Studies in Documents

Subgroup vs. Series Arrangement: The William Irvine Papers

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The arrangement and description of the William Irvine Papers was undertaken as a project in partial fulfilment of requirements for a Master of Library Science degree at the University of Alberta during the fall and winter of 1984-85. Donated to the Provincial Archives of Alberta by Anthony Mardiros, Irvine's biographer,[1] the collection consists of a wide variety of personal papers, photographs, and memorabilia, as well as a substantial quantity of minutes, reports, and financial statements that at first viewing appeared to be official records of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). Modest in size (2.4 metres), but sufficiently complex to offer a challenge, the collection seemed an ideal vehicle through which a student might be initiated into the procedures of archival arrangement. As it happened, the processing of the Irvine Papers occasioned a close examination of archival principles in the light of their application to the task at hand.

The Survey

It was clear from the beginning that the papers were in considerable disorder and that original order might well be difficult, if not impossible, to determine. That the attempt should be made, however, was suggested by the importance of William Irvine in the history of Canadian politics,[2] and in the apparent presence of Alberta CCF papers that had found their way into what otherwise appeared to be the private papers of William Irvine. Though not fugitive archives, the CCF papers, substantial quantities of assorted minutes, briefs, and publications, were nevertheless documents pertaining as much to an organization as to an individual. In the interests of future CCF, as well as Irvine scholarship, it was imperative that the final arrangement not obscure any aspect of the relevance of the documents.

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1 Anthony Mardiros, *William Irvine: The Life of a Prairie Radical* (Toronto, 1979), p. iv.
2 William Irvine, 1885-1962, played a significant role in Canadian politics for nearly fifty years. During a total of eighteen years in Parliament beginning in 1921, he was a pioneer advocate of the eight-hour working day, old age pensions, and abolition of the death penalty; a champion of public ownership and control of banks, and the struggle against monopolies. One of the radical "Ginger Group," he was a co-founder of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in 1933, and from 1935 to 1945, a major proponent of its economic and social philosophies in *The People's Weekly*, and numerous pamphlets. During the Cold War, Irvine urged coexistence with the Soviet Union, and despite widespread disapproval, visited Russia in 1956 and China in 1961.

A very detailed survey was undertaken. The papers were examined, file by file, and notes made concerning the types, origins, authorship, condition, and contents of the documents, and their inclusive dates where these could easily be determined. No attempt at physical rearrangement, even of documents within files, was undertaken at this stage. Since it was possible that the filing sequences themselves contained valuable clues to the origin and significance of the documents, it was important that neither the proximity of documents within files, nor files within sequences be disturbed at this stage.

Only gradually did the degree of disorder become apparent. Not only were document types distributed throughout the collection with no chronological or subject sequence in evidence, but most often there was little relationship to be found even among documents within files. Letters were found with minutes of five years before, articles together with clippings and tear sheets unrelated in time and subject matter. Documents had strayed between files and underneath files; many of the clippings and all of Irvine's typescripts were undated, and the number of fragments — first, last and other pages of corres-pondence, minutes, and notes — soon became alarming. The use of file cards was abandoned and long foolscap substituted for notetaking. The survey, which had been intended as a file level survey, frequently became an item by item survey, and proved to be the most time-consuming part of the project.

Persistence was rewarded, however, by the occasional clue to provenance and sugges-tions that order had once existed. Some of the minutes were heavily annotated, not only by Irvine, but by others. Among the annotations were occasional directions: "File in executive minutes!" These were duly noted, and would eventually, especially when in Irvine's hand, be followed to the letter. A loose leaf binder marked "Board and executive minutes '57-58" in fact contained minutes from 1959 to 1962. Unlike the other minutes, they were filed in two separate chronological sequences, "Board" and "Executive," in conscientious secretarial fashion, with the latest on top. Among them, original typescripts interspersed with carbons and mimeographed copies, was one very recent typescript beginning "Original on file at Glenbow."

Mardiros, Irvine's biographer and latest owner of the papers, had provided a clue to their provenance in the "Acknowledgements" to his book. He had acknowledged three archival repositories as well as Delia Irvine, Irvine's widow. But he had also acknowl-edged that "special thanks are due to Ernie Cook, the late Floyd Johnson and to Nellie and Roy Peterson."[3]

That many of these records had been created at the Alberta CCF headquarters, Woodsworth House at 10140-107 Street in Edmonton, to which most of the corres-pondence was addressed, there was no doubt. But clearly they had been assembled from many sources. Indeed, they were the Irvine papers only to the extent that they were Alberta CCF papers of Irvine's colleagues and such materials as Irvine himself had retained and was working on at the time of his death.

A great deal was missing. There was little, except such isolated pieces of memorabilia with which Mrs. Irvine had been persuaded to part, that could positively be dated earlier than 1940. There was the "fragment of autobiography" which Mardiros had mentioned in his "Author's Note,"[4] but almost nothing of the "Ginger Group" period or Irvine's

3   Mardiros, p. iii.
4   *Ibid.*, p. iv.

early years in Parliament. Nor, for that matter, is there anything of his non-partisan years in Calgary as editor of *The Nutcracker*, the *Alberta Non-Partisan*, and then the *Western Independent*.[5] Some of the bundles of handwritten notes, speaking notes, or writing notes, on various sizes and colours of notepaper and card, echoed the war and post-war issues of 1914-18, but they could have been written much later. The typescripts, many again dealing with issues of war and its aftermath, suggested little material earlier than 1935. The correspondence, much of it Irvine's, but also the correspondence of Nellie Peterson, CCF Provincial Secretary, was distributed throughout the collection in files covering two year periods at most, often overlapping and beginning properly only in 1944.

The survey complete, it was now necessary to address the question to what extent did the present state of the collection represent provenance and original order. In Gracy's words, it was necessary "to be certain an apparent disorder" did not "conceal a complicated, but precise, arrangement."[6]

The distribution of types of documents throughout the collection suggested the distinct possibility that the collection was a collection quite literally, and represented the contributions of various individuals, grouped consecutively by Mardiros. The overlapping dates in the correspondence files and the presence of duplicate minutes suggested this strongly. The frequent lack of chronological sequence among files, however, even among minutes and correspondence in homogeneous files, suggested something quite different. While it is certainly true that "individuals tend to live their lives chronologically," as the manuscript curators Bordin and Warner have pointed out,[7] it does not follow that they file their records in the same way, or in any other way that is necessarily intentional or meaningful. It was evident, moreover, that the individuals approached by Mardiros for information relating to William Irvine had with the best of intentions simply raided their own store of documents, leaving order and meaning to Mardiros in the most literal and trusting fashion.

If the collection represented groups of files contributed by various individuals, then it was impossible to discern where one contribution ended and the next began. If it contained evidence and information concerning the activities of William Irvine and the Alberta CCF, then this evidence and information was fragmented and obscure. While the state of the collection reflected its provenance, its overall order was unintelligible and would have to be abandoned in the interest of availability for research. It was determined that such original order as had revealed itself at the file and item levels would be respected, and accommodated within a new, imposed arrangement.

Intellectual control had of necessity begun with humility, that is, from the bottom up, with a file and more often document level survey. Physical control, by contrast, would have to be undertaken from the top down, that is, with the arrangement of record groups or subgroups into series and subseries, and these into file units — all in keeping with Holmes' five levels of archival arrangement.[8] It was apparent from the presence of many fragments and heterogeneous files, however, that if surviving original order was to be respected, arrangement could not, even now, be accomplished by a simple physical

5   *Ibid.*, pp. 35-83.
6   David B. Gracy II, *Archives & Manuscripts: Arrangement & Description* (Chicago, 1977), p. 8.
7   Ruth B. Bordin and Robert M. Warner, *The Modern Manuscript Library* (New York, 1966), p. 44.
8   Oliver W. Holmes, "Archival Arrangement — Five Operations at Five Different Levels," *American Archivist* 27 (1964), pp. 21-42.

"sorting" in the manner of Bordin and Warner, and Gracy's curator.[9] Though minutes had referred to attachments, many of these had long since become separated; though file folders had stated and even listed what was once their contents, only rarely, now, did contents conform to labels. The arrangement was undertaken with the notes that had resulted from the survey, a pair of scissors and a large roll of tape. The documents remained, still unmoved, within their files.

First Arrangement: Subgroup/Office of Origin

The Papers of William Irvine represented organic activity from three sources: the CCF, William Irvine, and Anthony Mardiros. These were undoubtedly the major divisions of the collection, the entire collection corresponding with the "record group or subgroup" of Holmes' five levels. " 'Record group' and 'collection' describe equivalent units," Gracy has written. In addition, he has redefined Schellenberg's three kinds of manuscript collections: (1) organic collections — "either papers of individuals or records of organizations," (2) collective collections — containing "both papers and records within one manuscript group, as occurs when the records of a company include the papers of a founder, or vice versa," and (3) artificial collections — collections of materials without common origin, accumulated for their intrinsic or other value.[10] Clearly, the Irvine papers were a "collective" collection, including as they did, both the papers of an individual and the records of an organization.

Gracy had warned of the possible presence of subgroups, even within manuscript collections, and even within the papers of individuals. Subgroups, by Gracy's definition, could consist of the records of "a primary subordinate administrative unit" and could be "established for related bodies of records ... delimited in terms of functional, geographical, or chronological relationships." Furthermore, they could be "divided into as many levels ... as will assist in grouping series entries in terms of their relationships."[11]

William Irvine had many times served as President of the Alberta CCF and had also contested Saskatchewan and British Columbia ridings. His influence had been not only provincial, but national. Communications to and from such figures as M.J. Coldwell, T.C. Douglas, David Lewis, Lorne Ingle, Stanley Knowles, and Hazen Argue, and numerous briefs and memoranda from the national CCF office, all interspersed throughout the collection, testified eloquently to this. Was it possible that those of the Irvine Papers that were CCF papers formed "subgroups" to what in the most perfect of archival worlds would be the archives of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation? Almost certainly this was the case.

In addition to Gracy's complex and somewhat ambiguous definition, there was Richard Berner's distinction between subgroups and series. Concerned with practices that led to item rather than collective description, Berner charged that Gracy had confused subgroups with series in that he advised the arrangement of series before subgrouping, thereby dispersing subgroups among series. Groups and subgroups, said Berner, were record creating agencies, and related to provenance. Series, on the other hand, expressed only the way the materials were filed, and depended on original order. Gracy's procedure, Berner maintained, as Schellenberg's before him, ran counter to Holmes, who had urged that

9   Bordin and Warner, pp. 40-41; Gracy, p. 9.
10   Gracy, p. 5; T.R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York, 1965), pp. 174-75.
11   Gracy, p. 6.

"once all series are assigned to record groups and subgroups ... the archivist looks within the group or subgroups and works out a logical arrangement sequence for the series so assigned." The first step, said Berner, was to determine the origin of series, and group them by their parentage.[12]

The arrangement of the Irvine Papers proceeded with the idea of delimiting the roles of the Alberta CCF within the national CCF context, and the role of Irvine within the Alberta section. Provenance would now be applied, not in its manuscript sense, that is to say the previous owners of the papers, but in its archival sense. Provenance became the office of origin.

Predictably, it was the Mardiros material that emerged most easily. Consisting of Mardiros' correspondence and photocopies gathered from various repositories, all dated after Irvine's death, this was documentation of Mardiros' own research, and would be placed at the end of the collection to provide aid and enlightenment to other Irvine and CCF scholars. A moment's pause was provided by the Mardiros "minutes," a few type-scripts and many photocopies for which originals, or certainly record copies existed in the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, and possibly in other repositories. These would be compared to the other minutes of more direct CCF origin in an effort to construct complete sets of CCF minutes. Though it was evident that Alberta CCF minutes were held at the Glenbow-Alberta Institute in Calgary, the presence here of a few originals and heavily annotated mimeographed copies suggested that the Glenbow collection could not be complete, at least not insofar as the provincial, or Irvine, office was concerned. More than likely, the Glenbow collection pertained more directly to the Calgary Constituency Association, a lesser denomination on the CCF hierarchy.

Attention was now turned to Irvine's writings. There were two copies, one in manu-script and one a clean typescript carbon, of *Live or Die with Russia*, which had been published privately in 1958. And there were many drafts of chapters for a book first called "Democracy at Home," and then "Democracy — Fact or Fiction?" These emerged from no less than thirteen files, distributed among three of the eight boxes, and would ultimately fill an entire box all on their own. A table of contents and other assorted pieces of front matter, accompanied by a signed but unmailed query to Harvest House Pub-lishers, dated September 1962, revealed that this had been Irvine's last book, and had remained unpublished.

Much more problematic were the many typescripts and bundles of handwritten notes distributed among some forty files and seven boxes, and totalling an undetermined number of centimetres. A few speeches and broadcasts were easily identified and dated. A "Parliament Hill Series" of broadcasts, all dated in 1947, had apparently been delivered from Ottawa while Irvine was CCF member for Cariboo. Mimeographed copies of the odd "Presidential Address" could, with a little research and ingenuity, be reconciled with the appropriate Alberta CCF convention minutes. Eulogies for Jessie and Wallace Archibald, an introduction of M.J. Coldwell, and another of Elmer Roper could perhaps find a place among Irvine's CCF activities.

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12   Richard C. Berner, *Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: a Historical Analysis* (Seattle, 1983), pp. 60-62, 67-69. See also: "Arrangement and Description: Some Historical Observations," *American Archivist* 41 no. 2 (April, 1978), pp. 178-79.

But what of the rest? Could Irvine's journalistic career be separated from his political career? Certainly not as easily as a few poetic and dramatic efforts that had been relegated to the "personal" category. Could the material be dated? Probably not without time-consuming comparison with sources outside the collection. In addition, the presence of some typescript originals rather than carbons suggested the possibility that much of this material had not in fact seen publication. The many drafts of Irvine's last, just finished book, in comparison with the single clean copy of *Live or Die with Russia* and the total absence of any obvious draft versions of his many earlier books and pamphlets suggested that Irvine had been in the habit of discarding working copies once a finished product was safely in print. Or, did the many drafts of the last book, typescript interspersed with manuscript, represent earlier works in the process of being recycled? The series having been identified, the problem of ordering — and assigning — Irvine's many writings was temporarily abandoned, and attention turned to the promising CCF "subgroups."

Minutes emerged in four categories, one of them national. Many had at one time been attached to financial statements and various committee reports. Other materials of more heterogeneous nature now fell with varying degrees of success into "national" and "provincial" divisions, depending upon office of origin. "New Party" materials, consisting of pamphlets, briefs, press releases, reports, and clippings, came in both national and provincial varieties. These testified to the transition from Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) to New Democratic Party (NDP) between 1958 and 1961. Other miscellaneous topical briefs and press releases of obviously national origin were so assigned. A sequence of topical files, neatly labelled "Social Credit," containing pamphlets, clippings, and a few handwritten notes, fell easily into the provincial category. More difficult to assign were files apparently assembled by Mardiros, dealing with various elections and CCF organizational matters. All but two seemed to pertain exclusively to Alberta. These two, labelled "Saskatchewan election file" and "Cariboo speeches," now began to cast doubt on the whole notion of subgroups.

Irvine had contested a seat unsuccessfully in Saskatchewan in 1936, and won the British Columbia federal riding in 1945.[13] But why, then, was the Irvine "itinerary" in Saskatchewan dated twenty years later, in 1956, and why were most of Irvine's "Cariboo speeches" titled "Broadcast by M. Sekora"? Clearly, Irvine had both written and campaigned for others, and done so beyond Alberta, but surely this spoke more eloquently of Irvine himself than of his political party, or any of its branches.

The only official materials relating specifically to either Saskatchewan or British Columbia were five pages of British Columbia executive committee minutes, dated 14 September 1946, and two undated leaflets from Saskatchewan. A file marked "B.C. letters" contained less than twenty letters, variously dated, that could only be described as personal fan mail, and were inconsequential to any CCF office. They belonged in the correspondence sequence, which was altogether too small to warrant subdivision of any kind. Another Saskatchewan file, marked "Civil Rights — Criminal Code Amendments," contained a copy of Bill 93 — Revision of the Criminal Code, materials concerning this and other civil rights issues, and a letter confirming Irvine's keynote address to a "Civil rights Institute" to be held in Regina, 9-15 February 1954. In short, there were no British Columbia or Saskatchewan subgroups. There was only evidence and information relating

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13   Mardiros, pp. 276-77.

to election campaigns, and a reference file on civil rights that only incidentally provided knowledge of Irvine's presence at a conference.

The Cariboo broadcasts and Saskatchewan election file were eventually placed in a "Campaign/organizational" series that included CCF briefing materials of various kinds: "How to Start a CCF Club," *Speakers' Notes*, and summaries of election "issues." The civil rights file became the basis of a set of topical reference files largely made up of annotated publications and clippings relating to specific issues or events that could easily be dated and filed chronologically. Both sequences were assigned to the Irvine "subgroup," although they also contained materials of national, Alberta, and other CCF origins.

The proposed arrangement was complete, but less than satisfactory. (See Appendix 1.) Most disturbing was the resultant overlap of evidence and information of Irvine's activities with evidence and information of CCF activity in the Correspondence and Campaign/ organizational series. In addition, the national CCF "subgroup" was altogether too unsubstantial, both in time and size, to stand alone. The unhappy result was that "New Party" files, reference files, and publication files had become distributed relatives. They each occurred more than once in the scheme, and Gracy had said that series should be mutually exclusive.[14]

Second Arrangement: Subgroup/Office of Origin

Upon consultation, manuscript archivist Keith Stotyn and project supervisor Gloria Strathern suggested that the situation might be improved by placing the Correspondence at the beginning, and reversing the positions of the National and Provincial series. "These are the Irvine Papers," they pointed out — more so, it was implied, than they were CCF Archives. This was only too apparent, and the suggestions were immediately adopted (See Appendix 2).

The solution was not much more than cosmetic, however. It did not address the distribution of similar materials, nor the disturbing truth that many of the Correspondence and the Campaign/organizational files could as easily belong to either the Alberta or the Irvine "subgroup." Was it possible that the whole notion of subgroups had been an illusion, and that the procedure of subgrouping had served not to reveal the evidential and informational values of the papers, but instead had seriously obscured them?

Not until the actual physical rearrangement of the papers began did the full consequences of subgrouping before arranging series become apparent. Much of the Correspondence, once assembled and examined more closely, proved to be the correspondence of Nellie Peterson, Provincial Secretary. Though she had often acted for Irvine, she had also acted on her own, especially with regard to the Calgary Constituency Association. Irvine's correspondence with Coldwell, Douglas, Lewis, Ingle, Knowles, and Argue, while interspersed throughout the chronological sequence, was largely perfunctory and fraternal in nature. Little that suggested a structured reporting pattern, such as one would anticipate from a "primary subordinate administrative unit,"[15] emerged. Whether by virtue of his personality, or by the nature of the organization in which he held office, Irvine had undeniably been his own man.

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14   Gracy, p. 9.
15   *Ibid.*, p. 6.

The minutes of the National Council and Executive meetings also proved instructive. Irvine had been present at only two of the twenty-three meetings documented between 1956 and 1960, and then only as Alberta representative. Though he had been a founding member of the national party, and the organizer and later president of its Alberta section, there was no evidence that he had ever held office in the national CCF. Upon examination of the many national briefs and press releases, it was discovered that their dates frequently coincided with the dates of elections. Now their significance became clear. Like the national minutes, variously folded but rarely annotated, they had been received as information from the national office and filed for reference as needed. They belonged more properly in the Campaign/organizational series. Similarly, the "New Party" files belonged together, the national consisting largely of printed information, the provincial documenting, in the form of committee minutes and reports, Alberta objections to the "New Party" platform.

The Alberta CCF, it was now clear, formed a subgroup to the national CCF in name and by definition only. Functionally, the relationship between the two offices, in the context of the Irvine Papers at least, had proved remote. The Irvine office, conversely, had proved virtually inseparable from the CCF Alberta section. The bulk of Irvine's writings, largely statements of social and economic theory, had defied the effort to discriminate between official and other categories, except, as with presidential addresses, on the basis of occasion.

Only as the functional relationships between files, and then file sequences became clear, did it become possible to group them. What emerged were not subgroups, however, but series. In the words of Berner's clarification of Holmes, "At the upper level arrangement is on the basis of record-creating activity, while at the lower level it relates to file order within the record group and subgroups."[16]

Final Arrangement: Series/Type of Activity

"The series level is the most important one in arrangement," Gracy had written, "because here the archivist expresses the character of the group or collection by the divisions made of it." The series, furthermore, is "the most interesting and challenging archival unit" because "concern for original order first surfaces on the series level and there exerts its strongest influence."[17] This, indeed, was exactly what it had done. The contents of those few files and sequences that were complete or understandable, indeed the very physical condition of the papers had testified to their relationships. The national minutes and New Party files, having been less frequently consulted, belonged after their Alberta section counterparts, not before. The Correspondence, and the heterogeneous Campaign/ organization files belonged both to Irvine and the provincial office — as, most probably, did the reference files, and certainly the writings. The proper order of the Irvine Papers was neither order by previous owner nor order by office of origin. The order of the Irvine Papers was the order that most efficiently revealed Irvine's activities and concerns. Irvine, not the surviving CCF records, was now the focus of the arrangement.

Series emerged by type and relation to activity. As Schellenberg has advised, "If series cannot be established on the basis of record type, an archivist should group into series

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16   Berner, *Archival Theory and Practice*, p. 60.
17   *Ibid*, p. 8.

records that have their origin in a particular activity or transaction."[18] Files that were heterogeneous in document type, but collocated by virtue of an issue or event, were retained or reconciled, and assigned to series or subseries accordingly. Individual isolated documents and fragments now found their way into files, also by virtue of an issue or event, and occasionally, by date. The new arrangement was better. (See Appendix 3) Distributed relatives were virtually nonexistent, and Irvine's organizational affiliations were subsumed in his activities and concerns.

Filing was chronological, although this presented a problem with Irvine's many type-scripts and handwritten notes. As Schellenberg predicted, "The logic for creating a series on an activity or transaction requires that the items within the series, or within its parts, should be arranged in an order that will reflect the sequence of action, i.e. chronological order."[19] But Irvine's writings were more difficult to date. His titles were repetitive, and even his most journalistic statements expressed more of theory than events. His hand-written notes testified eloquently to his reputation for spontaneous oratory. Though sometimes in outline form, they consisted largely of disjointed aphoristic phrases.

Subject ordering, the least recommended method of archival arrangement, was briefly considered. Where subject order existed elsewhere in the collection, it had represented the original order of files apparently assembled for reference purposes by Irvine or his secretary, and occasionally by Mardiros. Except for what were clearly successive drafts of numbered and titled book chapters, however, no topical continuity could be found within the large, amorphous bundles of typescripts and notes. While topical rearrangement would possibly have resulted in smaller units, the subject access so supplied would have collocated documents far removed in time and only distantly similar in matter. Comparison with Irvine articles and columns in *The People's Weekly* revealed that Irvine had written concerning a "New Party" as early as 1936, and proclaimed that "Russia leads the Way" even in 1941, at least fifteen years before his Russian tour and publication of *Live or Die with Russia*. No matter how specific the topics supplied, such rearrangement would have created misleading relationships simply by accident of language, and des-troyed irretrievably whatever chronology the existing order represented.

Since the bulk of the collection was divided into series and subseries by type of material, it was only reasonable that any further subdivision should also be done by type of material. "Archivists and curators," Gracy had written, "try to avoid establishing within any group or collection, series from more than one system — chronology, topics, or types of material. Such combination creates more than one proper place for some documents."[20] After careful examination, the bundles were divided into more manageable file units by genre, as exhibited by stylistic conventions of the documents. "Articles," "columns," and "notes" were further subdivisible by Irvine's pseudonymous by-lines;[21] by titles, either of very lengthy documents, or successive versions of the same document; and only then by topic. Filing was again chronological, though many files could only be given broad inclusive dates.

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18 Schellenberg, p. 185.
19 *Ibid.*, p. 196.
20 Gracy, p. 10.
21 See Mardiros, p. 229, for a discussion of Irvine's use of pseudonyms.

Description

In keeping with established procedure at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, a descriptive commentary, including a statement of provenance, a biographical sketch of Irvine and an outline of the collection, was now prepared and added as an introduction to what had finally become a complete file level inventory. Upon review, "see also" references were added for a few files that were closely related intellectually, but physically distant by virtue of provenance or original order. The Mardiros series included photocopies of Irvine correspondence found in other repositories, for example, necessitating cross references with the Correspondence series.

Cards filed in the integrated public catalogue would serve as an index to the inventory. A main entry card was prepared under "Irvine, William," and additional entries made for the Alberta CCF and *The People's Weekly*, for which significant records also existed in the collection. An entry under "Political parties — Alberta" would signal that the collection included materials that commented on other political parties. Individuals were accorded additional entries only if their names occurred frequently in the collection and were likely to be sought in connections other than their affiliation with Irvine or the Alberta CCF. Elmer E. Roper was better known as a mayor of Edmonton than as an Alberta CCF official, and T.C. Douglas was a national figure with Saskatchewan rather than Alberta CCF affiliation. The William Irvine Papers were available for research.

Subgroup vs. Series Arrangement

The processing of the Irvine Papers had proceeded with caution, but not without difficulty. A preliminary survey had established that the collection contained both the papers of an individual and the records of a group. This and known factors of Irvine's life suggested that the collection might lend itself to subgroup arrangement. But subgrouping brought unexpected results. Provenance proved misleading when applied as an arrangement principle. Order by previous owner was impossible to establish in a collection that was in disarray even at the document level. Order by office of origin caused the fragmentation and distribution of related materials, and resulted in ambiguities that served to obscure rather than reveal evidence and information. Only when attention was turned to the functional relationships between documents and files, did clearly exclusive filing sequences emerge, and did it become possible to group them. The file sequences that eventually came together did so by virtue of similarity in type or activity, not origin — dictating that the proper overall arrangement of the collection was a series, not a subgroup arrangement.

It is perhaps of passing theoretical interest that by Gracy's definition of subgroups, the final divisions of the Irvine Collection (Appendix 3) might as easily be called subgroups as series, since as Berner has pointed out, Gracy's concept of subgroups allows subject and functional divisions as well as division by origin.[22] Only by Berner's distinction between subgroups and series, which ties subgroups to origin and series to file order, is the final arrangement a series arrangement.

Of more practical interest is that the final arrangement is the one which most clearly and unambiguously displays the contents of the collection. The test, as with any taxonomical exercise, is in the absence of distributed relatives. The divisions made of a collection

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22   Berner, *Archival Theory and Practice*, pp. 67-68; Gracy, pp. 5-6.

should be mutually exclusive, so that files and file sequences have only one proper place in the scheme, and can be described without ambiguity. It follows that the most satisfactory arrangement will be the arrangement which displays the fewest distributed relatives. It was in the distribution of clearly similar and related materials that the inappropriateness of order by origin was revealed.

Unfortunately, there appears to be no easy formula for predicting the appearance of distributed relatives before the fact. In their defiance of subgroup arrangement, the Irvine Papers demonstrated the degree to which the nature of records dictates the procedures that should be applied. But the relevant procedures were found only by trial and error, and attention to the ambiguities generated by inappropriate divisions. Given the uniqueness of manuscript collections, the subgroup vs. series dilemma remains a constant in the life of the manuscript archivist.

APPENDIX 1
First Arrangement: Subgroup/Office of Origin

National CCF
    Minutes (Council & Executive) 1956-1960
    "New Party" publications & reports 1958-1961
    Miscellaneous reports & releases 1945-1956

Alberta CCF
    Minutes (Convention, Board & Executive) [1939]-1962
    People's Weekly editorial policy c. 1951-52
    "New Party" committee minutes & reports 1960-1961
    Publications [1934]-1962

William Irvine
    Correspondence 1926-1962
    Campaign/organizational files [1947]-1958
    Writings:
        Articles, columns, notes, etc. [1917]-1962
        Book manuscripts 1957-1962
    Subject reference files c. 1917-[1961]
    Publications [1934]-1962
    Memorabilia [1915]-1962

Mardiros Research Files
    Correspondence 1962-1973
    Photocopies & transcriptions (of records dated) 1917-1958
    Clippings & publications 1962-1979

APPENDIX 2
Second Arrangement: Subgroup/Office of Origin

Alberta CCF
    Correspondence 1926-1962
    Minutes (Convention, Board & Executive) [1939]-1962
    People's Weekly editorial policy c. 1951-52
    "New Party" committee minutes and reports 1960-1961

Social Credit files 1934-1960
Publications [1934]-1962

National CCF
   Minutes (Council & Executive) 1956-1960
   "New Party" publications & reports 1958-1961
   Miscellaneous reports & releases 1945-1956

William Irvine
   Campaign/organizational files [1947]-1958
   Writings:
      Articles, columns, notes, etc. [1917]-1962
      Book manuscripts 1957-1962
   Subject reference files c. 1917-[1961]
   Publications [1934]-1962
   Memorabilia [1915]-1962

Mardiros Research Files
   Correspondence 1962-1973
   Photocopies & transcriptions (of records dated) 1917-1958
   Clippings & publications 1962-1979

APPENDIX 3
Final Arrangement: Series/Type of Activity

Correspondence 1926-1962

Minutes
   Alberta CCF minutes and financial statements [1939]-1962
   National CCF minutes and reports 1942-1960
   "New Party" and *People's Weekly* topical files 1951-1962

Campaign/organizational materials 1933-1962

Writings
   Articles, columns, etc. c. 1917-1962
   Book manuscripts 1957-1962
   Publications [1934]-1962

Reference and clipping files
   Social Credit 1934-1960
   Other c. 1917-[1962]

Memorabilia [1915]-1963

Mardiros research files 1962-1979
   Correspondence 1962-1973
   Photocopies & transcriptions (of records dated) 1917-1958
   Clippings & publications 1962-1979