the June 1985 annual meeting of the Association of Canadian Archivists and several regional and provincial archival societies.

1 See Ruth B. Phillips, *Patterns of Power: The Jasper Grant Collection and Great Lakes Indian Art of the Early Nineteenth Century* (Kleinburg, Ont., 1984). An exhibition with the same title toured major galleries and museums in Canada.

It is no exaggeration to state that in its first quarter century, the history of its British copying programme was central to the history of the PAC itself. The first Dominion Archivist, Douglas Brymner, saw British copying as, of sheer necessity, a principal pillar of his acquisitions programme. Brymner's situation on his appointment in 1872 was a difficult one, which he himself summarized in his first annual report:

The changes that have taken place in the relation of the Provinces to each other since they came under British rule, the frequent removals of the seat of Government, the fires that have several times destroyed or displaced valuable and interesting documents, have rendered the task of collecting the archives in any complete form a task of more than ordinary difficulty. It is believed that many documents bearing on the history of the Dominion and the various Provinces are in the hands of private individuals, but it is exceedingly difficult to ascertain where they are, as there seems to be an unwillingness on the part of those who are said to hold them to let it be known.<sup>2</sup>

With little more than three empty rooms and a vague mandate, Brymner faced enormous problems in collecting the archives of the new Canadian nation. Because of discontinuities, frequent shifts of location, and disastrous fires in the various assemblies of what then constituted Canada, Brymner assumed that the collection of public records would be a long and arduous task. The vast and underdeveloped state of Canada would also make private collections difficult to locate, let alone acquire.

On the other side of the Atlantic, however, in the imperial centre, there were, as Brymner was aware, already well-established repositories containing major and well-organized collections of significance to Canada. Brymner lost no time in exploring them. In 1873, a year after his appointment, he was in London to visit the Public Record Office, the War Office, the Tower of London, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the British Museum, to prepare lists of material for copying.<sup>3</sup> L'Abbé Verrault, President of the Montreal Historical Society, visited the British Museum on behalf of the PAC the following year, looking specifically for material relating to New France. He also examined the papers of Sir Guy Carleton, as Commander-in-Chief at New York during the American Revolution, which were at that date deposited at the Royal Institution.<sup>4</sup> It took Brymner five more years before he was able to begin, but in 1878, he launched the PAC's copying programme in Britain.

In initiating an extensive copying programme in London, Brymner was breaking new ground for Canada. The one central Canadian institution which had interested itself consistently in overseas copying, with the aid of the legislature, was the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec. It had focused its efforts almost entirely on France. Its only major British acquisition, made about 1847, was six volumes recopied from transcripts made by the New York Historical Society.<sup>5</sup> Ontario's interest in collecting such material developed only later. For a brief period between 1859 and 1863, the Legislative

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2 Canada, *Report of the Minister of Agriculture...*, 1872, p. 171.

3 *Ibid.*, 1873, p. 151 ff.

4 *Ibid.*, 1874, p. 154 ff.

5 J. Edmond Roy, "Les Archives du Canada à venir à 1872," *Mémoires de la Société Royale du Canada*, 1910, 3rd Series, Section 1, p. 95. For a list of British published documents and calendars held by the Society, circa 1835, see PAC "S" Series: Correspondence of Provincial and Civil Secretaries Offices, Quebec and Lower Canada (RG 4, A1, Vol. 456, #260.)

Assembly of the Province of Canada supported the work of George Coventry in acquiring and transcribing documents of relevance to Upper Canada. The material he copied included six volumes of the papers of Lieutenant-Governor John Simcoe, borrowed from the Reverend Henry Simcoe. At the same time, J.P. Merritt, son of William Hamilton Merritt, also with legislative support, examined material at the British Museum, the State Paper Office, and the Royal Institution. He hired copyists to produce transcripts and returned approximately two volumes of material to Canada. With the end of parliamentary support in 1863, however, Ontario's copying ended as abruptly as it had begun.<sup>6</sup> Somewhat more ambitious was the programme of the Nova Scotia Archives. In 1858, the Nova Scotian Assembly had authorized the Lieutenant-Governor to procure "from the State Paper Office in England" transcripts of documents necessary to complete their files. Work was begun in 1859. By 1877, the year before Brymner began his federal programme, Nova Scotia held eighteen bound volumes transcribed at the State Paper Office and two volumes from the Public Record Office. As important an achievement as this was, however, it was soon overshadowed by the sheer volume of the copying that Brymner initiated.<sup>7</sup>

Brymner's programme is notable for its essential simplicity. His copying was sharply focused and designed to retrieve the most essential documentation of Canada's past, as he saw it. Because of its simplicity, Brymner's programme had an internal logic and a dynamic which would carry it through to his death at the turn of the century. Brymner was not a scholar; he did not have a developed schema of Canadian history, but he was quite clear in his own mind that there were two central events: the Conquest, which

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6 *Ibid.*, pp. 121-22; Murray Barkley, "Prelude to Tradition: The Loyalist Revival in the Canadas, 1849-67," in S.F. Wise et al., eds., "None was ever better...": *The Loyalist Settlement of Ontario. Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Ontario Historical Society...* (Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Historical Society, 1984), pp. 92-93; J.P. Merritt, *Biography of the Hon. W.H. Merritt, M.P.* (St. Catharines, 1875), p. 424; *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada*, 1860, XVIII, p. 350 (9 May 1860); 1863, XXI, p. 126 (15 September 1863). Coventry's and Merritt's transcripts were originally placed in the Parliamentary Library; they were later transferred to the PAC. See George Coventry collection (MG 24, K2) and Merritt Papers (MG 24, E1). Merritt in his biography of his father states that he had copied "an immense amount of history connected with the early settlement of this province" and that his transcripts were placed with the Coventry transcripts in the Parliamentary Library. The Coventry transcripts now at the PAC do not contain such material, although a catalogue card in the PAC's old subject card index refers to transcripts, 1783-1795, and memoranda made at the State Paper Office and elsewhere in England by J.P. Merritt, as being in the Coventry collection. These transcripts now appear to be in the Merritt Papers (MG 24, E1, Vol. 48). They consist of ninety pages relating mainly to Loyalists, Indian matters, and the Simcoe administration. A memo of eighteen pages by Merritt lists further relevant documents. Other material in this volume may relate to Coventry's rather than Merritt's transcripts. A further file by Merritt (MG 24, E1, Vol. 44, pp. 1260-1323) concerns material of relevance — mainly Haldimand and Bouquet Papers with some transcripts — in the British Museum. In 1860 money was voted by the Legislature to finance a second trip for Merritt to procure further copies, but he did not go and was requested in 1863 to return the funds.

7 John H. Archer, "A Study of Archival Institutions in Canada," (Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University, 1969), p. 49; C. Bruce Fergusson, "T.B. Atkins: A Centennial Commemoration," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, Vol. 37 (1957), p. 111; Joseph Plimssoll Edwards, *The Public Records of Nova Scotia: Their History and Present Condition* (Halifax, 1920), pp. 5-6; Nova Scotia, *Catalogue or List of Manuscript Documents... Preserved in the Government Offices at Halifax, Nova Scotia* (Halifax, 1877). Provincial archives, as well as the PAC, have carried on overseas copying programmes from the early beginnings of such activity. See Terry Eastwood, "R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield and the Founding of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1894-1919," in *B.C. Studies* 54 (Summer 1982), especially pp. 49, 53-54.

melded the destinies of the French and the English, and the American Revolution (or more specifically, the coming of the Loyalists), which brought Canada its first major influx of Anglo-Saxon settlers. Not surprisingly, then, Brymner initiated his programme with the copying of the Haldimand Papers in the British Museum. Sir Frederick Haldimand had been Governor and Commander-in-Chief at Quebec for most of the Revolutionary period. Deposited with the Haldimand Papers were those of Colonel Henry Bouquet, an important source for the history of the Seven Years' War and the Conspiracy of Pontiac. These Brymner also undertook to copy.<sup>8</sup>

Copying progressed at a remarkable rate. Between 1879 and 1883, copyists produced 232 volumes of Haldimand Papers and 30 of Bouquet's, all folio, double-spaced, and averaging over 400 pages apiece.<sup>9</sup> Production was a model of free enterprise: one copyist kept a list of the volumes to be transcribed and distributed the volumes to the others as required. The monthly haul was carted to the Canadian High Commissioner's Office, 17 Victoria Street, where "it was estimated by the accountant" and cheques issued to the copyists on the basis of production. No direct supervision of the copying staff was carried out. Such checking of the accuracy of transcription as did occur was done in Canada.<sup>10</sup> Inevitably, errors and omissions crept in and the PAC finds today that it must maintain all its transcripts as historiographical material so that modern researchers can check exactly what rendering of the sources their predecessors based their conclusions upon.

For a young and modestly funded archives like the PAC, its ambitious British programme required the expenditure of many of its resources at home as well as a major overseas commitment. Receiving and checking the transcripts was only a portion of the task. Influenced by the British Museum's *Catalogues of Additions to the Manuscripts*, Brymner undertook even more ambitiously to publicize his acquisitions by publishing calendars of the Haldimand and Bouquet Papers in the PAC's annual reports, describing them letter by letter in extended précis. They were to be a continuing series covering subsequent copying until Brymner's death.

By 1884 Brymner's little tribe of copyists had migrated from the lofty halls of the British Museum to the purpose-built search rooms of the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane. One is almost tempted to say that the true history of the copying programme began there, because for the next century it was indeed to be its promised land. Here its most extensive and longest-continuing copying would be carried out. Brymner had few doubts about where his copyists should begin. The inevitable source for him was a portion of what was then called "State Papers. Colonial Office" — specifically what is now Colonial Office 42 — covering Ontario and Quebec until Confederation. With the Conquest in mind, Brymner began the copying in the period of the Seven Years' War, but in that series such material was limited and the work soon developed into a total copying of the series so far as was permitted. The Colonial Office proved somewhat uncompromising in the matter of permission, allowing copying only as far as the period of union in 1841 and refusing to permit the transcription of minutes (its staff's marginalia on the correspondence), an important source for the comprehension of Colonial Office policy.<sup>11</sup>

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8 Canada, *Report of the Canadian Archives*, 1879, pp. ix-x.

9 See PAC MG 21, British Library, Add. Mss. 21631-21660; 21661-21892.

10 PAC London Office: Office Files: Memorandum on the Archives' Work by Mrs. K. Corner, 22 Nov. 1918. Mrs. Corner had worked for the office since 1880.

11 Canada, *Report on Canadian Archives*, 1882, p. 4; *ibid.*, 1884, p. v.

Brymner's next major copying project began to take shape in 1892, when he spent an extended period in London listing collections relating to Maritime Canada. The state in which he found the official records dismayed him, for relevant documents were scattered everywhere. Papers relating to Prince Edward Island, for instance, had been grouped with the Virgin Islands, an error created by the older designation of PEI as Ile St. Jean. At the same time Brymner was intrigued to find other major caches relating to the Maritimes: the British Museum, for example, held the correspondence of Paul Mascarene and Lambeth Palace Library had records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Brymner decided, rather misguidedly from our later perspective, to bring system and order to this mound of documentation by arranging "the whole on a strictly chronological system, no matter in what series the document might be found."<sup>12</sup>

Calendars of relevant documents for all the Maritime provinces were prepared but, due to the bulk, only the Nova Scotia calendar was published in 1894. Copying followed more slowly, with transcription of the Nova Scotia material beginning only in 1897. Because of the disregard for provenance and the subsequent reorganization and movement of the material calendared, the Nova Scotia "A" series and its successor, New Brunswick "A", have been a trial to long-suffering archivists as they attempted to explain the transcripts to equally long-suffering researchers. Still, Brymner's efforts to move beyond basic administrative sources into private papers and the records of religious societies marked an interesting departure and an expansion of the sources Brymner was bringing back to Canada. Other copying from Brymner's tenure which is now extremely difficult to date was largely from the Public Record Office and related to boundaries, instructions to governors, and the Board of Trade.

The copying of sources relating to the Maritime provinces continued to occupy the copying programme until Brymner's death in 1902. A listing of the PAC's holdings at that time demonstrates to what a remarkable extent Brymner's acquisitions programme had focused on Great Britain. Of the 3,155 volumes organized into collections by 1904, roughly one-third were transcripts from Great Britain. Almost another third were original records of the British Army which the War Office had agreed to leave in Canada. Beyond that material, the PAC held 585 volumes, correspondence of the colonial governors and further registers and military correspondence, which were also in theory the property of the British government. The only major Canadian holdings of the PAC were less than 400 scattered volumes in the 'M' series and 500,000 government records received from the Secretary of State.<sup>13</sup>

Brymner's death in 1902 and his succession by Arthur Doughty touched off some immediate changes in the British copying programme. By 1905, Doughty had discontinued the publication of Brymner's calendars which he felt were too labour-intensive, and often premature as the calendars were appearing before the relevant documents were transcribed and ready for use. Doughty's plan, however, was to expand rather than contract British operations. In the same year, a professional historian, H.P. Biggar, was appointed as head of European operations and immediately initiated a number of reforms. Accuracy in transcripts was more stringently insisted upon; all copyists with unsatisfactory handwriting were dismissed. Even the quality of the paper and ink used was upgraded. Biggar at once instituted an index card system by which a card was made

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12 *Ibid.*, 1894, pp. v-vi.

13 *Ibid.*, 1904, pp. xii-xvi, Appendices A and B.

each time a document was copied. If the same document was found in several series, duplication was thus eliminated. In Ottawa, work on the British calendars was replaced by an even more intensive programme to produce card indexes for all the transcript series.<sup>14</sup>

The changes went deeper than alterations to the modes of copying and describing the documents. It was Doughty who transformed the Public Archives from a fledgling institution to a major cultural force and, under his guidance, the British programme contributed to that transformation. Doughty's conception of the scope of the PAC's foreign copying programme was substantially broader than Brymner's. Doughty was a proponent of "scientific history," whose main tenet was that rational, unbiased history could be written if all the relevant documentation was carefully examined. Brymner's primary emphasis had been on state documents and the papers of major administrators. For Doughty, the writing of scientific history in a democratic and individualistic society made the acquisition of a wide range of private papers also essential.

In his second report as Dominion Archivist in 1904, Doughty asserted:

With the realization of citizenship and the recognition of individual influence in the progress of human affairs, the importance of the individual has increased, and the records of men which a by-gone age would have ignored, are now invested with ever increasing interest. In the more important documents of state we may find the expression of the voice of the people; but from local records and semi-private papers, we may construct a vivid picture of the temper, habits and aspirations of the people, and may follow, stage by stage, the evolutions which have brought about movements of political and economic change.<sup>15</sup>

The search for such private papers, Doughty believed, led overseas:

Certain documents of permanent value can be a still richer field in which we have scarcely commenced to work. Under the French régime and under the English domination, we find a long list of illustrious persons whose careers were intimately bound up with Canada. In the hands of the descendants of many of these families there are priceless treasures, which must find a place in our archives before we are in a position to offer to our students the material for a comprehensive history.<sup>16</sup>

The new direction was immediately evident. By 1906, Biggar had already examined the massive Selkirk Papers and transcription, which would ultimately total six metres — the largest collection of hand transcripts done from a private source in the PAC's history — had begun. In one sense, the Selkirk Papers were a logical extension of Brymner's acquisition policy, giving a major collection relating to the Canadian West to balance Colonial Office sources on eastern and central Canada. The Selkirk Papers, however, focused on settlement, economy, and the fur trade as opposed to the more political and administrative slant of Brymner's selection from official sources. Other private sources copied up to World War I were more conventionally political, consisting as they did in the main of papers of imperial functionaries such as Shelbourne, Bagot, and Oswald, supplemented

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14 PAC London Office: Office Files: Memorandum by Corner; see footnote 10 above.

15 Canada, *Report on Canadian Archives*, 1904, pp. vii-viii.

16 *Ibid.*, 1905, p. xiv.

by a moderate number of Hudson's Bay Company minute books. In 1912, transcription of the papers of James Murray, an early military governor, marked a perceptible shift in the copying programme. By 1930, military transcripts included the Wolfe, Carleton, Townshend, Amherst, Prevost, and Chatham Papers. A significant number of these collections were kept in the great houses of the British aristocracy, again a departure from Brymner's strategy of copying in public institutions. After World War I, religious material received a significant amount of attention, with massive transcripts being made of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts Archives and modest copies relative to the Moravian Missions in Labrador.

In 1912, work was again begun in the British Museum where a great deal of spot copying of specific documents and short runs occurred. The selection contained much relating to politics, military matters, and settlement, but also a remarkable amount dealing with exploration. The Arthur Dobbs Papers, copied at the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland in 1927-28 and concerned with the search for a northwest passage, complemented this material.

While these new private and quasi-public sources were being explored, the Public Record Office (PRO) was not ignored. Copying of Colonial Office material relative to Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island continued. The PRO's 1908-10 reorganization of its records into the modern classes we know today, however, which eliminated many inconsistencies, prompted the discontinuation of Brymner's composite series comprising transcripts from a variety of sources. This practice was replaced by straight copying from the new PRO classes. At the PRO also, as in private sources, the criteria for inclusion in copying broadened significantly. Parallel to a wider interest in the military material in private hands, copying in the PRO moved on to Colonial Office 5, which dealt in the main with military matters in the American colonies before the Revolution; War Office 12; and the Loyalist Lists in Audit Office 12 and 13. Starting with logs of warships present at Louisbourg in 1745 and 1746, copying at the PRO further encompassed Admiralty In and Out Letters concerning British North America; and both State Papers, Foreign, France, and Foreign Office 5, on British American relations concerning Canada.<sup>17</sup>

Up to this point, only the transcripts acquired have been discussed, not the originals. A great deal has been made of Doughty's original acquisitions in Great Britain, undoubtedly the most glamorous aspect of the Public Archives' work in his era. Despite Doughty's assertions about the need and indeed the potential ease of acquiring papers relative to Canada from the great families, the acquisition in 1910 of the papers of Charles Bagot was the PAC's only major coup before 1922. In 1922, Doughty was the moving spirit in the organization of the Canadian History Society, founded to promote an awareness of their Canadian links among the great families whose antecedents had ruled the Empire and, not incidentally, to encourage them to donate their papers to the PAC. The apex of the Society's existence was a gala and very elegant dinner at Claridges attended by a most impressive array of Canadian and British dignitaries.<sup>18</sup> Given all the fuss and feathers, the results were modest. Major acquisition began in 1922 and had virtually ceased by 1930.

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17 Information based on the relevant *Reports* of the PAC supplemented by Canada, Public Archives: Manuscript Division, *General Inventory of Manuscripts*, notably Vol. 2: MG 11-16; Vol. 3: MG 17-21; Vol. 4: MG 22-25 (Ottawa, 1972-76).

18 See A.G. Doughty, *The Canadian Archives and its Activities* (Ottawa, 1924), pp. 5-45.

In that time, six major political collections came in: the Durham Papers, the Northcliffe Collection, and the Buller, Dartmouth, Roebuck, and Grey-Elgin Papers. Through the influence of the historian, Adam Shortt, two business collections were also obtained, the records of Baring Brothers and Company and of Glyn Mills and Company.<sup>19</sup> The collections received were of the first importance and anyone who has negotiated the acquisition of any major collection will recognize that to acquire them in a mere eight years was no mean feat. Obviously as well, many more families agreed to the copying of their papers than donated them. The point is that in Doughty's era, as before and since, the great strength of the PAC's British programme for textual materials has been in the acquisition of copies, not the more prestigious but far more elusive originals.

After 1930, the PAC's British programme entered its dark ages and it is not unfair to say that in the two ensuing decades of depression and war, despite the continuation of a skeleton copying programme, the PAC did not again receive any transcript or original collection of the first importance until 1949.

After Doughty's tenure, the PAC's British copying programme lay largely quiescent until the appointment of Dr. Kaye Lamb. The Lamb years, however, were to be the golden age of the London Office. If Brymner began with an acquisition strategy and Doughty with a theory of history, then Lamb reinvigorated the copying programme with a technological innovation — the microfilm camera. The camera was a departure of the first magnitude. Although the PAC had acquired a photostat machine at the end of the Great War and had employed it at the PRO through the Second World War, the vast majority of copying right up to 1950 was, rather incredibly, by hand.<sup>20</sup> Typewriters were never used on a regular basis. In such a context, Lamb's enthusiasm for microphotography is readily understood:

It is in London and Paris that microphotography promises to bring about the greatest changes, and, incidentally, the greatest economies. Copying programmes have now been in progress in England and France for more than seventy years, and although occasional use is made of photostat, most of the transcripts received are still written by hand. While it is true that handwritten copies are usually much easier to read than the original documents themselves, some errors in copying are inevitable, and the copying itself is time-consuming and therefore costly. The Commonwealth of Australia recently instituted a comprehensive microfilming programme in London, the intention being to copy every document in the Public Record Office that relates in any significant way not only to Australia itself, but to New Zealand, Fiji and the Western Pacific as well. Experience has shown that it should be possible to photograph the astonishing total of 280,000 pages of manuscript per annum — a total so immeasurably beyond the capacity of copyists working by hand that it leaves no room for argument.<sup>21</sup>

Microfilm, combined with Lamb's own enthusiasm and initiative, was indeed soon producing quite remarkable results. Lamb initially had two very ambitious projects in mind: extensive filming of material in the PRO, starting with the Colonial Office Classes and the filming of the Hudson's Bay Company records to 1870.

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19 PAC London Office: Office Files: Memorandum by Corner, see footnote 10 above.

20 PAC, London Office: Office Files, [D.E. Eldred] to Gustave Lanctot, 30 Sept. 1943.

21 Canada, *Report of the Public Archives*, 1949, pp. ix-x.



Lamb's PRO programme was a recapitulation and extension of his predecessors' main transcript programmes. In 1950, a microfilm camera was installed directly in the PRO. The innovation suffered from start-up problems and by 1954 only 436 reels had been made, chiefly from Colonial Office 42, the same starting point adopted by Brymner's programme. By 1955, however, the initial difficulties had been overcome and, moreover, a second camera had been installed in the PRO. In the three following years, 1955-58, something in the range of 1,250 reels were produced, which virtually completed Lamb's first objective of obtaining from the Colonial Office records complete copies of all the series of papers concerning colonial administration that related in their entirety to areas now included in Canada. That filming alone encompassed in three years more material than all of Brymner's transcripts. The second decade of Lamb's régime was dedicated to copying other Colonial Office records of interest and filming, just as the programme had once transcribed, various Admiralty, Foreign Office, Audit Office, and other classes. The filming, however, was much more extensive than the earlier transcription had been. Lamb's second great microfilming project, perhaps a parallel to Doughty's transcription of the Selkirk Papers, was designed to capture the history of the Canadian West for Canadian researchers by the copying of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives to 1870. By 1958, 1,600 reels, virtually the total production of this phase, had been completed.

In less than ten years Lamb, with the aid of technological innovation, accomplished by these two projects alone almost three times as much as Brymner and Doughty's total hand transcription programmes had contrived to do in over seventy years, but that did not complete the sum of his achievements. Lamb's approach to the acquisition of private papers was very systematic. His first priority was to secure in some form (original, transcript, or microfilm) the papers of all former Governors and Governors-General of Canada and former Secretaries of State for the Colonies, insofar as they related to Canadian affairs. He pursued that goal with vigour, bringing in three original collections amounting to 3.6 metres of material and twenty-three collections on microfilm consisting of a grand total of 194 reels, as well as one collection in transcript. It is unlikely that any major improvement on Lamb's collecting in this area will ever be made. Another area Lamb approached systematically was that of religious records, specifically those of missionary organizations. Here seven major organizations were approached, including the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; the Methodist Missionary Society; the Moravian Brethren; and the Church of Scotland: Colonial Committee. They yielded an impressive 209 reels. Beyond even this extensive filming, the London Office copied fifty-three smaller collections. About 60 per cent of that material dealt with political or military affairs, 25 per cent with economic concerns, and 15 per cent with social matters. Larger amounts of filming related to the Rhodes Scholarship Trust and to Blake and Redden, a law firm involved with many of Canada's presentations to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.<sup>22</sup>

Lamb had the satisfaction of seeing the British copying programme, as he defined it, in the main accomplished. In 1969, the year of his retirement, the PAC *Report* declared:

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22 Based upon relevant PAC *Reports* and a collation of information in the published and unpublished inventories of the PAC. Material was originally compiled for Bruce G. Wilson, "The British Copying and Acquisition Programme of the Public Archives of Canada," in Patricia McLaren-Turner, ed., *Occasional Papers I: Canadian Studies*, (London, 1984), pp. 45-53.

“We have now clearly completed the copying of most of the major French and British records series relating to Canada.”<sup>23</sup> Lamb was convinced that work in Great Britain was near to completion.

The extent and vigour of the work in Great Britain during the Lamb years was indeed to provide something of a conundrum to the London Office in the following decade. With copying of the major sources in the PRO nearly finished, the Hudson’s Bay Company copying project concluded, and systematic copying of the papers of imperial administrators and religious institutions together with some general copying also virtually complete, the question quite literally became one of what to do next.

In the attempt to locate new material for copying, increasing emphasis was placed on sources relating to social history and a special effort was made to copy material within London relating to assisted children’s emigration to Canada. Copying of smaller collections also continued. Still, the amount of material thus copied dropped off steeply from the previous two decades. Copying did continue in the Public Record Office to a total of 600 reels, but this encompassed the last of the large groupings relating expressly to Canada. From Brymner’s time the PAC had relied primarily upon the large PRO classes relating specifically to Canada, whose value to Canadian scholarship was self-evident and whose identification had required little effort, indeed little more than scheduling for copying on the part of the Office. Now that their end was in sight the backbone of the copying programme seemed in danger of disintegrating. Location of further material related to Canada in PRO sources would require increasingly assiduous research and increasingly selective copying.

At the same time as the traditional sources of copy were drying up, important developments within the PAC were occurring. Under Dr. Lamb, and increasingly under the new Dominion Archivist, Dr. Wilfred Smith, the PAC grew substantially at home and encouraged specialization, notably among archivists working in manuscripts. Heavy emphasis came to be placed on collecting in Canada in such subject areas as science and technology, business history, sport, and women’s history. With the much more intense concentration on sources within Canada, the significance of the London Office seemed to diminish. Many felt the time had come to wind up its affairs. Certainly by 1980, the PAC’s manuscript collection derived from the British Isles and Ireland was an impressive one, a valuable resource on its own, with or without further additions. It consisted of 7,000 reels of microfilm and 1.3 million pages of originals and transcripts.

This survey of the British programme has stressed manuscripts but it should be noted that maps were copied as well, especially in Public Record Office sources, and for years a cartographer was maintained on staff for that purpose. More recently contact cards of relevant maps have been sought from major British repositories. Many of the major maps and atlases of the National Map Collection were acquired in Great Britain. Likewise, beginning about 1903, the PAC systematically acquired documentary art in Great Britain — notably prints and watercolour portraits and topographical works. Particularly in the period between the wars, at a time when the National Gallery was concerned with building an international collection, the Public Archives purchased documentary art almost literally by the crate-load in London and created a collection which cannot now be duplicated.

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23 Canada, *PAC Report*, 1959-69, p. 24.

Despite its impressive accomplishments, it is reasonable to ask whether the PAC's British programme was justified. The whig-liberal school of Canadian history, if it had expressed itself on matters as mundane as the collecting policies of the Public Archives of Canada, might have seen in it a classic case of colonial mentality, with the first Dominion Archivist rushing off to the imperial centre almost before he had time to examine material at home. In both Brymner's and Doughty's collections, there was a heavy bias towards British sources and undoubtedly the efforts put into the British programme played their part in retarding both the PAC's development of an adequate Canadian public records programme and its acquisition of major Canadian collections of private papers.

A contemporary Canadian historian, however, might see the Public Archives' overseas endeavour as part of the nationalist/imperialist phenomenon. The Public Archives recognized the truism that, because of the nature of its history, Canada could not be studied without access to archival resources in Great Britain and Ireland. Canada grew to nationhood within the British Empire and later the Commonwealth and shares a significant common heritage with Great Britain. A vital portion of the administrative records of Canada are in the British Isles — records relating not only to politics and administration, but to defence, discovery, economic policy, and immigration. British cultural institutions, businesses, and individuals have also played a direct role in Canadian history and British repositories hold collections concerning missionaries, clergymen, explorers, scientists, visitors, settlers, and businessmen with a strong interest in Canada.

In selecting from this wide range of available material, the Public Archives did at the outset make a hard-headed and practical decision to focus primarily on official and quasi-official archives relating to colonial administration. No other Canadian records in Britain are so extensive, cover such a long period or contain as much information on such a wide range of subjects. The PAC transcripts of this material were the basis of the work of the first two generations of Canadian historians and Public Record Office material continues to be widely used by Canadian scholars. Likewise, the extension of the PAC's collecting activity to the private papers of British figures who were prominent in Canadian politics and military matters, and then to material relating to religious institutions, the economy, and social matters was carried out in a considered and systematic way, and generally in accordance with the perceived research trends of the time.

Some, while recognizing the importance of British resources, might question whether copying should have occurred at all. Access of Canadians to archival resources in Great Britain has always been a vexed question. There are three possible solutions. First, it could be left entirely to researchers to conduct their own studies. The identification of relevant material from a distance can be extremely difficult, however, while costs can make extended research trips virtually impossible for many. Much duplication of effort among individual researchers in locating collections inevitably occurs, while valuable sources in obscure or unusual locations can easily be missed by researchers with limited time and budgets. The second solution might be the wholesale removal of large quantities of documentation from Great Britain to Canada. Such a solution is neither possible nor practicable. Great Britain considers the official records it holds relevant to Canada as the documentation generated by the imperial administration in Canada and thus its own by right. In modern times, it has consistently rejected any requests from its former colonies for the return of records relating to their colonial period. In the private sphere, as has been emphasized, the PAC has never had more than modest success in acquiring manuscript material either by donation or purchase. Indeed, because of the programme's heavy

reliance on the goodwill of British repositories for its copying privileges and the increasing sensitivity in the British archival community to the export of cultural properties, caution and discretion need to be exercised in considering any major acquisition. The third solution then, copying, has much to recommend it. Most British repositories are quite willing to cooperate in the filming of their collections, provided that there are no major restrictions upon them, and many, down to the level of district or city record offices, have their own facilities to produce film. The London Office has a portable camera and a stationary camera for the filming of collections where repositories cannot provide such facilities. Good success has been had in the use of commercial contracts. At an average of \$60-\$90 per reel of 600 frames, filming remains a convenient and relatively inexpensive mode of expanding the resources available to Canadian researchers. It is unlikely that filming will ever be so systematic or complete as to eliminate entirely the need for the specialist's personal examination of sources in Great Britain, but research time abroad can be very substantially reduced by this means. Moreover, for the professional researcher, local historian, or genealogist, either with limited resources or a need to consult only limited material, the PAC's British microfilm continues to be a very adequate as well as a convenient source.

This leaves one rather large question: is — or was there by about 1980 — any substantial justification for continuing the British programme? What further might be copied or acquired? Has a century of effort exhausted available resources? The examination of a few statistics suggests that copying up to 1980 was not as comprehensive as might at first appear. About 95 per cent of the collection is copy rather than original. Over 90 per cent of it has come from institutions rather than private hands. What is perhaps surprising is how narrow the institutional base has been: 78 per cent of the total volume copied came from the PRO or offices under its control. Likewise, copying efforts were heavily concentrated in London. Over 90 per cent of the British copies came from within its boundaries. Only a small amount, therefore, derived from outside London, and less than 3 per cent from outside England in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.<sup>24</sup>

The relatively small amount of material coming from outside London might well give pause to anyone assuming that the PAC programme in Great Britain had exhausted the available resources. In fact, until recently there was little specific knowledge of what other material might warrant copying. Despite intensive copying for over a century, the British programme had always been more geared to acquisition than to identification and had been systematic only within certain defined subject areas. Beyond those areas, the programme had relied upon an informal network of academics who passed on information on collections of interest to themselves; upon the National Register of Archives; and upon the occasional discovery of interesting material.

A general survey, then, which would give an overview of what potentially might be copied and provide a basis for a systematic and rational copying programme with clearly defined priorities, seemed desirable. All promising repositories down to the level of at least county record offices or their equivalent were written to, requesting permission to visit and aid in locating collections of relevance. Those repositories were then visited, their lists and indexes searched, and relevant material examined as necessary. Other repositories for which there was little information on relevant holdings — for example, many regimental

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24 *Supra*, footnote 22.

museums, district libraries, and specialist research institutions — were also contacted and asked for a written response on any likely materials. If the holdings proved substantial, a visit was arranged. The survey was largely one of established archival repositories. The entire survey, except work in Scotland, which had previously been undertaken by archivists working two months apiece, was undertaken by two archivists without support staff and with other regular duties to perform. Because of considerations of time and expense, no effort was made to locate archives in private hands, beyond collections listed through the National Register of Archives or in published guides. Likewise, businesses still holding their own archives were not approached. The survey has been geared specifically to manuscripts and public records, although other media have been listed when they were encountered.

The survey in Great Britain and Ireland is not yet complete. A portion of London remains to be done as well as a relatively minor amount of work in the Republic of Ireland outside of Dublin. Scotland was surveyed prior to 1981. In the three following years, the surveyors visited, or contacted by letter, 520 repositories, and listed an estimated 3,000 collections of relevance to Canada. Many of these collections contain only a few scattered items relating to Canada. An earlier check of 2,000 collections, however, indicated that 40 per cent of them contained substantial amounts (one or more volumes, or the equivalent) of material. Because of the large amount of material involved, it is difficult to characterize it with any great degree of precision. Documentation relevant to Canada tends to be located in middle-sized and larger institutions. District and county museums and historical societies have tended, in a process of specialization, to turn their manuscripts over to archives and most regimental museums and local libraries have little. The large manuscript collections of the great landed estates tend to be listed either in the National Register of Archives or in the relevant local county record office, where some references previously unknown to the PAC have been picked up. More problematic are the potentially large amounts of material relating to Canada held particularly by middle class and professional families. The location of such material would require a different approach from a formal survey of repositories. University libraries, county record offices and city libraries are the most likely sources below the level of the national and specialist repositories. An institution's location and collecting history are more likely to determine its Canadian holdings than the type of institution.

The majority of the material identified ranges in date from the late eighteenth century to World War I. Twentieth-century material is far from lacking and, since the British are rather more conservative than Canadians about the deposit of their papers, much twentieth-century material may yet be deposited. Still, it does not seem unreasonable that the majority of material uncovered should relate to the period when the imperial tie was strongest. Material now being found is much more varied in content than the collections copied in the past. The PAC has done its work well in collecting material relating to imperial administrators, politicians, and military men. Collections currently being discovered, therefore, are usually smaller, tend to relate more to the middle class and professionals than to the great and aristocratic, and are much more numerous.

An area where the PAC had not previously worked extensively is that of the papers of learned societies and professional associations. The present survey has listed the papers of physicians, surgeons, lawyers, botanists, geologists, astronomers, meteorologists, architects, and others involved in the development or study of Canada in such institutions as the Royal College of Physicians of London, the Royal Botanical Gardens, the British

Museum (Natural History), the Royal Astronomical Society, the Inner Temple Library, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the Royal Anthropological Institute. Business collections also have surfaced with great regularity. Exploration too is a fruitful area; in the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge, for instance, 180 collections of interest were identified. The most relentless flood, however, has been of family collections and a multitude of letters, diaries, journals, and logs of immigrants, travellers, and residents, of military men, clergy, and businessmen describing conditions they have encountered in Canada. These materials are found virtually everywhere.

It is hard to convey the richness of what has been found in generalities and examples from a selected area may be helpful. The north coast of Wales, for instance, might seem an unpromising area, having little in the way of major industry linked to Canada, no major imperial politicians, nor any record of heavy emigration to Canada. The Caernarfon Area Record Office, however, holds late nineteenth-century letters sent home from the gold fields of the Caribou by one Welshman and the diary, 1862-65, of another also written in the Caribou. From the other side of Canada, it has the papers of Philip Knowling, a Newfoundland broadcaster and author, including his notebooks and papers on the seal hunt in the 1950s. In addition to these, it has a number of charter party agreements relating to shipping between Wales, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland, and shipping registers listing many ships built in the Canadian Maritimes and sold in Wales. Of smaller collections, it holds five letters from a military officer concerning the Rebellions in the Canadas; letters from a clergyman on depression conditions in the 1930s in PEI; an 1811 letter describing the voyage to Newfoundland from Liverpool; the surveyor's notebook of a railway engineer working in British Columbia, 1912-16; and other diverse material.

A few miles back along the north coast, the library of the University College of North Wales at Bangor has been quietly putting together a collection which it is improbable that any Canadian researcher has ever used. It includes the papers, 1905-07, of Isaiah Brookes Jones, a missionary of the Church of England's Church Missionary Society, working with the Cree Indians in Manitoba. The material includes not only his letters, but also his journals, sermons, and sketches. On an entirely different topic, it has a customs account book, 1854-57, whose entries relate mainly to the unloading of timber at the port of Conway from vessels arriving from Quebec. Its Crawley-Vincent family papers contain a run of letters, 1844-48, from John Vincent as an officer in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers serving at London, Chambly, Sorel, and elsewhere in Canada. The letters are a very full description of a rather naïve young man, particularly of the social aspects of military life in Canada. The same collection has substantial correspondence concerning a tract of land in Pictou, Nova Scotia; letters and documents, 1825-26, concerning the death of John Crawley on the Arctic voyage of the *Blossom*; and the memorandum book, 1795-96, of Edmund Crawley of Pictou, Nova Scotia. The library also holds a bundle of letters, in Welsh, 1951-65, of W.O.L. Davies, an emigrant to Saskatchewan, and a letterbook, 1893-1907, written in a Welsh colony in Patagonia, which includes references to the migration of many of its members to Canada after a flood in 1899.

The Clwyd Record Office, Hawarden branch — the third major repository on the north coast of Wales — controls an interesting collection, different in its Canadian content from the others so far mentioned. Hawarden, as may be recalled, was the country estate of William Ewart Gladstone and St. Deniol's Library, which the Record Office services, contains some of Gladstone's personal papers, including some he borrowed from

the 5th Duke of Newcastle. These contain extensive correspondence of the Duke, as Colonial Secretary, with officials in Canada and the Duke's journal, 9-29 July 1860, kept while accompanying the Prince of Wales on his tour of Canada. The Record Office also holds well over one hundred letters, 1882-87, written from Alberta by F.W. and Byam Martin Godsal to their father, commenting extensively on farming, the Indian situation, land speculation, politics, railway building, and local and family news; a manuscript copy of the journal of the Legislative Council of Lower Canada in the 1790s; and commissions and warrants of Alured Clarke, the Lieutenant-Governor of Lower Canada.

The holdings of Hawarden's neighbouring city, Chester, are surprisingly slight, but from Hawarden, one can look across to the suburbs of the great port city of Liverpool whose repositories have extensive material on Canada, including, for instance, records of ships built for the Canadian trade; extensive insurance company records covering Canada; records of the Liverpool Sheltering Homes which sent children to Canada; records beginning in the 1830s of Benjamin Bowring's shop in St. John's, Newfoundland, and later material relating to the Bowrings' business; numbers of relevant ships' logs and diaries; papers relating to an expedition to collect botanical specimens in British Columbia in the 1840s; travel journals relating to Canada; letters of a New Brunswick Loyalist describing his life in Canada; the Cunard Steamship Company Records; twenty-three letters of the Beakbane family, Montreal, 1881-84, concerning the remarkable trials of the children to support themselves as servants and in sweatshops after their father's suicide; a diary, 1920, of a trip to assess harbour facilities in North America, including Quebec City and Montreal; diaries and letters of officers of the 8th or King's Regiment serving in Canada; and forty-six letters, 1855-72, from two firms in Quebec and Kingston relating to trade in wheat and timber. Such findings can be duplicated in other regions.

Over one thousand microfilm reels have already been filmed on the basis of the survey work done in the past three years. Publication of a guide to the material identified is planned and continued expansion of the filming programme, using the guide as a basis for systematic copying, is also hoped for. Ongoing copying arrangements have been made with such institutions as the Scottish Record Office, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, the National Library of Scotland, and the House of Lords Record Office.

A final word about direct acquisitions in Britain is in order at this point. The London Office follows the sales for relevant manuscripts, maps and atlases, photographs, water-colours, silhouettes, and miniatures at the three major auction houses and maintains relations with a variety of dealers both inside and outside London. The PAC finds this representation at sales very useful. London is the great international market for all manner of archival materials. Catalogues often do not reach Canada in time to allow a response. Direct representation allows examination and accurate assessment of items offered, as well as much fuller information on the general market. Consistent presence and personal contact encourages dealers and donors to establish and maintain contacts with the PAC. Between 1981 and late 1983, the office acquired ninety collections, totalling over one thousand individual items. About 50 per cent of that material came from donors or small dealers and much of it literally walked through the door of the offices at Canada House as the gifts of private individuals.

One can hope that, building on over a century of remarkable effort in copying and acquisition in the British Isles, the London Office of the Public Archives of Canada will continue to be a potent force in bringing home Canada's archival heritage.