

archives throughout Canada and the United States. Unlike them, I harbour no criticism of necessary genealogical and local historical orientation which sustains these institutions.

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### ***Canadian Archival Literature Revisited***

It is indeed good to see Gordon Dodds in print again and I was much impressed by his lively and perceptive, if rather quirky review of Canadian archival literature; his conclusions in particular deserve careful attention. He would not expect me to agree with *all* he has written (no one could be expected to do *that!*) and I would like to add some points by way of clarification.

How should we define Canadian archival literature? The survey might perhaps have been more effective if contributions of Canadians to the *Journal of the Society of Archivists* (England) and *The American Archivist* (AA) had been taken into account. There were not many of them, but they were not unimportant. This leads me to my second point.

I have always believed that despite our shortcomings we have as Canadians much to offer the North American archival scene and this has been recognized since the days of Douglas Brymner. *The Canadian Archivist* (CA) when I was editor (compiler would be more accurate) was a very primitive affair and I was much concerned that our significant professional contributions should reach as wide an audience as possible via the AA which was at that time virtually "the only game in town." If I saw the CA as a regional publication with very local concerns, I believe that was the reality at the time. I know I overestimated the readership of the AA in Canada and I had the rather quaint notion of it as the organ of the North American archivists forming one society. This was not to be and I believe it was Gordon himself who quite properly led the move to have the Society of American Archivists treat us as a "foreign country" rather than as a Canadian region of the American whole. However, I would make a strong plea for the continuance of a vigorous SAA connection by Canadian archivists; much more unites than divides Canadians and Americans. We have a common language and documentary heritage; we all deal with the same media journal; our influence (in this field at least!) is out of all proportion to our numbers and I find that rather encouraging, for *Archivaria* is very highly regarded in the United States. When some of us become more involved for a while with the SAA, our papers at its conferences are published in the AA, but for all that they were no less Canadian. Conversely, I published what was in effect an unofficial minority report on Education by the SAA Committee of the Seventies in the *Canadian Archivist* (vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 30-35). The Taylor-Welch educational guidelines were presented to both the ACA and the SAA simultaneously, and the response of the former was very positive in contrast to the latter which found them unacceptable.

I must take issue with Gordon when he writes of my going to the PAC to “superintend the unfortunate fragmentation of responsibility along burgeoning media lines.” I don’t wish to revive the Cook/Birrell debate, but I make no apology for the division of the Branch (in most cases) by media. Arrangement, custody, and information retrieval do not yield to one archival discipline but several. We do not yet have any “general theory” of archives, quite apart from the physical problems of preservation. A record of provenance should of course always be mandatory, but automated systems will in future facilitate a more holistic intellectual control. But there, I suspect, I *have* revived the debate!

With regard to the *Manual* on arrangement and description, I offer no defence. It was never intended to stand alone, as the introduction tried to explain, but rather to complement the available literature. Clearly it could have been much better, but without some general theory of archives for the English-speaking tradition and applicable to all media, such a work within a small compass is almost impossible. The *Manual* was conceived and produced during an education period of three months and the manuscript accepted by the ICA without a word of criticism (which I found disappointing), so I could only presume satisfaction. I mention this because we desperately need a multi-media “Jenkinson” which builds on the verities of our mentors and critics (and this is one of the challenges which Gordon presents). Without it we can only offer choices, compromises, and *ad hoc* institutional solutions.

Finally, I would like to endorse Gordon’s conclusions on “the poverty of our collective knowledge and experience about the evolution and character of record and record keeping.” The study of each medium of record is still in its infancy. A seminar on “Society and the Documentary Record” presently being offered in the Master of Archival Studies programme at the University of British Columbia explores the nature of records through history, their impact on government, and the impact of the principal media of record on society and hence on the user. This is only a start. There is a long journey ahead.

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### ***Canadian Manuscripts in British Repositories***

I was very impressed with Michael B. Moir’s piece, “Scottish Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories” which appeared in *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84). It is refreshing to see Moir’s firm grasp of the processes by which the documentation of interest to his field of study was generated and his commitment to seeing that documentation identified, acquired, and adequately listed. His careful explanations of the types of manuscripts to be found in Canada which are of interest to students of Scotland and his considered comments on how the archival description of such collections could be improved should be noted and acted upon.

I have a strong fellow-feeling for Moir’s project, being concerned myself with the identification in Scotland as well as England, Wales, and Ireland of manuscripts of relevance to Canada. I must even admit to some sense of relief in hearing of his work: I at least have something to point to when British and Irish colleagues question me