

table discussion on Québec workers, a subject area receiving much attention today, is reported in some depth as is the preparation of an inventory of union records. Some reports are presented crisply and clearly, such as the one on the workshop on the Association of Canadian Archivists which English speaking archivists will be keen to read. Several of the more technical sessions, such as the one treating maps and plans, are reported in satisfying detail. It should be pointed out however that the minor changes in the written text submitted by M. Marc Lafrance, for example, and the dropping of the photographs submitted does not make that text the work of the chairperson, whose signature appears at the end of that text. Such an example brings into question the editorial policy of this volume.

In conference proceedings, the choice is always between selectivity and comprehensiveness. Every programme chairperson and editor hopes that some session will produce seminal ideas or some milestone of research that should be recorded for posterity. In opting to report comprehensively, the Association des archivistes du Québec has given its members a snapshot of the Association in progress but little analysis or evaluation which surely is necessary for leadership and future direction. Perhaps that is intended for future issues of *Archives*. It was an ambitious project, perhaps overly ambitious because the technical quality of the report suffered. The format of *Archives* is usually appealing but this issue suffered from smallness of type and very poor copy.

Maybe it is fitting that an archival association should produce verbatim reports. The Association des archivistes du Québec in their proceedings gives a picture of a vital, productive organization for the French-speaking archivists of Canada. Would that the Association of Canadian Archivists lived up to that!

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**Manual: Sound Archives.** Ottawa: Public Archives Canada, 1975. Pp. 18.  
Free. Available from the Information Services Division of the Archives.  
(Text in English and French, each with separate title page and pagination.)

This short volume outlines the procedures and philosophy behind one of Canada's major collecting efforts in the area of historical sound recordings. The work is that of the entire staff of the Sound Archives with Ernie Dick as the principal author. The manual gives a short history of the development of the eight and a half year old Sound Archives within the Public Archives of Canada, briefly describes the collection and offers some advice to

prospective aural/oral historians about the techniques of interviewing and recording. It also outlines the archival procedures followed by the Sound Archives in terms of accessioning, cataloguing, indexing, preservation, restrictions on use, copyright and ownership. The manual will doubtless find wide circulation among aural/oral historians and sound archivists in Canada and elsewhere. There is a need for advice and guidance in this relatively new field of historical and archival endeavor.

The sections on cataloguing and preservation are probably the best in the manual. The array of equipment described in the section on preservation is the envy of every aspiring sound archives in Canada. The wide variety of forms of recorded sound (for example, wax cylinders, wire recordings, discs, and tape) present tremendous technical and cost problems for a sound archives that the PAC has overcome. However, their procedure of re-recording original material onto large 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> reels is a questionable one. Reels of this size are cumbersome and difficult to work with. A uniform format of one hour on smaller reels would make the collection more accessible and easier to handle. The admonition to listen thoroughly to every item during the cataloguing process is certainly needed. It is tempting to catalogue large collections and even larger backlogs on the basis of a partial aural perusal of some material. For material such as conference proceedings or the recordings of official hearings or legislative debates, this latter approach might be feasible, but most tapes should be auditioned in their entirety.

The weakness of the sections on accessioning, cataloguing and indexing is the lack of specific examples and illustrative material. The principles used in these activities are described only in generalities and are therefore hard to follow. With a little additional effort and cost this section would have been considerably strengthened in its usefulness to other sound archivists by the inclusion of examples of the documentation used by the Sound Archives.

The Sound Archives itself does not normally produce transcripts of the material in its collection, leaving this to researchers and users, yet in the manual the light use of the collection is lamented. Although it is all very well for sound archivists to remain purists who deal only with the sound medium, it is a fact of life that transcription of some sound documents, especially those using the interview format, will dramatically increase their use and dissemination. If the aims of a sound archives go beyond those of simply collecting and preserving then transcription will not be the heresy that this manual implies it is.

The three-page section on interviewing detracts from the manual. The basic problem is that it is too brief. The notion that background preparation can be an impediment to a successful interview contradicts all reports of experienced interviewers and the suggestion that placing the recorder out of the interviewee's sight will make for a better interview is reminiscent of the

discredited microphone-in-the-potted-palm approach. Some interviewees are relaxed while others are not, but making an extraordinary effort to hide the recorder will not have any effect. People are aware that they are being recorded, especially when confronted by the imposing boom microphone which is recommended in this manual. The purchase of much of the equipment recommended for use in the interview process is beyond the financial resources of most small aural/oral history programmes and amateurs. Suggested compromises involving less expensive equipment and advice on how to achieve good sound quality with it would have been useful. One other small distraction is the use of sexually biased pronouns (he, his, him) in reference to the interviewee. However, the main criticism of the interviewing section is its superficiality and the rigidity of the suggestions. The section can only lightly cover a few of the main issues and problems of interviewing. The essence of successful interviewing is to be well prepared, yet flexible enough to develop the full possibilities of the interview.

The section on restrictions raises many interesting points regarding copyright and literary property rights in tape recorded reminiscences. While none of these issues are finally resolved, the manual points out correctly that they cannot be resolved before a new Canadian copyright law is passed. However, there is a part of the discussion with which I cannot agree. The Sound Archives staff believes that since interviewers are the initiating party, the copyright should remain with them unless transferred. The Aural History Programme, Provincial Archives of B.C. takes the view that since the interview is the first person reminiscence of an interviewee, the interviewee has superior rights to the material. This situation would be reversed of course if the interviewee were paid.

In short, the manual is a useful addition to the limited literature on the archival handling of sound documents, although interviewers will find it to be of little use. The manual includes some good discussions of the principles to be followed by a sound archives but its brevity impairs its usefulness for advanced amateur and professional sound archivists.

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**Primary Sources in Canadian Working Class History, 1860-1930.**

RUSSELL G. HANN, GREGORY S. KEALEY, LINDA KEALEY,  
PETER WARRIAN. Kitchener, Ont.: Dumont Press, 1973. Pp. 169.  
\$4.00.

The publication of this book two and a half years ago marked a milestone in Canadian historiography. More than a bibliography of primary sources for