

Piecing the Quilt: Sources for Women's History in the Saskatchewan Archives Board. BARBARA POWELL and MYRNA WILLIAMS. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1996. 177 p. ISBN 0-88977-090-5.

The elimination of most of the human race from the historical record shrinks our human identity. We don't know fully who we are. We know even less what we might become.

– Elise Boulding,
The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time

Researching women's history can be an extraordinarily difficult task. Certainly in the recent past, primary source material on the lives of women was scarce and often difficult to find. A spate of secondary source references have been written, beginning in the 1970s. Titles such as Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, eds., *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History* (Toronto, 1977); Gillian Cheese and Veronica Strong-Boat, eds., *British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women* (Vancouver, 1992); and Strong-Boat and Anita Clair Fellman, eds., *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History* (Toronto, c. 1986) provide clues that the (female) editors of these collections considered the history of women to be hidden, overlooked, and of considerable importance in understanding our society. Barbara Powell and Myrna Williams have therefore provided a useful resource by listing all sources relating to women at the Saskatchewan Archives Board. But *Piecing the Quilt* serves also as an eloquent reminder of just how sporadically records documenting women's history have been acquired. Certainly there is an element of serendipity to any acquisitions policy, but archivists should question whether this lack of documentation has resulted from their failure to recognize the importance of materials not in vogue with historians, or whether women themselves did not consider their history important and therefore did not retain any useful record of their lives.

Powell and Williams have been exhaustive in their quest for source material, listing all items *about* women as well as anything written *by* women regardless of the topic, which was often the lives of the men around them. A single copy of a teaching diploma is given as much weight as a file containing a decade's worth of information regarding women's participation in the labour force, but this inclusiveness makes the work as a whole more useful. The only exceptions to overall practice evident elsewhere appear to be those employed when listing oral histories. Although twelve informants are listed under "Indian and Metis Elders of La Ronge," for example, no indication is given as to how many might be women. Several entries for oral history collections simply refer the reader to the finding aid, which lists informants, but these entries seem generic in comparison with the detail provided elsewhere. Additionally,

although the authors note that useful material may exist in restricted fonds, these fonds are not identified.

Neither Powell nor Williams is an archivist; *Rules for Archival Description (RAD)* is not mentioned and it did not serve as a basis for the entries. In some instances it is difficult to know if the entries refer to a single fonds. Of eight entries for "Agnes Groome," five refer to the same finding aid, which might suggest a single fonds; but the single entry for "Campbell Innes" simply lists the pertinent files and "Violet McNaughton" has a single paragraph describing her records.

There is a name index, but a subject index would have substantially increased the usefulness of this listing as a reference tool. Even a researcher well acquainted with Saskatchewan history may not know that information on women as health care professionals can be found in the entries for Kahan, Molloy, Truesdell, Weekes, and Robinson, for example. Lack of any subject indexing can make using *Piecing the Quilt* rather like thumbing through the dictionary when a thesaurus is needed.

But it is a valuable and useful addition to references relating to women's history. As well, it unwittingly provides an excellent glimpse into acquisition practices in a large institution over a period of years. Reading through the entries, it seems remarkable indeed that *any* women's history could be pieced together given the level of archival documentation that has been preserved. Of 1,435 entries, each of which was defined as a separate collection, there appear to be only a dozen fonds for individual women; the majority of entries are single clippings, articles, and reminiscences, or single files found within government records. Powell and Williams should be credited with "uncovering" this material, but one is still left wondering who has been documented, and who has been left behind.

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The Canadian Military Experience 1867–1995: A Bibliography. 3rd ed. O.A. COOKE. Ottawa: Directorate of History and Heritage, Department of National Defence, 1997. xxi, 520 p. ISBN 0660601648.

The third edition of *The Canadian Military Experience* is one third larger than its 1984 edition. It is a record of published primary sources and secondary works, excluding poetry and fiction. Like the 1984 edition, it is divided into the same six sections: "Bibliography," "Defence Policy and General Works," "Naval Forces," "Land Forces," "Air Forces," and "The Unified Canadian Forces since 1968." There are many reasons for the increase in the number of works about Canada's military. As W.A.B. Douglas explains in the book's for-