

The genealogical section draws together a sample of documentary material of value to the family historian; rather than concentrating on treasures, its aim is to show that "an ordinary scrap of paper, a poorly shot photograph, or a seemingly uninteresting military file often provide important information to the family researcher." The uses to which, for example, a baptismal record for the French colony of Acadia in 1686, a return of chimneys swept in Quebec in 1777, 1851 census returns for Northumberland County, or 1925 day-school returns for Ross River, Yukon Territory, can be put are clearly explained; and there is clearly scope for further publications in this area to provide guidance on methods and techniques of genealogical research.

Many more themes emerge across the chapters and reveal the richness and value of the collections for subject-based research in other areas. The National Archives is clearly a mine of information about native Canadians; included in this volume are, for example, a 1773 map of Newfoundland by John Cartwright giving significant archaeological evidence about the Beothuk; a fine 1818 watercolour on ivory of Demasduit ("Mary March"), a Beothuk woman; a celebrated petition on birchbark from the Chippewa Indians of Wabigon to Lord Lorne, the Governor-General, in 1881; an early daguerreotype, taken in the 1840's of an Ojibwa chief, Maungua-daus; and a recent photograph of the broadcast crew of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation on location.

Canada's emergence as a nation is chronicled directly and indirectly in many of the examples chosen. The ledger recording the expenses of the officials who travelled to London to oversee the passage of the British North America Act (1857) giving Canada its status as a dominion, is reproduced as is the magnificent but rain-bespattered Constitution Proclamation of 1982. Canada's architectural heritage is represented by, for example, a plan of the remarkable gothic revival Parliament buildings at Ottawa, largely destroyed in 1916, a design for an 1887 villa in the Ottawa suburbs, and an outstanding photograph of the 1982 Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto.

Amongst many other themes to emerge from the records selected are Arctic exploration and the quest for the North-West passage, the settlements of New France, the opening up of the Canadian West, the building of the railroads, the promotion of the Canadian way of life to attract immigrants, and Canada's role in the two World Wars. All this suggests that it would have been equally possible to organize this volume on subject-based lines; and that a series of guides for readers on key themes in Canadian history would find a good market.

Treasures of the National Archives of Canada is designed and produced to a high standard; the excellence of the photographs and the imposing jacket design add to the impression that this is a work of quality. This is borne out by the contents: here is a book which reveals the value and fascination of a great archival collection.

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Archival Appraisal. FRANK BOLES, in association with JULIA MARKS YOUNG. New York and London: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 1991. ix, 118 p. ISBN 1-55570-064-0 \$39.95 (pa.)

Tom Nesmith has noted that Canadian archivists tend to focus on fundamental ideas in archival theory, whereas Americans are often more concerned with technology, technique, and administration.¹ This difference is evident in two recent publications on appraisal. The Canadian, humanistic approach appears in articles by Terry Cook and Terry Eastwood in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Barbara L. Craig, ed.). The contrasting attitude of many Americans—that "em-pirical research regarding selection...practice may help resolve and clarify a number of issues that abstract theory cannot adequately address" (p. 14)—is the basic premise of *Archival Appraisal*.

In 1983 Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young began developing a hierarchical model of appraisal criteria, later published as "Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records" (*American Archivist* 48 [Spring 1985]). They grouped their appraisal criteria into three "modules"—value of information, costs of retention, and implications of the selection decision. Each module contained sub-modules (or "components") further subdivided into the actual criteria "elements." Both the article and *Archival Appraisal* include complex diagrams illustrating these items' hierarchical relationship.

With additional grants and cooperation from archivists in American college and university, business, religious, and public archives and manuscript repositories, they field-tested the model which they had refined since it appeared in the article. The policy implications module remained about the same, the costs-of-retention module component became more detailed, but the value-of-information module underwent major revisions until it contained nineteen "elements" grouped under four "components," two of which had sub-components.² Along with this model, they gave each participating institution a forty-one page manual to explain what to do and how "to record their activity and thoughts" using a quantitative system for ranking each of the model's parts (p. 19).

After surveying existing appraisal theory and describing the model and test procedures, Boles³ discussed the test results and their implications for archival theory. The participants considered the value-of-information module the most important and useful (ranking it 2.52 out of a possible 4.0), but found the other modules—implications (2.09) and costs (1.47)—less useful. Boles warned against reading too much into the results because the participants were not randomly selected and were too few to be statistically significant. Not heeding his own warning, he frequently used the test results to state how *archivists* (not just test participants) appraised records.

Boles then noted two general results of the project. Participants found the "quantification system...unworkable...as a practical, day-to-day decision-making tool," but he still believed that "numerical methodology is useful" for promoting discussion and research on appraisal (pp. 76, 79). Participants' responses also showed that the application of appraisal criteria differed by type of institution, with an especially sharp division between archives and manuscript repositories.

Boles ended with four conclusions about how the study's results could shape record appraisal and guide additional research. Archivists should be aware of (1) "the fundamental role of selection policy" and (2) "the importance of the information environment and general policy context" as they (3) "further develop... their record selection methodology" (p. 97). Finally, the study revealed the participating archivists' (4) "continuing diversity...and pluralistic approaches" to appraisal, in contradiction to archival theorists (especially Richard C. Berner) who have noted a "movement toward professional uniformity" since the 1960s. Boles seemed concerned that if the archival community remained "permanently pluralistic" it might have difficulty agreeing upon national (he does not consider international) descriptive standards, and that archival education would be based on a "smaller...core of knowledge and a larger specific body of information" (107).

Boles is commendably forthright in revealing test results he did not expect or agree with, e.g., limited concern with cost, currently insurmountable problems with the policy implications module, diversity or lack of consensus, and the quantitative model's failure to predict selection decisions. He does not mention the intensity of some staff participants' reaction to the project. At one test site, "most of the staff hated the experience" because of their "basic humanistic orientation."⁴ Boles understands and ably summarizes existing scholarship and writes clearly, although the book is so concise that reading it is almost like eating instant coffee from the jar.

But some aspects of the book seem questionable. Boles's first three conclusions noted above reflect his assumptions more than the results of the study. He confuses his participants with all

archivists, especially in his conclusions. He mixes theoretical analysis with "scientific" typology/quantitative testing and claims primacy for the latter while beginning and concluding with, and frequently referring to, the former. His intent and methodology—quantitative typology construction and testing—are typical of some American information "scientists." But, perhaps the most valuable contribution of the book — his analysis of the project and its possible implications, i.e., advancing our understanding of archival theory through informed discussion — more closely resembles the Canadian approach in the publications cited above.

Notes

- 1 Paper given at the 1992 Society of American Archivists' Conference in Montreal.
- 2 Test results led to further revisions of the model.
- 3 Young dropped out of the project, so only Boles wrote *Archival Appraisal*.
- 4 Robert Sink, "Appraisal: The Process of Choice," *American Archivist* 53 (Summer 1990), p. 454.

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Études d'archivistique, 1957-1992. MICHEL DUCHEIN. Paris, Association des archivistes français, 1992. 210 p. ISBN 2-900175-00-3.

Il arrive régulièrement qu'on souligne le travail d'une personne qui s'est illustrée dans une discipline ou dans une profession en préparant des "Mélanges" qui lui sont dédiés au moment où elle se retire de la vie active. C'est ce qu'ont fait les archivistes français en offrant à Michel Duchein un recueil de quatorze de ses articles les plus marquants, choisis parmi ses nombreuses publications parues entre 1957 et 1992.

Michel Duchein, archiviste paléographe, exerça ses activités professionnelles particulièrement aux Archives nationales de France où il travaille au Service technique avant de devenir Inspecteur général. Il oeuvra aussi dans le milieu international des archives en participant à plusieurs missions techniques pour différents organismes internationaux et en donnant des cours et des conférences en archivistique dans différents pays.

Au Canada, on connaît Michel Duchein pour son article sur le respect des fonds qui a fait école un peu partout dans le monde. Il a toutefois écrit sur plusieurs autres sujets. Les *Études archivistiques* regroupent ses articles sur la théorie archivistique (respect des fonds, pré-archivage, terminologie), l'histoire des archives (Révolution française et les archives, évolution du métier d'archiviste et l'histoire des archives européennes, la législation française), les archives et l'administration (collaboration entre les archives et l'administration), la recherche dans les archives (instruments de recherche, guides d'archives, publicité des archives), les bâtiments d'archives, les études d'archives spécifiques (recensements, archives des syndicats et du mouvement ouvrier), et la profession. Les textes sont précédés d'une courte biographie écrite par Jean Favier et suivis de la liste des principales activités professionnelles de Michel Duchein et d'une bibliographie de ses publications archivistiques, archéologiques et historiques. Cet ouvrage nous permet de mieux connaître l'homme, ses principales réalisations mais surtout sa pensée sur différents thèmes archivistiques.

La critique d'un ouvrage porte habituellement sur son contenu. On comprendra qu'on ne peut critiquer les écrits de Michel Duchein dans le contexte de ces *Études* et ce, pour plusieurs raisons. La notoriété de l'auteur est déjà garante de la qualité du contenu des textes. De plus, la variété des textes ne permet pas une critique d'ensemble.

Par contre, nous croyons que la forme de l'ouvrage mérite quelques commentaires. Ainsi, il est intéressant de comparer les coutumes françaises et nord-américaines à l'égard des *Mélanges*.