respository and an acceptable degree of detail for the user. In lieu of Hoffman's essay, which relies heavily on sources not contained in the fonds it serves to introduce, researchers might deem a biographical timeline and a complete bibliography of Ryga's works, published and unpublished, more useful. Researchers do not need Hoffman's introduction to discover telling and touching facts about Ryga's life: that he cared and fought for the rights of an ailing father; that, between he and his wife Norma, he shared responsibility for four children; that Ryga negotiated the world of car-buying and insuring with difficulty, but was avid about planting trees. Careful reading of the finding aid made this reviewer-cum-researcher ask questions and that's what a well-prepared finding aid should do.

The University of Calgary is to be commended for following through with a vision and product initiated in the affluent eighties; *The George Ryga Papers* is an impressive addition to an outstanding series. At $34.95, university and other research libraries supporting Canadian studies should acquire this volume for their reference collections, while we all work toward easier electronic access to all of our country's archival collections.

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Lorna Knight
National Library of Canada

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A Record of Service: A Guide to Holdings of the Central Archives of The United Church of Canada. RUTH DYCK WILSON, project coordinator with PETER D. JAMES. Toronto: United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Occasional Paper Number One, 1992. ISBN 0-9696545-0-2.

This guide is of special interest to Canadian archivists in that it is one of the earliest finding aids that adopted *Rules of Archival Description (RAD)* published by the Bureau of Canadian Archivists in 1990. As such, it is a pioneering work because it is a good example of how *RAD* has been applied in a conventional finding aid. It is from this perspective (the use of *RAD* to produce conventional archival finding aids) that I will review it.

The type of finding aid *A Record of Service* most closely resembles is the inventory. I do not believe that there are any hard and fast rules that are or were used to produce archival finding aids. In other words, I do not believe that there are standards for the naming of finding aids, nor what should appear in any particular type of finding aid, or how the material should be presented. The inventory is perhaps the type of finding aid that has the most typical conventional structure in that it usually starts with an administrative history, biographical information, or family history, as the case may be, for the creator of the material with which it deals. This is usually followed by a description of the material itself in an order reflecting its arrangement and that seems most logical to the archivist who prepared the inventory. Most inventories of this sort are accompanied by an index at the end and a table of contents at the beginning and some may have an introduction, foreword, or both. This is a structure suited to the stand-alone or monographic type of publication format, i.e., the book. *A Record of Service* generally follows this format, but with significant differences. It has a foreword, an introduction, a section with the "entries," an index, and, of course, a table of contents. So, in what way has it adopted *RAD*?

First of all, in accordance with *RAD* stipulations, the arrangement of the records of the United Church of Canada was decided upon before any description took place. This is clear from the introduction where, under the heading "Organization of the guide" an overview of the structure and the history of the United Church of Canada is given on the basis of which the fonds have been determined. The following brief outline gives an idea of the complexity of this structure.

Uniting Churches

Methodist Church (Canada)

(entries 1-50)

Presbyterian Churches in Canada

(entries 100-150)

Congregational Churches

(entries 200-213)

Evangelical United Brethren Church

(entry 250)

United Church General Council Offices

(entries 499-531)

United Church Conferences and Presbyteries

There are five Conferences each with its respective Presbyteries.

(entries 1000-1044)

Personal Papers

Papers of individuals associated with the United Church of Canada and its antecedent denominations.

(entries 3000-3395)

The entries given in the above outline translate into units of description, each entry being a fonds or a part thereof, i.e., series or subseries. (The finding aid descriptions do not go below the subseries level of description.) The section with the entries (the description of the records) forms the major part of *A Record of Service*. The entries are numbered and hence each fonds has a unique identification number. The idea of numbering fonds is, in my opinion, a very good one if only because fonds titles are made-up titles nowhere to be found but in the citations to the published finding aid from its publication date forward. In association with the institution's (archives') name holding the fonds, unique fonds numbers can only increase the ease of citing and of lay-out of the finding aid. The descriptions of parts of the fonds, such as series, files, etc., may then be given further numbers that are subdivisions of the number of the fonds. In fact, this is what has been done in *A Record of Service* where series are identified by numbers such as 44/1, 44/2, etc., meaning series 1 of fonds 44, series 2 of fonds 44, etc., and the next level of description, subseries or files, subdivided by numbers such as 515/10/1, 515/10/2, meaning, in this case, subseries 1 of series 10 of fonds 515 and subseries 2 of series 10 of fonds 515. The entry

section also indents the description of subordinate units of description making it further clear to the user what forms part of what. In both the numbering and indentation, the entry section of *A Record of Service* thus follows the *RAD* dictate to make the levels of description clear by the layout or typography (*RAD* rule 1.0A4.).

Because *RAD* prescribes an administrative history or biographical sketch (as the case may be) as a part of the description, there is no need in the finding aid for an exhaustive administrative history for the entire organization of the United Church of Canada, its predecessors, and organizational parts. It is the convention for most inventories to precede the part that describes the records themselves with a complete history or biography. The way this is laid out in *A Record of Service* is, in my opinion, so much better than what I have seen in other inventories of this type. It is better in the sense that the context is much clearer. There is the general overview in the introduction. The detail is presented where it belongs, i.e., pertaining to the part of the records that are described. For those who might criticize this approach because of the loss of the thread and overall coherence of a history of the entire organization, I have but one answer: the inventory is a finding aid and not a book describing the history of the organization. If the intent is writing a history of the United Church of Canada, it is not done in a finding aid. There are numerous books on that history and any serious student would not substitute that which is written in a finding aid for what has been written in the general historical literature on the United Church of Canada.

I have not examined in any detail the adherence to *RAD* of each of the descriptions. All the relevant elements of description prescribed by *RAD* are present as far as I can see, including the elements in the archival description area. The elements used in the descriptions are mentioned in the introduction. The descriptions also adhere to the rule of multilevel description in that description proceeds from the general to the particular (from fonds through to series, subseries, etc.) and the rule of non-repetition of information. The latter stipulates that information given at a higher level is not repeated at a lower level of description. The compilers and describers of this work have understood these principles and the economy of labour and space that results from its application.

The power of multilevel description for giving historical, contextual, detailed information may be gleaned by reading, for example, the administrative history of the Audio/Video Production Unit (515/10/5) of the Department of Media Services/ Media Resources (515/10) of the United Church of Canada Division of Communication (515). Read them from the top down (general to specific) or from the bottom up (from the specific to the general), whichever is your fancy. In both cases there is no repetition of information, yet I was struck by the richness of information and the detail possible with such an approach. Furthermore, it presents itself in context and, when reading from the top down (the general to the specific), one may stop at any point if no further detail is needed. If this were not such a short review, where space is limited, it would have been worthwhile to extract this hierarchy in history writing as an example and display it in concatenated form. If the reader is interested in examining this facet of archival description he or she may do this for him or herself. In a linear type of history, the level of detail for all tends to be uniform whereas the detail in multilevel writing goes from general to more detail as the records,

in the context of which the history is written, progress through their levels of collectivity to more and more unitary units of description.

The index is a conventional one in the book sense. It simply indexes names and terms that occur in the descriptions. It does this very thoroughly and probably with better results than an index compiled from *RAD*-prescribed primary and added access points. As far as I can make out, it has no relation to *RAD*-compliant primary or added access points and/or their tracings. In fact, the descriptions do not carry any access points at all. Each description starts with the title rather than the name of the body that created the fonds in the form prescribed by Part Two of *RAD*. Since the title of the fonds contains the name of the creator, the compilers and describers of *A Record of Service* probably found *RAD*- compliant primary access points superfluous. The names do appear, of course, in the index.

The authors state in the introduction that the goal of the project that produced this finding aid was really to create a searchable database and that the guide entries are simply copies of selected fields printed directly from the "Archives" database. The finding aid is a snapshot of the database at a particular point in time in its development. This implies that the "index" of the finding aid is also a derivation from the database. If this is so, then my observation that the index is not related to *RAD* access points is somewhat inaccurate. It may have little to do with *RAD*- compliant access points, but there are obviously also other access points, such as subject access points. If the index is indeed derived from the database, the finding aid would be easily updatable. The introduction and the table of contents would be the only parts of the finding aid that need manual updating. This is surely the way to go: the finding aid is simply a by-product of the computer database.

In conclusion, *A Record of Service* is a truly pioneering piece of work. That the finding aid has a publication date only two years after the publication of an incomplete *RAD* speaks for the expertise of the authors/compilers in that they have produced a truly remarkable finding aid, fully using the new possibilities of the new Canadian standard for archival description and, at the same time, exploiting its possibilities in an automated environment. The authors/compilers ought to be congratulated and archivists should turn to this work as an example of how *RAD* may be exploited and how it should be done. I am looking forward to a new and updated version with, perhaps, new inventions for the organization and display of the information.

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