

# *Archives in the Classroom*

by **KEN OSBORNE**

## **The Archivist as Educator**

The publication of George Bolotenko's paper, "Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well," in 1983 sparked a considerable debate on the role and identity of archivists.<sup>1</sup> In this debate two positions have been staked out — the archivist as historian *versus* the archivist as records manager — to the neglect of a third: the archivist as educator, a role which receives surprisingly little discussion in archivists' journals. In 1906 when George Wrong and Adam Shortt were pressing the case for increased government support of the national archives upon Wilfrid Laurier, they discussed with him the best way of connecting the archives with "the educational life of the country."<sup>2</sup> Overwhelmingly, in the years that followed, this took the form of collecting and organizing the official and unofficial records of the past and of making them available to scholars and researchers. The main educational role of the archives was seen as fostering and supporting scholarly research. From time to time an attempt was made to reach the general public, through exhibitions, for example; and the schools through collections of lantern-slides and occasional school visits. Above all else, however, archivists saw themselves, so far as any educational role was concerned, as serving the universities and, to some extent, independent researchers.

W. Kaye Lamb noted this emphasis in 1949, observing that "many inquiries ... have come from teachers in elementary schools, or from high school pupils, whereas Archives publications have always been prepared with research and universities primarily in mind."<sup>3</sup> His suggested solution was to produce two series of publications, one aimed at researchers and the other "designed to be primarily teaching aids for elementary and high school use."<sup>4</sup> Nothing seems to have come of this and the educational potential of archives for teaching (as opposed to research) at any or all levels of education remained largely untapped. The then Dominion Archivist, Wilfred I. Smith, noted in 1972 that "from the point of view of the community as a whole the educational value of Archives are (sic)

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- 1 G. Bolotenko, "Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983), pp. 5-25.
  - 2 Cited in I. Wilson, "A Noble Dream: The Origins of the Public Archives in Canada," *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83), p. 27.
  - 3 Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), *Report for the Year 1949* (Ottawa, 1950), p. xxxiii.
  - 4 *Ibid.*

important,”<sup>5</sup> but, for well-known reasons, largely having to do with lack of resources, staff, and time but also arising from a failure to connect with teachers and schools, this educational value has remained unrealized.

In this regard, archives stand in surprising contrast to museums, which have made it a priority to reach the public in general and schools in particular, and, wherever possible, have established education and extension branches to make this a reality. Elsie Freivogel is surely right when she writes:

To the museum educator, the term museum education means the education of the public. To the archivist, archival education means the education of other archivists. In fact,... the archivist does not ordinarily perceive the education of the public to be his job.<sup>6</sup>

This neglect of the educational potential of archives is unfortunate on at least three counts. First, the failure to forge possible links between archives and schools denies the schools an invaluable resource for improving the quality of teaching, especially in the fields of history and social studies. Second, it denies society at large a chance to appreciate and to benefit from the evidence and the records upon which its sense of identity and continuity depends. Archivists are certainly aware of the social and cultural significance of their role: as the Provincial Archivist of Manitoba, Peter Bower, put it, archives “are the memory of our species. These records are the fullest chronicle of what we have been both individually and collectively ....”<sup>7</sup> In practice archivists appear to have relied upon historians and other researchers to make this chronicle available to the people and, given the current academic disdain for “popular” history and for working in or with schools, it has not reached a particularly wide audience. As this paper will suggest, there is much that archivists could do themselves in this regard, rather than acting only as the servants of others. Third, by not engaging in educational work, either with the public at large or with the schools, archives deny themselves the possibility of building and benefitting from the support of a knowledgeable and sympathetic public. To quote Elsie Freivogel again, “If a public institution does not build constituencies larger than those of the academic researcher, the institution is doomed.”<sup>8</sup> In a Canadian context, T.H.B. Symons expressed a similar sentiment when he identified two important tasks for Canadian archives: the development of a comprehensive archival system and “the promotion of much greater public awareness of the significance of archives,” — and this second task he thought would be the more difficult of the two.<sup>9</sup>

Some years earlier, Wilfred Smith had similarly argued the case that archives should foster public involvement and support:

The Public Archives of Canada can report some amazing achievements in the last century but development of public awareness of its role, the encouragement of popular participation in what should be a cooperative mission,

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5 PAC, *Archives: Mirror of Canada Past/Miroir du passé du Canada* (Toronto, 1972), p. 22.

6 E. Freivogel, “Wider Use of Historical Records,” *The American Archivist* 40(3) (July 1977), p. 333.

7 P. Bower, “Archives and Education,” *The Manitoba Social Science Teacher*, 10(1) (September 1983), p. 23.

8 E. Freivogel, “Wider Use.” See also her “Education Programs: Outreach as an Administration Function,” *The American Archivist* 41(2) (April 1978), pp. 147-53.

9 T.H.B. Symons, “Archives and Canadian Studies,” *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83), p. 58.

and the sharing of the benefits and the increased enjoyment of its treasures must be a challenge for the next century.<sup>10</sup>

If there is a substantial case for archivists to become much more involved in educational work, then a good place to start is with schools, both with students and teachers. When an appreciation of history develops among the young — who today are frighteningly a-historical and even anti-historical — it establishes deep and secure roots and makes an essential contribution to the search for self-knowledge. There is a long archival tradition in Canada that one essential purpose of archives is to foster and maintain a sense of national, regional or cultural identity, a task in which the schools also have an important part to play. To work with schools helps to provide a focus that is not always easy to find when dealing with public education in the broadest sense where it is difficult to know just who the audience is and how it might best be reached. By contrast, the school system is well-defined: it has a curriculum; it has channels for in-service and professional development work with teachers; it has a system of communications; above all it has students in organized groups, charged with the task of learning particular things — all of which makes focussed, fairly precise goal-oriented activity possible.

History and social studies teachers are looking for ways to make their classes more interesting and to get beyond the prescribed textbook. Impressionistic evidence suggests that history teaching has improved since Hodgetts so scathingly condemned it in 1968 in *What Culture? What Heritage?* but it also appears that students for the most part do not rate it as one of their more interesting or useful subjects. There are, of course, many reasons for this, having to do with the narcissistic climate of the times, the here-and-now emphasis of the mass media, the mismatch between curricula and students' level of development, uninteresting teaching, boring textbooks, the emphasis on vocational priorities and the rest, but the lack of useful and usable teaching materials which are both interesting and practical is one important problem and it is one that archivists can help to correct, especially in light of recent developments in the theory and philosophy of history and social studies teaching.

### **The Rejection of Traditional History Teaching**

In the late 1960s it became customary in educational circles (though perhaps more so with the theorists than with the teachers) to speak of the "new history" and the "new social studies." In the United States, 1968 saw the publication of *The New Social Studies*. In Britain, 1971 saw the publication of the Historical Association's *A Framework of Educational Objectives for the Learning of History*, followed in 1973 by Ben Jones' *Practical Approaches to the New History*. At the end of the 1970s the Historical Association sponsored another pamphlet, reviewing and analyzing a decade of work, Rogers' *The New History: Theory into Practice*. In Canada, although he did not use the term new history, Hodgetts approved many of its principles and assumptions in his well-known and influential *What Culture? What Heritage?* Milburn's *Teaching History in Canada*, which appeared in 1972, was similarly sympathetic to the new history and the Anglophone teachers' journal, *The History and Social Science Teacher*, consistently ran articles which reflected and advocated the new pedagogical approaches.

The new history never was a unified movement. Its proponents disagreed among themselves on questions of method and philosophy. Nonetheless, they were in broad

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10 PAC, *Archives: Mirror*, p. 2.

agreement on general principles and were certainly united in attacking what they saw as traditional history teaching. This they condemned on a variety of grounds:

- (i) students were bored by it and learned to dislike history and historical study;
- (ii) it was dull, uninteresting, and smug; more propaganda than history; and often whiggish and tendentious;
- (iii) it overemphasized political, constitutional, and military history at the expense of social, economic, and cultural themes;
- (iv) it overemphasized factual knowledge, often the memorizing of trivia, at the expense of skills and understanding;
- (v) it dealt with large periods of time, inevitably in broad survey fashion, and provided no opportunity for in-depth study;
- (vi) its preferred approach was survey and lecture (including films and film-strips) rather than research and analysis;
- (vii) it assigned students to a listening and memorizing role rather than one which demanded discussion, investigation and discovery;
- (viii) it was often academically obsolete, and sometimes just plain wrong, and out of touch with contemporary historical scholarship;
- (ix) it had no bearing on, and made no connexion with, the world in which students lived.

These criticisms were heard not only in Canada but in many countries in the western world and, indeed, in the Soviet Union. The new history was an international phenomenon.

This condemnation of existing history teaching derived not just from changes in educational philosophy and ideology but also from the supposedly empirical results of psychological research. It has long been recognized that school students often have trouble properly understanding history, hence the prevalence of schoolboy howlers and the satire of *1066 And All That*. A Canadian school history textbook which appeared in 1929, authored by George Wrong, Chester Martin, and Walter Sage, three of Canada's then most prominent academic historians, noted that "there is something radically wrong when so many students in our schools dislike Canadian history" and attributed this state of affairs to the one fact that many students simply did not and could not understand what was taught: "many of the most vital issues in the development of Canada are quite beyond students of thirteen or fourteen." The solution to this problem was to return to the Victorian tradition of historical anecdote: "constitutional problems are given a minor place, along with war, bills, acts, and party politics, while stress has been laid upon personalities and events of romantic interest."<sup>11</sup>

In the 1970s the realization that students often found history hard to understand moved from folk-wisdom to apparently empirical science, as psychologists began to investigate how students perceived — or misperceived — the past. These investigations derived from the application of Piagetian psychology to the learning of school subjects. The Piagetian distinction between concrete operational and formal operational thought,

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<sup>11</sup> G.M. Wrong, C. Martin & W.N. Sage, *The Story of Canada* (Toronto, 1929), p. v.

or in Peel's terms between describer and explainer thinking, seemed to offer an explanation of students' difficulties in learning history.<sup>12</sup> Students are restricted to a concrete, contextually bound way of thinking in which they can describe phenomena but not explain them. They think concretely but history, especially as it is often taught, is full of abstractions. One researcher concluded that

Ignoring any extreme instances, 16.2 to 16.6 years is the chronological age at which formal history begins. It seems, however, that a mental age of 16.5 to 18.2 is required for the beginning of the formal stage.<sup>13</sup>

This view is now considered to be far too pessimistic and there is increasing evidence that students can in fact "understand" history at an earlier age, though much depends on how they are taught and how the learning materials are organized. In other words, certain ways of organizing curricula and certain methods of teaching do indeed make a difference.<sup>14</sup> Without them students often lack motivation (a favorite complaint of teachers), interest, and, therefore, discipline. To cope with this, teachers are driven to resort to authoritarian, expository, full-frontal, notes-on-the-overhead-projector techniques simply as a way of maintaining control. This, in turn, increases students' frustrations which leads to teachers tightening the screws — or giving up altogether — and so the circle becomes ever more vicious.

The research is, of course, far more complex and disputatious than this brief summary suggests but it has established one clear-cut conclusion: adolescents do not necessarily find history unproblematic or easy to understand and, therefore, teaching methods do matter — and, in this regard, archives and archivists have a valuable role to play. The psychological research strengthened the case for the new history and added some weight to its criticisms of conventional history teaching — criticisms which carried with them suggestions for what needed to be done to correct such a depressing and unsatisfactory state of affairs. These suggestions formed the agenda of the new history.

### **The Agenda of the New History**

Educators came to realize that much more careful thought had to be given to ascertaining the objectives of history teaching in order to destroy the old, complacent, and ultimately self-defeating assumption that history was desirable in and of itself. What, in fact, were the goals of history teaching? What could history contribute to the school curriculum? Why should students have to study it? Why was it losing ground to social studies and the various social sciences? The 1970s saw a fair amount of breast-beating on the decline and possible fall of history in the schools.

Perhaps history simply could not bear the weight of the educational goals it was supposed to help achieve. Not only had the educational role of history to be reexamined, argued the proponents of the new history, but, once defined, it had to be stated in terms of student behaviour, not of what teachers would do but of what students would be able to do as a result of studying history. This was part of a much wider movement in education

12 K. Osborne, "Some Psychological Concerns for the Teaching of History," *The History and Social Science Teacher*, XI (Fall 1975), pp. 15-25.

13 R.N. Hallam, "Logical Thinking in History," *Educational Review*, 19, (1967), p. 191.

14 M. Booth, "Inductive Thinking in History," in G. Jones and L. Ward, eds., *New History: Old Problems* (Swansea, 1978), pp. 104-21; also D. Shemilt, "Formal Operational Thought in History," *Teaching History* 15 (May 1976), pp. 237-43.

which stressed the importance of precisely stated “behavioural objectives,” which would enable student performance to be measured and the effectiveness of education to be quantified. This technocratic view of education has generated a vast literature and continues to excite controversy. The new history never accepted it lock, stock, and barrel, and indeed some advocates of the new history never accepted it at all, but what did emerge was a general agreement that history teaching had to make an impact upon students and that it was not quite good enough to think of educational goals in such fuzzy phrases as “students will appreciate....” or “students will understand....” That’s all very well, went the reply, but just what is it that students will do?<sup>15</sup>

This led to a second priority of the new history: an important purpose of history teaching — some said the most important — became the development of students’ skills, particularly the skills of research, investigation, and analysis. Conventional history teaching, it was argued, had put too much emphasis upon the memorizing of factual knowledge to the exclusion of other worthwhile goals. Few people were prepared to reject knowledge out of hand, but there was general agreement that its importance had been exaggerated and that “knowing how” was as important as “knowing that.” The new history redirected attention to the importance of skills and proposed ways of using history to develop them.

This was connected to a third priority of the new history: that students should learn how historians worked. They should, so to speak, not only “learn” history, they should also “do” history. There were two main ways proposed of accomplishing this: one was to introduce students to questions of historiography and historical interpretation to examine how and why historians disagreed; the other was to get students to do some genuinely original historical research. This might often be small-scale and personal, as in the case of family history or local studies, but it would make it impossible for the students simply to read the summary version of other people’s research and then pass it off as their own. Teachers who took this position pointed out that in the traditional classroom, when students undertook research projects, it really meant library research in which they went beyond the pages of the authorized textbooks — usually to consult another textbook or two — but rarely on a problem that was genuinely new and unexplored. In this context, the idea of the historian-as-detective became popular and various projects designed exercises in which students had to explore the ramifications of incomplete or only partially conclusive source materials.

From this emerged a fourth priority: teacher-centred, expository methods of teaching, described by one critic as “full-frontal teaching,” which saw the main task of students as memorizing what was presented to them, had to be replaced with student-centred, activity-based methods, usually described by the words discovery or inquiry. Hodgetts called it the dialogue method and commented approvingly upon it in *What Culture? What Heritage?*, where he noted that the best classes that he and his researchers observed were all pursuing a topic in depth, were using a wide range of materials, were characterized by fluent and relevant discussions, were scenes of high student involvement where the teacher acted more as a seminar leader, and were examining alternative interpretations of particular issues.<sup>16</sup>

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15 For a summary of this topic see L. Stenhouse, *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development* (London, 1975), pp. 52-83.

16 A.B. Hodgetts, *What Culture? What Heritage?* (Toronto, 1968), pp. 53-56.

This generally meant a shift in emphasis so far as course content was involved. The move away from survey in favour of intensive treatment of particular topics inevitably involved a shift away from history as a continuous story of national development. Either only particular themes or topics of national history were examined or the national emphasis was sacrificed, either in whole or in part, for local or regional themes. The advantage of local history, it was argued, was that it was much closer to students, physically and therefore intellectually. Further, it provided opportunity for first-hand investigation of problems and direct experience of research methods. This shift away from the national was accompanied by a move away from traditional emphases upon political, constitutional and military themes towards the social, the cultural, and the economic. Labour history, women's history, ethnic history, and the whole panoply of the new social history gradually began to influence school curricula and materials. The old confident titles of Canadian history textbooks — *Canada: The Story of a Nation*; *Canada: A Nation and How It Came to Be*; *Building the Canadian Nation*; *From Colony to Nation* — became more tentative — *In Search of Canada*; *Challenge and Survival*; *New Beginnings*.

So, the new history presented both a critique and an agenda for reform. As one of its proponents put it, it represented

....a concentration upon the essentials of the subject, an examination of the processes of historical research (albeit at an elementary level), a reaching after the excitement of discovery for oneself.... Its advocates urged that a firmer foundation for historical studies would be found by adopting a skills based approach made possible by analyzing one's teaching scheme in terms of a taxonomy (or at least a framework) of educational objectives. With this foundation to give direction and coherence, children could embark upon the pursuit and assessment of evidence of whatever sort inside the classroom or in the locality, in the manner of historians.<sup>17</sup>

Not surprisingly, this view did not carry all before it and some of its more high-flown claims were vigorously attacked. As one critic of archives-based teaching units put it: "to compare the mature work of historical research with the exercises conducted by children from limited and pre-selected material ... is the sort of clap-trap that brings the scholarship of educationists into doubt."<sup>18</sup> And there is a fair amount of evidence that, though the journals were full of news about the new history, classrooms carried on much as before. Nonetheless, textbooks began to change to reflect the new emphases and so did curriculum outlines.

This emphasis on skills and research, on trying to work like an historian, on investigating and analyzing issues, understandably led to a view of the history curriculum as a series of problems to be investigated, and various problem-solving procedures and methods of inquiry were proposed. No one was so naive as to suggest that there existed *the* historical method, but there was an argument that, for teaching purposes, an ideal-type would be useful as a way of helping students (and teachers) tackle problems in a

17 R. Ben Jones, "Roman Lead Pigs, or How to Avoid the Perils of the New History," *Teaching History* 25 (October 1979), p. 19. For perhaps the most celebrated example of the new history in action see Schools Council History 13-16 Project, *A New Look at History* (Edinburgh, 1976), and T. Boddington, "The Schools Council History 13-16 Project," *The History and Social Science Teacher* 19(3) (March 1984), pp. 129-37.

18 W.B. Stephens in *The Journal of the Society of Archivists* 4(1) (April 1970), p. 84.

systematic way. Probably the most popular of these formulas was Edwin Fenton's "mode of inquiry" which he described as follows:

### STEPS IN A MODE OF INQUIRY

1. Recognizing a problem from data
2. Formulating hypotheses
  - 2.1 Asking analytical questions
  - 2.2 Stating hypotheses
  - 2.3 Remaining aware of the tentative nature of hypotheses
3. Recognizing the logical implications of hypotheses
4. Gathering Data
  - 4.1 Deciding what data will be needed
  - 4.2 Selecting or rejecting sources on the basis of a statement of logical implications
5. Analyzing, evaluating and interpreting data
  - 5.1 Selecting relevant data from the sources
  - 5.2 Evaluating the sources
    - 5.21 Determining the frame of reference of the author of a source
    - 5.22 Determining the accuracy of statements of fact
  - 5.3 Interpreting the data
6. Evaluating the hypothesis in light of the data
  - 6.1 Modifying the hypothesis, if necessary
    - 6.11 Rejecting a logical implication unsupported by data
    - 6.12 Restating the hypothesis
  - 6.2 Stating a generalization<sup>19</sup>

Understandably, this view of the history curriculum as composed of problems or issues led to a concern for the kinds of evidence that students would use when conducting their own investigations. Fenton, for example, found it necessary to produce a whole new series of textbooks in order to achieve his goals and he and most other proponents of the new history were scathing in their denunciation of traditional textbooks. These books, they agreed, gave students answers to problems that they did not know they had and rarely understood. They were boring to read, cursory in their treatment and usually clichéd in approach. Above all, such books totally failed to stimulate any spirit of inquiry or to teach any worthwhile skills: they were the perfect embodiment of history as "one-damned-thing-after-another."

If the conventional, descriptive, narrative textbook was to be abandoned, along with the teaching methods that went with it, the question arose as to what should replace it. By and large, three responses emerged. One was to revamp the textbook so as to reflect the new approaches and the new curricula. This revamping could take the form of abandoning the traditional chronological narrative in favour of one that was organized around themes or topics as recently exemplified in Francis and Riddoch's *Our Canada*, written in the first instance to parallel a new Grade XI Canadian history programme in Manitoba. Alternatively, textbooks were revamped to include excerpts from primary sources both

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19 E. Fenton, *The New Social Studies* (New York, 1967), pp. 16-17.



for illustrative purposes and to serve sometimes as a replacement of the explanatory text so that students could experience history first-hand — or nearly so. A conspicuous example of this approach is provided by the high school text, *Challenge and Survival*, written by three Winnipeg teachers and published in 1969. That this approach struck a chord is suggested by its rapid adoption in Anglophone school systems across the country, as it quickly became the most commonly used text in English-speaking high schools. As well as including excerpts from primary sources, some texts also began to include historiographical exercises and illustrative passages so that students could begin to see some of the issues in Canadian historiography, for example of the “Confederation: Act or Pact,” or the “Regional *versus* the Laurentian” variety. The latest generation of textbooks, as seen for example, in Francis and Marsh’s *New Beginnings*, has seen the inclusion of much more social history, usually by decreasing the amount of space and attention devoted to political and constitutional themes.<sup>20</sup>

Certainly by the mid 1970s history textbooks had begun to change. They were more attractively produced, with sophisticated lay-outs, attractive illustrations, and the rest, although often they did not carry as much solid (if sometimes indigestible) information as their more staid predecessors. This new visual attractiveness of textbooks might have helped to popularize at least some of the innovations of the new history and especially the use of primary sources (no matter how limited) and of historiography, but, so far as one can tell, it did not wholly work this way. Admittedly there is no hard evidence on this point, but teachers and students often remarked that they found the excerpts from primary sources to be either a nuisance or a distraction. If they were included in the main body of text, they were skipped over; if they were boxed in a special section, they were ignored. It is probably fair to say that, for the most part, the teachers who used them were those who were using similar approaches anyway, so that the new texts made their work a little easier by giving them some of the materials they would otherwise have had to seek out for themselves. Teachers who were not using such methods, however, were not swayed by the new textbooks: indeed, they sometimes found the new texts less manageable than the old.

Besides revising the textbooks, a second response of publishers to the new history was to commission special collections of documents, or extracts from them, to introduce students to the raw materials of historical study. These collections were intended either to supplement or even replace the authorized textbook. In this latter case, the idea was that a teacher might use a series of such books in order to lead students through the chief topics in their history course, though this was rarely done in practice, be it for reasons of cost, impracticality, or student reaction. The main problems were the obvious ones: first, students did not always respond favourably to a teaching strategy which did not provide for sufficient variety and, second, it was very difficult to find any collections of documents that would do everything that a teacher needed: the documents usually required some setting of the stage, some contextual background, as well as some linkage between topics. To solve these problems there were attempts in the United States to write whole textbooks using primary sources, but nothing like this was attempted in Canada.<sup>21</sup> Instead, Canadian publishers issued collections of documents on particular themes, topics or

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20 See, among others, R.C. Kirbyson, H. Herstein, and L. Hughes, *Challenge and Survival* (Toronto, 1970); D. Francis and J. Marsh, *New Beginnings: A Social History of Canada* (Toronto, 1981); and D. Francis and S. Riddoch, *Our Canada: A Social and Political History* (Toronto, 1985).

21 E. Fenton, *A New History of the United States* (New York, 1970).

problems in Canadian history. Such, for example, were McClelland and Stewart's *Curriculum Resource Book* series; Prentice-Hall's *Issues and Options*; or OISE Press's *Documents in Canadian History*. It is difficult to know to what extent such books made an impact upon the classroom. They were rarely ordered in classroom sets: the most common practice was to order only a few copies of any one book for the school library or resource room, where a teacher might dip into them in search of anecdotal or illustrative material, or use them as enrichment for advanced students. And, of course, with the use of a photocopying machine one book could be made to go a long way. It seems reasonable to conclude that such books were used most by teachers who were already sympathetic to the use of historical sources and documents and whose work was made easier by the new availability of materials especially in places where there was no access to a good library. It seems doubtful that they changed the approach of teachers who were not already so inclined. Perhaps their most profound effect was to make teachers more aware than they had been of the possibilities of using documents in the classroom and of the range of material that existed, so that even teachers who did not use documents at least realized that there was something they were not doing.

Those who did use them especially welcomed a third response of publishers to the new history: the publication of collections of documents in facsimile form, usually as a folder or envelope containing photographic reproductions of newspapers, letters, official memoranda, maps, and the rest. Sometimes these collections were expanded to include sound recordings and artifacts. The best received of such efforts remains the well-known Jackdaw series, published in Britain by Cape and in Canada by Clarke Irwin. Such collections seem to have been most widely used for display and decoration rather than for detailed use by students, but their very existence helped to popularize the notion of teaching history with and through primary and other sources, whether these sources were used to illustrate more traditional materials or to replace them.

In general, then, the new history, with its emphasis on sources and documents, appealed primarily to those who were already favourably disposed towards its precepts. It is not at all certain, however, that it made many converts among those who were not so disposed. If teachers who are unconvinced of the value of documentary approaches are to use archival materials, then it is obviously important that archivists work closely with those involved in the training and professional development of teachers.

### **Historical Documents and Sources in the Classroom**

It seems clear that over the last fifteen years the use of documents and other sources in the teaching of history has become increasingly popular. The advocates of the new history were not the first to argue for the use of documents and primary sources in the teaching of history. One can find such ideas advanced almost as soon as history was introduced into school curricula as a compulsory subject in the late nineteenth century. It quickly became obvious that history did not automatically interest school children and that ways had therefore to be found to make it palatable. One way was to turn to the sources, and especially to documents, if history was to become a vehicle for the intellectual enrichment of students. Thus, for example, in 1910, M.W. Keatinge, Reader in Educational Studies at Oxford, published his *Studies in the Teaching of History*, a book which must have met acceptance in Canada to judge by its availability in second-hand bookshops around the country. Keatinge was an enthusiastic advocate of the problems approach to teaching history and therefore also of the use of documents in the classroom:

Our pupils must be given materials to work upon and plenty of them. The documents from which history has been written, and is to be written, are to be had for the asking.... Our subject, then, must be reduced to problem form, and our pupils must be confronted with documents, and forced to exercise their minds upon them.<sup>22</sup>

And, even before Keatinge, one can find examples of the same line of argument, as in the case of a 1903 American Historical Association *Report* which recommended a limited use of primary sources:

The use of sources which we advocate is a limited contact with a limited body of materials, an examination of which may show a child the nature of the historical process, and at the same time make the people and events of by-gone times more real.... The Committee looks upon sources as adjuncts to good textbook work, as something which may be used for a part of the collateral reading, and may also form the basis of some of the written work.<sup>23</sup>

That such advocacy had an effect on at least some teachers over the years is suggested by a comment in the 1931 *Annual Report* of the Public Archives to the effect that "There is an increasing number of requests for photostatic prints from teachers who have found that the use of such material is of the greatest value in the teaching of Canadian history."<sup>24</sup> In the same vein, the Public Archives some years earlier had instituted a policy of making available lantern slides "for the illustration of lectures on Canadian history" to "responsible teachers and lecturers" and in 1931 the *Annual Report* noted that "interest in their use is increasing."<sup>25</sup>

In 1929 Professor Trotter of the history department of Queen's University conducted a "summer school for teachers" in conjunction with the Public Archives.<sup>26</sup> From time to time school and university students, including normal school students, visited the archives, as in 1937 when "students from the University of Ottawa, and from St. Patrick's college, and from the Normal School and Collegiate Institutes of Ottawa, and others from North Bay, Montreal and Quebec visited the Map Division in groups, and received instruction on the value and uses of maps."<sup>27</sup> In the next year, the Map Division distributed "thousands of historical maps" to high schools around the country.<sup>28</sup> Special events also triggered some teachers into making some use of archives: for instance, the *Annual Report* of the Public Archives for 1937 noted that the Coronation and the constitutional issues of federal-provincial relations led to many inquiries: "noteworthy was the interest in these and kindred questions manifested by pupils of collegiate and similar schools, who visited the Archives in groups or sought information individually."<sup>29</sup>

These examples show that the interest in using documents in the teaching of history had at least some impact on archives. Such activities, however, inevitably caused problems for already over-burdened archives staffs. Not only were they understandably

22 M.W. Keatinge, *Studies in the Teaching of History* (London, 1910), p. 38.

23 Cited in G.R. Batho, "Sources," in W.H. Burston and C.W. Green, eds., *Handbook for History Teachers* (London, 1962), p. 95.

24 PAC, *Report of the Public Archives for the Year 1931* (Ottawa, 1932), p. 21.

25 PAC, *Report for 1930* (Ottawa, 1931), p. xx.

26 PAC, *Report for 1929* (Ottawa, 1930), p. 6.

27 PAC, *Report for 1937* (Ottawa, 1938), p. xiii.

28 PAC, *Report for 1938* (Ottawa, 1939), p. 10.

29 PAC, *Report for 1937* (Ottawa, 1938), p. xix.

preoccupied with the continuing tasks of collection, classification, and storage — tasks whose demands increased as more and more materials were acquired — but they also were faced with a conflict of priorities, notably between serving primarily the needs of serious researchers, whether academic or otherwise, and the needs of a wider public, including schools, whose interests were in areas other than research. This is a continuing theme in many of the reports of the Public Archives. In 1934 the Dominion Archivist put it this way:

The collection of 3,155 volumes of manuscripts in the Archives thirty years ago has increased more than a hundred fold. The great problem has been how to make this large mass of materials known outside of Government circles, since it is desirable that Canadians, wherever they be, should have access to the sources of their history....<sup>30</sup>

In 1972 another Dominion Archivist returned to this theme. W.I. Smith then called for the “total utilization of archives,” which he described as “the use of archival materials by and for the benefit of the greatest possible number of persons.” This he described as a “revolutionary concept, since conventionally the use of archives has been limited to a relatively small number of researchers.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Archives as Educational Resources**

In short, there is nothing new in seeing archives as educational resources, both in the broad sense of arousing general public awareness and interest and in the narrower sense of establishing links with teachers and schools. The problem has not been one of ideas or intentions but of resources and mechanisms — or the lack of them. The new history of recent years, with its emphasis upon training students to do historical research, upon questions and issues, upon the use of primary sources, has directed renewed attention to these problems, especially on the part of teachers and educational theorists in the area of history and social studies, to the extent that in some cases archives staffs have found it difficult to cope with the increasing demands upon their services and expertise. In 1910 Keatinge wrote that documents were “to be had for the asking”<sup>32</sup> but all concerned, whether archivists or educationalists, have discovered that the problem is a good deal more complicated than this happy formula suggests. At the very least one needs to know what to ask for, but frequently archivists meet students — and even teachers — who know neither what they want to do nor what it is that they need in order to do it. It is obviously not much use for a student to show up at the archives knowing only that he or she has to do “something on the fur trade” or “something about pioneers,” but it happens with surprising frequency. It is bad enough when one or two students show up; it is altogether impossible when a whole class is virtually dumped on the archives with little or no preparation by teachers, who expect the archives staff to take over while they enjoy a free period. In short, it does not matter even if documents are there “for the asking” if teachers and students have not properly prepared themselves and if there has not been adequate prior consultation between teachers and archivists. And even then it is far from certain that archives have the staff, the time, the educational expertise, or certainly the physical space to cope with the demands of schools. It might be much more efficient in the

<sup>30</sup> PAC, *Report for 1933* (Ottawa, 1934), pp. v-vi.

<sup>31</sup> PAC, *Archives: Mirror*, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Keatinge, *Studies*.

majority of cases not for the classroom to enter the archives but for archives to enter the classroom. Either way, if archives are to realize anything like their educational potential, there will have to be a good deal of joint planning and consultation between archivists and educators. In this context, recent developments in the use of archival resources in schools have some useful lessons to teach.

The educational literature, especially those journals and monographs dealing with the teaching of history and social studies, is especially useful in this regard and has much to say of interest to archivists whose journals reflect other priorities and say very little about the educational role and activities of archives, whether actual or potential. Unfortunately, the increasing specialization of both academic and professional life means that few people have the time or the opportunity to read specialist papers outside their own field so that the educational and pedagogical literature is not widely known beyond the educational sector. This is especially regrettable in the case of educational uses of archives since such literature contains many valuable reports of activity and suggestions for further development. Indeed, what follows draws heavily upon such journals as *Teaching History* from the United Kingdom and its Canadian counterpart, *The History and Social Science Teacher*. An examination of these and other sources suggests an eight-fold classification of approaches that have been used to bring together schools and archives:

1. Teacher-education projects and activities.
2. Classroom units of instruction on the work and role of archives.
3. Exhibition and visits.
4. Projects involving students in archival research.
5. The production of archives-based teaching kits.
6. The use of students to identify and collect material of interest to archives.
7. The formation of school-based archives.
8. The establishment of organizational linkages between teachers and archivists.

All of these are more or less self-explanatory but it might be useful to provide some description of the kinds of work that have been done if only to suggest directions that could be pursued in the future. Personal experience and correspondence indicate that many Canadian archives, especially at the local and regional levels, are already involved in some form or another of these activities, although given the lack of a network or of some method of communication, it is extremely difficult to know just what is being done and where. What follows, therefore, may well unwittingly ignore or do a disservice to something that is happening somewhere in Canada. If this is the case, I hope that readers will accept my apologies and forgive my ignorance — and that they will let me know what it is that I have missed — for many interesting activities are in progress but they proceed unheralded and unsung. This said, this paper now moves to a consideration of each of the eight activities listed above.

### ***1. Teacher Education Projects and Activities***

If teachers are not familiar with archives and with the educational potential of archival material or if they do not accept that archives provide a valuable resource for teaching, nothing is likely to happen in the classroom. Even when students are led to use archival material, in whatever form it may be provided, their work often suffers from lack of adequate preparation by their teachers. In short, if one wants to make more or better use of archives in the classroom, one must at some point work with teachers so that they are

themselves familiar with archives, their holdings, their methods of operation, and their particular strengths and weaknesses. From an archivist's point of view, it is also obviously easier to deal with one teacher, especially one who knows what he or she is doing, than with thirty or so students. Given the range of pressures on archivists' resources, particularly at a time when increased funding is unlikely, it is also more efficient and cost-effective to do something to train teachers than to work more or less haphazardly with masses of students.

Teacher training and education can usefully be divided into two stages, pre-service and in-service, and in recent years it is the latter which has attracted increasing attention. We have come to realize that, no matter how much it might be improved, pre-service teacher education can accomplish only so much and that it is a mistake to try to pack too much into it. Student teachers and teachers at the very beginning of their careers are usually preoccupied with what might be called the basic mechanics of teaching: classroom control, lesson-planning, familiarity with course content, school expectations and a range of similar demands. Such approaches as using archival materials often appear to be too exotic or too demanding for a novice to undertake. For these reasons it probably makes more sense for archivists to concentrate on the in-service education and professional development activities of teachers who are already in the classroom than to bother too much with pre-service teacher education, although this should by no means be totally neglected. In their pre-service training, would-be teachers should be introduced to the possibilities of using archives in teaching and should also be given some direct, personal experience in archival research.

Student teachers who intend to become history specialists should, as part of their historical training, have to do some archival research and become familiar with the operations of archives. At the University of Manitoba, for example, the History Department, in response to a request from the Faculty of Education, offers a second-year course in historical research and methodology intended mainly, but not exclusively, for education students in which they are given both an orientation to the provincial archives and an assignment which involves them in archival research. The intent is that prospective history teachers will have "done" some history of their own rather than only studying the work done by others.

In the more specifically pedagogical part of their training, education students who wish to teach history should become familiar with the use of archival material in the classroom; they should become familiar with the materials that are available; design their own units, whether it be a one-lesson activity focussed upon a specific artifact or document or a more ambitious multi-lesson package; and experiment with them in the classrooms. Activities of this type are in fact to be found in many of the courses in teaching methods offered in Faculties of Education.

Such work is, of course, primarily the responsibility of teacher training institutions, not of archivists, but there is no reason why archivists should not at least make contact with those who are training history teachers in order to find out what is being done and what, if anything, archives staff can do help. Since, in many provinces, Faculty of Education staff who train history teachers are also well connected with provincial departments of education, with the appropriate teacher organizations, and with text-book writers and publishers, they represent a useful point of entry into the educational world and an important part of any networks that might be established.

No matter what is done in pre-service teacher education, it is in-service education that is crucial. In this regard, British experience is particularly useful. Many British archives run short courses or workshops for teachers either on the use of archives in general or upon the use of particular selections or types of documents. For example, the Kent and Suffolk Record Offices have offered residential weekend in-service courses for teachers; Coventry and Herefordshire have organized evening courses on particular types of documents and their application in the classroom; the Northumberland Record Office keeps a monthly evening reserved for teachers. Several British record offices have produced handouts, pamphlets, and newsletters specifically designed for teachers. The Suffolk Record Office, for instance, produces short aids for teachers on such topics as the use of census returns and tithe maps in the classroom. Coventry produces resource sheets on specific topics, giving some introductory notes and listing the kinds of sources available. The Essex Record Office provides a handout of dos and don'ts and of suggestions for teachers on the use of archives.<sup>33</sup>

British archivists have adopted such approaches in part in self-defence, to cope with the increasing demands being made on them by schools. As Alice Prochaska of the Public Record Office puts it: "If their enquiries are to be answered systematically rather than in an *ad hoc* and unco-ordinated way which strains the limited resources of the P.R.O. and still fails to meet the need effectively, perhaps the time has come to provide more active help to teachers."<sup>34</sup>

In this spirit, the Public Record Office, in response to requests from teachers, began a three-day course for teachers which aimed to introduce them to the resources and procedures of the PRO and to give them some experience in working with primary sources. In order to ensure that the course was both practical and worthwhile it was carefully planned with the teachers who would take it. The teachers identified six themes or topics on which they wished to work (for instance, Britain and the Caribbean in the early nineteenth century) in order to help them with their classroom teaching. For each of the six themes, Public Record Office staff selected a batch of documents for the teachers to use in order to avoid spending long hours in searching. While this prevented teachers, in the first instance, immersing themselves in the documents by doing their own digging in the materials, it was a necessary concession to such practical concerns as the demand upon teachers' time and, of course, it did not at all prevent teachers finding things in their pre-selected materials which led them back into the archival collections. After their initial orientation, the teachers spent their three days, both individually and in groups, working up the documents into teaching units and activities. As Alice Prochaska commented on her experience of the course: "The overriding impression ... is that teachers of history and the Public Record Office have much to gain, and much to offer to the school children of this country, from working together."<sup>35</sup>

One of the noteworthy aspects of this type of work with teachers is that it goes far beyond the traditional lecture or show-and-tell session of a typical teacher in-service day. In this it is entirely consistent with the research that is now being done on the impact and delivery of in-service training. The overwhelming message of this research is that traditional approaches to in-service training, in which an expert comes to tell teachers what

33 J. Myles, "Archives Services in Schools," *Teaching History* 21 (June 1978), p. 16.

34 A. Prochaska, "Using the Public Records in the History Classroom," *Teaching History* 39 (June 1984), pp. 37-39.

35 *Ibid.*

they could and should do and then is never seen again, are almost totally ineffective. If archivists are to become involved in in-service work with teachers, they should realize that this means more than a once-and-for-all lecture or visit and that there is a solid and increasing amount of research on in-service training to which one can turn for useful suggestions.

## ***2. Classroom Units of Instruction on the Work and Role of Archives***

Some teachers have extended their interest in the use and analysis of historical sources to examine with their students such questions as what kinds of evidence are useful for historical purposes, how such evidence can be used and interrogated, and how it comes to be preserved. It is not difficult to put together a collection of materials — bus tickets, shopping lists, fragments of a newspaper, letters, photographs, artifacts — and to ask students what it tells them about the society that produced it. And it is an old trick to bring to class a bag of (hygienically pre-sorted) garbage and ask them to draw inferences from it. Nor is it difficult to get students to see that, depending on the topic under investigation, almost anything can be a potentially useful source of information, especially if one knows how to ask the right questions. Such considerations lead naturally to thinking about the problem of deciding what to preserve and what to jettison, of storage, inventorying, and so on. In this record-conscious age it is also easy to find new accounts of issues arising from the use or misuse of archival evidence such as the 1985-86 controversy over the culling of immigration records.

An interesting example of this general approach is provided by a six lesson unit for fourteen year olds which has these goals:

- (i) to show the nature and variety of archives;
- (ii) to develop a positive attitude towards the conservation of materials;
- (iii) to show why historians need primary sources;
- (iv) to provide practice in research and analysis.

The unit begins with a slide show illustrating the work of archives. In the words of the teacher who designed it, "To emphasize the unique quality of archive material one lesson is spent studying the process by which archives are conserved and made available to the public."<sup>36</sup> Ian Mason of the Essex Records Office has commented that students best learn the "proper conservationist attitude" not from exhortations, warnings, or threats, but by the visible example of the care taken in the handling of documents and of the precautions that archives take: "The youngsters greatly enjoy looking at a slide sequence explaining how smoke detectors and thirty gas cylinders containing carbon dioxide stand in ever-readiness."<sup>37</sup> Similarly, students are often intrigued by descriptions of the fragility of archival material.

There is, then, a wealth of information that can be given to students concerning the working of archives and the general experience has been that it interests students, both those of high and low achievement, those who are not especially motivated by school as well as those who are. To return to the six lesson unit for fourteen year olds, it is worth noting that the class was of mixed ability. After the slides, the unit moved on to a thirty

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<sup>36</sup> N. Munro, "Archives in the 3rd Year," *Teaching History* 26 (February 1980), pp. 17-19.

<sup>37</sup> I. Mason, "The Essex Road Show or Documents in the Classroom," *Teaching History* 31 (October 1981), pp. 4-6.



page booklet containing activities and exercises involving the use of documents, designed to introduce students to a wide variety of different source materials and to give them a chance to work with sources that illustrated some aspects of their local history.

What works with fourteen year olds can obviously also work with older students and some kind of multi-media kit illustrating the nature and work of archives could be of great use at the university level with students in history and education in particular — and, indeed, with the wider public. Such programmes would make at least a partial response to T.H.B. Symons' call for educational institutions to assume the "responsibility to promote an understanding of the function of archives as part of their educational programme."<sup>38</sup> This can, of course, also be achieved by a programme of visits, exhibitions, displays, and conferences.

### **3. Exhibitions and Visits**

There is a long tradition in Canada, as elsewhere, of archives organizing displays and exhibits, whether of the in-house or the travelling variety. Ian Wilson has noted that under Arthur Doughty the Public Archives "assumed a museum atmosphere"<sup>39</sup> and, as noted earlier in this paper, the circulation of lantern slides and facsimiles, as well as travelling exhibits, made archival resources more generally available to schools and to the public at large.

Visits can work two ways. In one, teachers and students go to the archives for an introduction to the work of archives and a tour of the facilities, at which time many of the activities already described can be undertaken: viewing of slide shows and displays, listening to lectures, examination of sample documents of particular relevance to students' school-work, and so on. In the other, archives staff visit the schools, an arrangement which, if staff resources permit it, obviously relieves the pressure on archives facilities and eliminates the problem teachers sometimes face in organizing out-of-school visits.

Ian Mason of the Essex Records Office has provided a fascinating glimpse of the kind of work he does when he visits classrooms with students as young as five and as old as eighteen. Not least among his many contributions to the educational use of archives is his demolition of the myth that only secondary school students who have reached a certain age and level of maturity can usefully be involved with archival materials. When he visits schools he takes actual documents with him, not facsimiles or photographs. In his words, "There is something special about the idiosyncratic shapes of earlier forms of documents ... which is lost when photocopies or transcripts are employed." He argues that the actual document, as opposed to a replica, can have a powerful impact: "The first impression was that there is almost universal joy in being confronted with the genuine survival from the past.... For many youngsters these are the hooks, the first powerful stimuli to begin their own enquiries into the past."<sup>40</sup>

Mason uses his documents to arouse students' interest, often by using ones that illustrate some facet of the history of students' own locality, and to help explain the work of the records office and the problem it faces. He is careful to avoid a routine show-and-tell format and takes great pains to stimulate student discussion and to involve students in

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38 T.H.B. Symons, "Archives and Canadian Studies," p. 67.

39 I. Wilson, "A Noble Dream," p. 30.

40 I. Mason, "The Essex Road Show."

solving historical problems. He notes that “there is no question that the practical tasks in which the pupils are asked to participate are popular.”<sup>41</sup> Deciphering old handwriting, comparing before-and-after photographs of the same scene, seeking explanations of anomalies and discrepancies — such activities make Mason’s visits to schools far more than the standard visiting speaker lecture. What makes his visits to schools particularly effective, in his own estimation, is taking the time to ensure that the documents he takes with him will actually be used and that at least some of them deal with what students are currently studying or with some aspect of their local area.

As Mason acknowledges, the kind of work that he does is possible only because the Essex Records Office has an explicit and long-standing commitment to education and operates a “schools-service.” One cannot realistically expect already hard-pressed archives staff to take on added responsibilities which lie beyond their primary mandate. Nonetheless, as Mason himself notes, the work he does on his visits to schools can be done by teachers themselves, especially if they have some familiarity with archival materials and with the use of historical sources in the classroom. In the Canadian setting, and especially for rural teachers who live a long way from archival collections, teachers would almost certainly need help in the form of hand-outs, sample documents, and descriptions of the working of archives. To return to an earlier point, a set of slides illustrating the work of archives, and perhaps describing the passage of a document from its very first coming into existence to its being made available to researchers, could be of great assistance to teachers. There is also the precedent of the travelling exhibit used by museums which can be packaged securely and sent to schools, often without needing a member of the museum staff to accompany it, but with sufficient teaching aids and materials for a teacher to use comfortably.

#### **4. *Projects Involving Students in Archival Research***

It is not uncommon for students, usually on an individual basis, to make some use of archives, nor is it unusual for teachers to give assignments which call for some such use. Often, however, such work is not properly prepared. This creates obvious problems for archives staff, not least because archives are not designed to cope with large numbers of students — nor should they be, given that their primary obligations lie elsewhere.

It is within the bounds of possibility, however, for archives on an occasional basis, perhaps only once or twice a year, to do some work with selected groups of school students. Such work, for example, could consist of a day-long investigation of a particular problem using a pre-selected set of documents, with the students being carefully prepared before they ever reached the archives. One such project involved dividing a class of thirty students into ten groups of three, each of which worked on a different aspect of a problem and then reported their findings and combined them into a coherent whole.<sup>42</sup> Other projects have involved small numbers of students doing research which involved working in archives. Indeed, some British archives give an annual prize for the best student essay using archival research.

All such approaches depend for their success on careful preparation and close cooperation between a knowledgeable teacher and a sympathetic archivist. Topics need

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> See J.R.S. Whiting, “The Annual Gloucestershire Record Office Course for Sixth Formers,” *Teaching History* 33 (June 1982), p. 36; also G.M. Sherfield, “The Record Office and Sixth Form History,” *Teaching History* 27 (June 1980), pp. 35-36.

to be identified, documents selected, study guides produced, preparatory activities provided, and organizational arrangements made. Even at their best, such approaches can work only with very small numbers of students, since archives are not equipped to do more. The obvious alternative, therefore, if students cannot go to the archives, is for the archives to come to the students, usually in the form of teaching kits, units, or packages.

### ***5. The Production of Archives-Based Teaching Kits***

The most frequent way in which classrooms and archives have found common ground is the production of teaching packages, whether by archives, museums, educational authorities, commercial publishers, universities, teachers, or other agencies. As early as 1972 one British commentator noted that such packages, or Archives Teaching Units as they were generally called in Britain, were becoming "a new orthodoxy, a different type of textbook."<sup>43</sup> In that same year, one of the pioneers of the approach, Gordon Batho of the University of Sheffield, cautioned that their use had outstripped thinking about how to use them. However, whatever the case in Britain, such packages were accepted cautiously in Canada by teachers and never came close to replacing the textbook.

Their format is well-known: collections of facsimiles, reproductions or transcripts of a variety of sources, most often print but also including maps, pictures, advertisements, even sound recordings, all on a specific topic, often of a social or economic rather than a political nature. When produced non-commercially, by teachers or archives staffs for example, they tended to deal with local history. They made available to teachers and student copies of primary source materials on topics of interest or relevance to the school curriculum and usually at low cost. They represented an attempt to put the principles of the new history into practice.

They came essentially in two varieties, one consisting of a collection of source materials usually with explanatory comment but with no pedagogical advice for the teacher; the other consisting of a much more tightly organized set of materials accompanied by suggestions for classroom use, questions and activities for students, and an array of pedagogical advice. Marilyn Palmer has called the first "resource packs" and the second "teaching units."<sup>44</sup>

An example of the first is to be found in a pack on Durham Cathedral in which the designers comment that they "did not seek to determine how teachers ... should use the varied materials.... The individual teacher, with expert knowledge of the needs of the particular class will select from and adapt the resources as thought best."<sup>45</sup> The Jackdaw kits also follow this approach, abstaining from any pedagogical note or comment, although the Canadian publisher did find it worthwhile to issue a booklet on their use in the classroom.<sup>46</sup> The producer of "resource packs," however, left decisions about teaching to the teachers. As one British archivist put it: "Any teacher worth his salt doesn't need to

43 Cited in R.G. Wood, "Archive Units for Teaching," *Teaching History* III(9) (May 1973), pp. 41-44.

44 M. Palmer, "Using Stimulus Material" in R. Ben Jones, ed., *Practical Approaches to the New History* (London, 1973), pp. 84-108; also her "Educational Objectives and Source Materials: Some Practical Suggestions," *Teaching History* 16 (November 1976).

45 Durham County Joint Curriculum Study Group, *Durham Cathedral (Explanatory Handbook)* (Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1976).

46 G. Milburn, *Teaching with Jackdaws* (Toronto, 1972).

be told by me what use he can make of a document. Just give him the document and leave the rest to him.”<sup>47</sup>

In reality, however, the omission of any suggestions about how to use them in the classroom has proved to make the packages less useful than they could be. Many Jackdaw kits have been relegated to display material or even left to moulder in cupboards as teachers found them either impractical or too difficult to use due to their not exactly fitting with their own plans and objectives, or to their not providing multiple copies of documents, or to their not corresponding to the performance levels of students. It is increasingly the case that history and social studies are taught by non-specialists who often do not have the familiarity with the subject-matter that is needed if a “resource pack” is to be used comfortably. It is worth noting in this regard that textbook publishers are insistent upon the value of teachers’ guides and student activities to accompany textbooks and increase their sales potential. Whatever the reason, teachers apparently want help — and, of course, to provide suggestions for teaching activities does not compel teachers to use them. Some teachers will, while more confident teachers will ignore them.

More is involved in this question, however, than simply putting together a collection of materials and then designing some exercises for students. And in many cases such exercises are perfunctory at best, often poorly thought out, and achieve nothing of educational value. Educational and pedagogical considerations should guide the very selection of the materials. In looking at many of the units and packages that have been produced over the years, it is difficult to avoid the impression that more concern has been given to their historical and archival contents than to their educational usefulness. It is always easy, when designing curricula or materials for the classroom, to get carried away by a sudden enthusiasm or by the lure of some particular theme or source and to lose sight of the educational goals that are ostensibly being pursued and this seems to have happened in the production of archives teaching packages. A collection of interesting documents is certainly not to be despised — though it is sometimes forgotten that what students find interesting is not always what designers expect — but it may be useless if it is not educationally or pedagogically sound and this can create tough problems. Sometimes the best or most representative document from a historical viewpoint is not the best for teaching. As John Fines once put it, one great weakness in the use of documents in teaching “has been the over-concentration on historical sources that are in the main abstract, requiring skills of a high order, and to do with ideas and techniques that are too taxing for many pupils.”<sup>48</sup>

To be of maximum value for most teachers, archival materials should be designed not as “resource packs” but as “teaching units.” Not to do this will mean — and does mean — that they will remain on classroom shelves rather than in students’ hands. They should contain at least the following ingredients:

**(i) A Contents Page:**

- A clear outline of what is in the package and in what sequence.

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47 E.F. Lloyd, “The Use of Historical Documents in School,” *Amateur Historian* VII(2) (1966), pp. 47-52.

48 J. Fines, “Towards Some Criteria for Establishing the History Curriculum 8-13,” *Teaching History* 31 (October 1981), p. 21.

**(ii) An Introduction and Rationale:**

- An explanation of the importance of the topic of the unit;
- an explanation of its applicability to school curricula;
- an explanation of the principles underlying the particular selection of material.

**(iii) Goals and Objectives:**

- An explanation of the educational goals of the unit, especially in terms of students' knowledge, skills and values.

**(iv) Initial Activities:**

- Some suggestions as to how teachers can orient students both to the topic of the package and to the kinds of work it entails.

**(v) The Materials:**

- These should be selected in light of their interest, their importance to the topic, their level of difficulty and their potential for educationally worthwhile work — considerations which will often be in conflict and will necessitate some difficult decisions;
- the materials should be as varied as possible, including written sources, maps, pictures, statistics, artifacts, and so on;
- it will have to be decided how to avoid the problem of many existing kits which contain only one copy of each document, thus making it unnecessarily difficult for teachers working with a classroom full of students. Either every student should get a copy of the material or, more practically, there should be enough copies for students working in groups.

**(vi) Student Activities:**

- A large portion of these activities will consist of questions based upon the material contained in the unit. These questions should be pitched at a variety of levels, following, for example, the format of Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* as represented in Sanders' valuable handbook *Classroom Questions: What Kinds?*<sup>49</sup>
- questions and activities should also go beyond the cognitive in order to arouse students' sense of curiosity and imagination. It is dangerously easy for the new history to become simply a kind of applied detective work. Marilyn Palmer is right to say that "it is vital to guard against the document approach becoming just another exercise in comprehension and ignoring the imaginative impact that such material can have."<sup>50</sup>
- questions and activities should also allow for students to make a personal contribution to the topic, for example by encouraging open-ended, intuitive, and interpretive reactions and judgement. To use the language of pedagogy, they must be divergent as well as convergent. As Gordon Batho puts it, "experience has shown that the best results come when students are given the maximum

49 B.S. Bloom *et al.*, *A Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: I. The Cognitive Domain* (New York, 1956); N.M. Sanders, *Classroom Questions: What Kinds?* (New York, 1966).

50 M. Palmer, "Using Stimulus Material," p. 98.

freedom to make their own historical judgements at their own levels and at leisure from a critical appraisal of the sources.”<sup>51</sup>

(vii) **Bibliography:**

- The unit should include a list of related materials, both print and non-print, for the use of both teachers and students.

(viii) **Packaging:**

- The unit should be packaged attractively, for experience has shown that students today do respond to format and appearance as well as to content;
- since the unit is intended for classroom use it should also be packaged sturdily and practically.

It will no doubt be thought that these eight components are too obvious to be worth stating and that here is yet another example of how those who write on education love to elaborate the obvious. In fact, it is remarkable how often the units and packages that have been produced ignore one or more of them, thus diminishing, and sometimes destroying, the value of a potentially useful idea on which someone has spent a good deal of time and effort. Moreover, this list should not be seen as a rigid prescription of step-by-step procedures but rather as a checklist of items that should be attended to.

To put all this another way: archives teaching units are about teaching as well as about archives and need to be designed in cooperation with teachers or educational specialists. The production of such units should be a collaborative enterprise involving those who possess the necessary expertise in teaching and materials design, in the historical content, and in the source materials. Ideally one can envisage a team of teachers, historians, and archivists. The task would make an appropriate project for a history teachers group, a course in education, or for a department of education. One such project was recently undertaken by Queen’s University Archives which involved the production of slide/sound kits dealing with local history topics for use with schools and community groups. Under the supervision of the University Archivist, students who had completed their university degrees were hired and given the necessary archival and research training, funded by a Canada Works grant.<sup>52</sup>

## **6. Using Students to Identify and Select Material**

To this point, this paper has dealt with ways in which archives and archivists can have an impact upon the classroom. It is also possible to reverse this procedure so that classrooms can be of some assistance to archivists. When teachers give their students projects which call for genuinely original research — no matter how limited in scale — rather than simply rehashing what has already been written, it sometimes happens that they uncover materials previously unknown which may well be of interest to archivists. Some teachers get their students working on family history, local history, or the history of their school and in the process students can unearth photographs, letters, school and other records which no one knew still existed and which could be placed in the archives.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> The best place to discover what archives teaching units have been produced is to look through the back issues of *Teaching History* which used to feature a regular review article on them and which also mentioned many of them separately. See also H. Taylor, “Clio in the Raw: Archival Materials in the Teaching of History,” *The American Archivist*, 35 (1972), pp. 317-30.

Similarly, as has been done in Saskatchewan, students can be involved in oral history projects in which the taped interviews are deposited in a local or provincial archives. Given that one is working with students, the results will be inevitably uneven, and such projects obviously require careful preparation and organization, but they can generate material which simply would not be gathered in any other way.

Perhaps the single most fruitful avenue for this kind of cooperation between classrooms and archives is in the area of school histories and records. Educational history has been revolutionized in the last ten or twenty years as it has ceased to be a version of educational hagiography and became instead a branch of social and cultural history. It has now reached a point where its concepts and assumptions need to be applied at the local level so that we can see what happened in schools and classrooms. For this one needs evidence, be it in the form of attendance registers, inspection reports, school newspapers and year books, principals' diaries and memoranda, school regulations or other documents. Much of this type of material has disappeared as schools are closed, as filing cabinets are cleaned out, as space is made for this and that. As a result it can be and often is singularly frustrating to try to investigate the history of a particular school or school system. Despite the loss of much valuable material, however, much remains, often put away in cupboards and store-rooms and long forgotten. This is where student projects in school history can be rewarding and from time to time turn up material of potential archival interest. In any event, one advantage of establishing links between archives and classrooms is that students, once they are aware of the possibilities, can be looking out for archival material.

### ***7. The Formation of School-Based Archives***

Often, of course, this type of student activity will not lead to the discovery of material of interest to a provincial or local archive, but, in such cases, there is no reason why it should not lead to the development of a school-based archive. Just as some teachers organize natural science or local history museums in their classrooms, so one could organize a school archive which would contain many of the ephemera that are of little interest to archivists but which in a generation or two could be of considerable interest to students and perhaps even to researchers: sports day and concert programmes, tests and examinations, study guides and textbooks, administrative memoranda and bulletins, report cards and school rules — such things are rarely preserved and yet they are invaluable when one wishes to build a picture of school and classroom life.

This is perhaps not of direct concern to archivists, though they could provide useful advice and they would surely welcome any activity that helps to make students aware of the need for and value of archives and preservation. A school archive would not necessarily be a particularly professional affair, though there is no inherent reason why it could not attain a reasonable standard, but this would not be its main purpose. The intent is not to train little archivists but develop in students a sensitivity to the importance of archives and, in the process, to accumulate a record which will be of interest and use to teachers and students in the future. It certainly offers a linkage between archivists and schools to the mutual benefit of both.

### ***8. The Establishment of Organizational Linkages Between Teachers and Archivists***

All of the activities described in this paper depend to some extent on the existence of solid links between archivists and teachers and others in the educational system — links which

do not appear to have been established in many parts of Canada. Most provinces have organizations of history or social science teachers which organize conferences and workshops, publish newsletters and journals and, in some cases, support or sponsor the publication of classroom materials. These organizations are often connected with university departments of history, education, and related subjects but not, it seems, with archivists. In this connection, it is instructive to compare the journal of Anglophone Canadian history teachers with its English counterpart. The first, *The History and Social Science Teacher*, includes many articles which deal with aspects of the new history — the use of documents, of student-centred teaching methods, of curriculum organization, and the rest — but has almost nothing about archives and their educational role and next to nothing written by archivists themselves. The English journal, *Teaching History*, which has been much used in the preparation of this paper, frequently features articles on the use of archives, some by teachers, and some by archivists. Canadian teachers, in short, have not made much use of the potential of archives for teaching, nor have archivists done much to influence the work of teachers and schools, though there are some exceptions. There is much to be gained if all interested in the state of history and social studies — be they teachers, researchers, archivists, or others — can work together to correct this state of affairs.

### **What is to Be Done?**

It seems appropriate in a paper of this sort to go beyond general exhortations to consider, albeit briefly, some specific courses of action, for, if the general task is to establish linkages between archives and classrooms, the problem remains how best to do it. Two questions emerge so far as such linkages are concerned: with whom and how? Regarding the first of these questions there are four groups who are worth contacting: specialist organizations of history or social science teachers; those working in teacher training institutions who are involved in the training of history and social science teachers; history and social science curriculum consultants at the school based level, where they exist; and provincial or territorial curriculum consultants with ministries or departments of education. Once personal contacts have been established, there are many things that can be done to make them enduring and effective:

- archivists should get themselves on the mailing lists of people and organizations involved in history and social science education;
- conversely, archivists should include such groups in the mailing list of relevant archival publications;
- archives staffs could be represented on appropriate curriculum committees, advisory groups, specialist teacher organizations, and so on;
- archivists should contact the professional development staff of teachers' federations in order to become part of the network of resource people and givers of in-service programmes;
- archivists could work out in-service programmes which would be made available to teachers;
- archivists could approach any of the four groups mentioned above to explore the possibility of joint projects, such as the production of archives-based teaching units. To take only an example, teachers who are taking graduate courses in education are often



looking for activities which would meet the requirements of their course work while also being of practical use in the classroom: such teachers, experienced and working in classrooms, would be ideal participants in such projects.

Beyond all this, there is much potential in organizing seminars and conferences to explore the possibilities of such activities, in the same way that this paper originated in a request to participate in the Annual Conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists. Such gatherings can be a useful catalyst to action.

More specifically, proposals can be drawn up, preferably through joint action between archivists and teachers, for particular projects. Archives teaching units have already been mentioned as one possibility. Two others are of particular interest: one, the production of multi-media kits for use in schools explaining the role and operation of archives and, two, formats for arranging for students to undertake specific projects using archives or, alternatively, for archives staff to visit schools. Such projects would, of course, require funding, though not in huge amounts, and it may be that departments or ministries of education, teacher organizations, and even universities (for instance, through outreach or academic development funds) could provide the necessary moneys. So far as personnel are concerned, there are four obvious sources: education students; teachers taking graduate courses; teachers who like to have some involvement in professionally-related work outside the classroom; and retired teachers who all too often are ignored once their active career is over and whose experience goes for nought. None of this would put a very heavy drain on archival resources, except for some allocation of staff time, but it may be that archives could find personnel and funds to devote to education. The obvious point of comparison is museums, which have been able to organize very useful and effective departments of education, extension and school-liaison. Obviously, museums and archives have different mandates, but they are not totally exclusive and there is much to be learned from the work done in museum education.

Finally, it would be extremely useful to have an inventory of the kinds of activities undertaken, materials produced, and people available, in archives-based educational activity around the country. Anyone who looks at the literature describing such activity will be struck by how fragmented it is. They will also very quickly be struck by the amount of activity that never does get documented in any publicly available forum. It is almost certain that everything described in this paper has been done, in one form or another, somewhere in Canada, but often with the knowledge only of those directly involved. Perhaps, for example, it is possible for a journal such as *The History and Social Science Teacher* or *Archivaria*, or both, to run a regular feature describing the educational work of archives.

All the activities described or recommended in this paper would represent a response to Professor Symons' call for archives "to undertake projects aimed at achieving a better and wider utilization of archival resources"<sup>53</sup> and fall squarely within the Canadian tradition which sees archives not simply as depositories of records, but, to use Ian Wilson's words, as "an active cultural agency interacting with the community around it."<sup>54</sup> To return to the idea with which this paper began, archivists should be more than historians or records-managers — there is an important role awaiting them as educators.

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53 T.H.B. Symons, "Archives and Canadian Studies," p. 66.

54 I. Wilson, "A Noble Dream," p. 16.