

machinery" led to a firm in Dundee which had deposited the material in a local museum. Extensive media coverage throughout Scotland has proven to be the most effective means of adding new material to the collection and confirmed the existence of considerable resources remaining in private hands. Once found, however, such films are not always easily acquired, for owners, understandably, are sometimes reluctant to part with the material. Success in this field will continue to depend upon the growing public awareness of the archive as the national home for Scottish film.

Film, of course, presents special archival problems, not least of all in the area of preservation. Often it requires cleaning and repairing before viewing is possible. Old film is frequently shrunken, creating projection difficulties, and if in negative form, a positive print must be made. Cellulose nitrate film, because it is subject to rapid decomposition, is naturally given priority in the film archive programme. Particularly in matters of preservation, the staff of the National Film Archive in London has been most helpful, advising on the nature and ramifications of the work.

Once film has been properly preserved, assuming it is identified, a detailed catalogue or "shot-listing" is made of each reel. This catalogue includes not only the actual subject of the film, but also a list of peripheral information which will be of use to a wide variety of researchers. Identification of personalities, places, dates, and events has not always been easy, and assistance has often been solicited from outside sources. The dating of wartime scenes has proven to be particularly difficult because censorship was in effect at the time. This sort of basic information is absolutely necessary for effective use of the material by researchers.

Although public access is the end of the archival process, there are numerous problems which hinder availability. Copyright questions, for example, arise when ownership is unclear. One of the greatest difficulties involves the provision of a viewable print, for it would be irresponsible to subject unique and fragile footage to the strains of the viewing table, however slight.

The entire venture is still in the process of developing, and of defining its role in the Scottish community. Many problems remain to be resolved, not least of which involves the fact that filming of present-day events is no longer a cinema activity. Videotape is replacing ordinary motion picture film through television. This is obviously a future source of archival footage with, unfortunately, very different problems of preservation.

The Scottish Film Council's archive is essentially a collection relating to the people and past of Scotland. While the project is reluctant to refuse material, some selectivity is essential. For example, "home movies" are not included, and feature films are sent to the National Film Archive in London where work in this field is already well established. For the present, film archive work in Scotland is concerned with locating and preserving threatened film material, and making it available to anyone interested.

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Clearing-House of Microfilming Projects

The International Archival Affairs Committee (IAA) of the Society of American Archivists is proceeding with plans to establish a clearing-house of microfilming projects in foreign archives.

The project was inspired by strong urgings from several repositories engaged in microfilming archival materials abroad, reflecting the problem of mounting expenses,

uncertainty about copyright regulations, and the growing incidence of duplication of efforts by two or more repositories. Repositories initiating microfilming projects often discover that while they alone fund their projects, they are soon expected to produce multiple copies from their negative stocks for other interested repositories, usually at only the cost of the positive print.

During the summer of 1977 the IAA Committee surveyed about two hundred repositories in Canada, the United States and other countries to determine the need for a central agency responsible for gathering information on proposed microfilming projects and making it available to other repositories interested in participating on a cost-sharing basis. The positive responses convinced the Committee to go ahead with a pilot project which, if successful, might be developed into a more permanent clearing-house bureau. During the next few months, the Committee will write to all repositories known to be engaged in microfilming projects abroad, asking for an identification and list of their copying programmes. Information on the type, content and extent of the series/collections will be solicited, together with the cost estimate on the initial processing, as well as on the *pro rata* expenses which will depend on the number of potential partners in any venture.

The results will be compiled and published in leading archival and library journals throughout the world. Repositories interested in participating in the various microfilming projects on a cost-sharing basis will be able to contact initiating repositories to make the necessary arrangements.

Further information is available from the co-chairmen of the project: Sybil Milton, Leo Baeck Institute, 129 East 73rd Street, New York, New York 10021, U.S.A., and R.S. Gordon, Public Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Canada, K1A 0N3.

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Archives and the Landon Project

The Landon Project, based in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Western Ontario, London, is an ambitious, computer-supported programme directed at the interdisciplinary reconstruction of the total history of a fourteen-county region in Southwestern Ontario. Building upon the impressive holdings of the Regional Collection of the D.B. Weldon Library at Western and guided by certain approaches to the study of human behaviour in the past being explored by the French *Annales* School, the Cambridge Group in England, the Philadelphia Social History Project, and the Canadian Social History Project, *inter alia*, the Project is a manifestation of the "new history" concerned with finding the common man so long shrouded by historians' concentration on "kings, politicians, and assorted other 'heros' of the past. . . ."

In an earlier guise, the Project centred on developing and providing much of the apparatus for a social science laboratory through the publication, in various forms, of historical documents, thereby making "available to the international scholarly community, a unified regional body of historically important social, economic, and political materials."² An essential ingredient of this Landon Series was an extensive

1 "The Landon Series: Documentary Studies on the Historical Evolution of Southwestern Ontario," a submission to Canada Council for a major editorial publications project from the Department of History, Faculty of Social Science, University of Western Ontario (September 1975), p. 2.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 5.