

traditional textual documentation would benefit from the development of similarly well-defined and systematic criteria as those outlined for machine-readable records in this study. While there is no perfect taxonomy for records and no formula for determining the archival value of recorded information, this study moves appraisal closer to a process of systematic selection.

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Susanna Moodie: Letters of a Lifetime. CARL BALLSTADT, ELIZABETH HOPKINS, and MICHAEL PETERMAN, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985, x, 390 p. illus. ISBN 0-8020-2580-3 \$29.95 cl.

The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery. Volume I: 1889-1910. MARY RUBIO and ELIZABETH WATERSTON, eds. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1985. xxiv, 424 p. illus. ISBN 0-19-540503-x \$24.95.

These books will be of greater interest to students of Canadian literature than to archivists. As historical documents their value is limited, although from Moodie we can learn a bit about the publishing trade in England and Canada in the nineteenth century and from Montgomery we can derive, within certain boundaries, a picture of life on Prince Edward Island at the turn of the century.

The 138 Moodie letters, which the editors located in eighteen different repositories and six newspapers, date from 1826 to 1882. They represent therefore only a very fragmentary record of their author's life and are further limited by being only Moodie's side of her correspondence. Those who preserved Susanna Moodie's letters were either relatives, fellow writers, or publishers: thus the letters are almost entirely about either literary publishing or family matters. We discover that the two hundred copies of her first book, *Enthusiasm, and Other Poems* (London, 1831), were printed only when the subscription list reached one hundred and fifty names, a practice similar to that which prevailed in Canada at the same time. In letters forty-six and forty-seven, addressed to her publisher, Richard Bentley, Moodie gives some indication of her writing methods, and in letter seventy-two to Henry J. Morgan, dated July 1861, after almost thirty years in Upper Canada, we find her asserting that she is English rather than Canadian. As far as understanding her personality is concerned, both her admirers and her detractors will find evidence to support their positions.

The editors have, on the whole, done an excellent job of making these scattered letters intelligible to readers. There are four genealogies, one for Thomas Strickland and his children, and three others for Thomas's "Canadian" children, Samuel, Susanna, and Catharine, and their families. The genealogical charts are complete as to birth dates, but lack some death dates. There are also fifteen illustrations, principally pictures of family members, family homes, and some individuals to whom letters were addressed. One cross-written letter page is reproduced.

The letters have been sorted into five chronological periods, for each of which the editors have provided an introduction giving background for the letters to follow. The explanatory notes appear on the same page of the text. While policy with regard to transcription of the actual text is carefully described, there is no mention of any policy

regarding annotations other than a statement that they have been kept to a minimum because of space limitations with "much interesting and useful commentary ... reserved for future work." The result is considerable variation from letter to letter in the type of explanatory notes provided and a weakening of the scholarly value of the book. The notes also contain a few errors and there have been some omissions from the index.

The notes in the Montgomery book are certainly not organized for the convenience of readers. They are placed together at the end of the book and there is no indication in the text itself that a note has been provided for a particular point. When finally located the notes are excellent, although, because of the international interest in Montgomery today, they were prepared with a non-North American, non-English-speaking readership in mind. Thus we find notes explaining what Halifax, Nova Scotia and *Romeo and Juliet* are, as well as ones more relevant to Canadian readers.

The principal difficulty with the volume is that it contains only "selected" journal entries. Montgomery's ten handwritten journals, now in the possession of the University of Guelph, will not be available to the public until 1992. This volume is derived from the first two of these journals and the editors state that for reasons of length they have omitted those entries which were repetitive or non-essential. From the appended list of dates for which the entries have been omitted we can determine that 397 entries were dropped and another sixty-one are included only in part. Both Waterston and Rubio have high reputations as scholars and there is no reason to doubt their word as to the content of the missing entries, but we will not be able to verify their editorial decision making for another six years. The present book is such fascinating reading that we cannot help but feel cheated by the omission of so much material. The line-up to read the original, unedited journals in 1992 will be a long one.

The editors have provided an excellent introduction containing biographical material, background on the Montgomery and Macneill families as well as on PEI, and a general description and evaluation of the journals' contents. There are over a hundred photographic illustrations, all taken from the journals themselves, maps of PEI and of Cavendish, a genealogical chart, and a reproduction of one page of the handwritten journal. The lettering on the maps and the genealogical chart is in an elaborate italic script which is difficult to read, and the genealogy could have been organized in a clearer manner. The index proved equal to all my spot-checks.

Of the two books, the one on Montgomery is by far the most interesting to read. Journals are essentially more private than letters, so one has the feeling of coming close to the writer herself. There is, however, a very self-conscious element in all the entries — those of the fourteen-year-old girl as well as the thirty-six-year-old woman — which gives the impression, confirmed by the existence of a later self-edited version, that Montgomery intended them for publication at some future date. While pouring out her heart she is at the same time setting the record straight for posterity. That the journals are artful, rather than artless, weakens their value as social history documents, but it increases our respect for Montgomery as a writer.

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