

Directory of Canadian Records and Manuscript Repositories. Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1977. iii, 115 p. ISSN 0700-4850
Members: \$3.00, Non-members: \$4.00 (Available from Valerie Cowan, 24 Edward Laurier Dr., Halifax, Canada B3M 2C7).

The first directory of archival institutions in Canada, published by the Archives Section of the Canadian Historical Association in 1971, has long been out of date. Local directories which have been produced recently, and the current edition of the *Union List of Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories* have served to fill the gap, but none of these is as complete as the new *Directory of Canadian Records and Manuscript Repositories*, produced by the Publications Committee of the Association of Canadian Archivists. The directory provides information on approximately 290 institutions, and the scope of the publication and the thoroughness of its authors can be grasped on understanding that it attempts to list all institutions, with its range including the Public Archives of Canada and the Swift Current Museum, which describes its holdings as the "souvenir album of the Swift Current Rotary Club, with reminiscences."

The objective of the work is to list all archival repositories in Canada and to provide basic information such as complete address (including postal code), telephone number and the name of the person responsible for the institution. The capsule comment on the nature of the holdings is particularly useful, allowing the reader to make a judgement on the nature of the institution and the scope of its operation.

The large number and the diversity of institutions holding archival material in Canada lead to two important challenges for the professional association. One is in recruitment and education, if all of the institutions listed in the directory in fact aspire to offer archival services. Second, the number and diversity of institutions holding archival material is also an indication of the lamentable lack of an archival policy in this country. Even a casual reading of the directory should present us with a renewed appreciation of the scope of the challenge that faces archivists in Canada to bring some rationale to the preservation of archives in this country.

The only serious shortcoming I could find is in the alphabetizing of entries, where there seems to be some problem, particularly with the French-language entries. For example, whereas the City of Toronto Archives is found, logically enough, under "T", the City of Montreal entry is found under "V" for Ville de Montréal. On that note, however, the Committee should be commended for attempting to produce a bilingual publication, at least to the extent that the entries are printed in the working language of the institution. Entries for federal government agencies are in both English and French.

The directory will be appreciated by many people throughout the country. It is certainly a useful tool for those of us in the profession who must communicate with our colleagues either by mail or by telephone. In addition, the publication should become known by the academic community, since it is an indispensable guide to sources of documents.

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Helen Creighton: A Life in Folklore. HELEN CREIGHTON. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1975. 244 p. illus. ISBN 0 07 082241 7 \$8.95.

Many of Dr. Creighton's comments and anecdotes will strike responsive chords in the memory of the experienced field-worker—the anxious moments when looking for informants in new territory, the false leads and fruitless efforts heightening the delight of

“striking gold” with an outstanding singer or storyteller, occasional physical discomforts in travelling and lodging (don’t forget your hot-water bottle) but more often the warm-hearted generosity, hearty meals, and life-long friendships with men and women who help the collector in many invaluable ways.

Reminiscences of this kind are what the professional folklorist will probably find to be the volume’s most interesting contribution, as there is little in this book which throws light on the subject of folklore or could be of much assistance to students. Except, perhaps, that her story once again reinforces the general truth that motivation and persistence can compensate for many disadvantages—in Helen Creighton’s case, the lack of formal training and academic qualifications in her field. While the scientific folklorist may be critical of her methodology or her treatment and analysis of her material, the fact remains that she rescued a large number of Canadian songs and tales from oblivion and brought them prominently to the attention of Canadians and an international audience by means of her books, lectures, and broadcasts.

The early part of this book dealing with her family and background, while of minimal interest to the general public, is useful for historical and biographical purposes, and all through the book there are snippets of information of value to archivists; for example, the dates of her publications and the circumstances surrounding them, people she met, places she visited, field-work details, and honours received, most of which can be found elsewhere but is conveniently gathered in this volume with some amplification and in sequence.

Judged by her writing style, Helen Creighton seems to be a woman whose character is stamped by old-fashioned virtues of simplicity and directness. In fact, there is an unremitting girlish innocence which is refreshing if at times incredible to today’s sophisticates. For instance, she relates many instances of supernatural events she believed to have occurred to her personally, mainly of the forerunner variety so frequently found among the Nova Scotian informants with whom she worked. (Undoubtedly, this belief and other supernatural beliefs she professes helped her to establish rapport with those who related similar experiences to her.) There is also a candid and unfashionable respect for aristocracy, the upper classes, and the famous which, while it obviously did not preclude respect and affection for the “ordinary” people she worked with, still allows her to delight, all the way through the book, in mentioning noble or prominent names of people to whom she was related, met briefly, or dealt with. She also has an unfortunate tendency to mention names which may well mean nothing to the average reader. This perhaps should be included among other signs that the book was put together rather hastily. For instance, she should give her authority for the statement on page 113 that the Gaelic song with the title (translated) “The Gloomy Forest” stopped emigration from Scotland to Canada for fifty years! This is demonstrably incorrect but, if it is a folk belief, it would be interesting to know its source. Other signs of haste, perhaps, include the lack of indexes or chapter descriptions, and on page 229, she begins but leaves unfinished an account of how her official connection with the National Museum of Man, Ottawa, was severed.

In conclusion, this autobiography can be read with pleasant interest by those working in folklore, for to them Helen Creighton has become a living legend—a fact humorously brought out by Dr. Creighton herself in her Foreword where she tells how she occasionally has to play the reversed role of informant when interviewed by young people who visit her “usually with a tape-recorder tactfully concealed” which, in the traditional manner she has used so well herself, they slip out and ask permission to use “when sufficient rapport has been established.”

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