

coalesced into one. There may have been some "inspiration" in the choice of *Archivaria* as Gordon Dodds suggests,⁴ but forging the title was a laborious exercise in onomastics.

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I hear you, Chris

I read Chris Hives's comments in *Archivaria* 19 on George Bolotenko, ACA '84, and history with a sense of recognition. Chris does not want his future and his career confined to the study of the past. He does not want the study of history to be seen as the only door to professional archival training. Naturally anyone starting out on a career or job wants all the options open and we all recognize that feeling. But using history does not have to cut down your options. Chris says he sees the archival field opening and developing in the corporate area, whether public or private, with today's management and tomorrow's communications. Then why, he asks, should he be interested at ACA '84 in listening to papers on topics such as the development of the Dominion Power and Transmission Company in 1910? The answer is not for a narrative history of a particular company, but to see its history as a case study of corporate change, the kind of change an archivist could be caught up in during his career as corporate archivist. Alternatively, if you as archivist are establishing the programme for a company, such studies illustrate the type of development to look for in appraising the company's vital records. A background of archival experience would make a case study seem more relevant. A corporate archivist will be custodian of records created in 1910 and 1985. To fulfil this duty, he will have to understand both types of records.

An archivist stands on a continuum of past and present. How can you understand one without the other? What Chris sees as a split in the archival profession between dealing with the past and present can surely also be seen as a spectrum. More than one career path is valid. If some archivists choose the challenges of the corporate office, others will choose to work in institutions whose mandate is to preserve the nation's heritage. And these institutions are not backward. Did you hear the presentation at ACA '84 on the automated office by John McDonald *of the PAC*?

And who can predict the future? At a recent ARMA conference I heard Ira Penn (who likes to be the iconoclast) declare that the paperless office would never be achieved; it was just a mirage. If archivists know and understand the records that are our archival responsibility, then we can declare, as Terry Cook did on the last day of the conference after Richard Kesner's dazzling look at the future, that we know we've mastered technological change before and we can do it again.

4 Gordon Dodds, "Canadian Archival Literature: A Bird's-Eye View," *Archivaria* 17, (Winter 1983-84), p. 26.

An understanding of the past is not going to shackle you, Chris, but rather liberate you to become a better archivist for the future.

Shirley Spragge
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The State of Court Records: Louis Knafla Replies

There are several items in D.H. Bocking's letter in *Archivaria* 19 on my article in *Archivaria* 18 which prompt discussion. First, with regard to the court records destroyed, two of my former students who consulted Saskatchewan court records in their research were under the impression that more than 15 per cent were lost in the floods, and the state of the records was such that one of them decided that the province could not be studied for the court records topic chosen due to the lack of consistent runs of records and their inaccessibility. Some of the early records were also thinned by retaining only specimen files and shredding others, a policy of earlier days (like that of stripping some of the most important information from the Justice of the Peace files) which has since been abandoned. The lack of access and professional archival care for the post-1931 court records are still serious problems, and in this respect the court records of Saskatchewan have less accessibility than those of other common law provinces. In neighboring Alberta, for example, most of the judicial records to 1971 have been transferred to the custody of the Provincial Archives in Edmonton. This has also occurred in many other provinces.

A second item concerns finding aids. Inventories of court records, such as those being prepared in British Columbia, are essential for researchers, and the preservation of docket or process books for civil actions (usually inaccessible in local court houses), together with prosecution books for criminal actions, are no substitute for complete inventories by jurisdiction and court. In particular, the bulk of research into court records has been, and probably will continue to be, on the criminal side, and most prosecution books are useless to researchers as they list only the names of the accused and the date. Seldom do they include the offence, witnesses, prosecutor, and dispositions of the case. It seems, therefore, that inventories and indexes not only make court records accessible to users, but also draw users to the great amount of information which is contained within them. To have records which receive little use is not a healthy situation for the archival profession.

The key to these and other items is the second to last sentence of Bocking's letter, where he states that "we are doing all we can within the limits of our resources to ensure the preservation of these historical records." The key lies in the word "resources." One of the reasons why Alberta has made such significant advances in the transfer of these records to archival custody, and in the preparation of inventories, lists, and indexes, is because the local academic profession convinced the Law Foundation to invest in more than \$100,000 over five years to make a major assault on these problems, and then used matching funds from provincial STEP and federal Summer Career Access programmes to enlarge the effort. Governments these days like to see their funds follow in the wake of others. And when public funds are in scarce supply, they usually track even more closely