

it as a war propaganda film. As she said, "*Les yeux du temps* without *les mots du temps* may prove to be rather unreliable". She then went on to identify the issues yet to be tackled: the nature of meaning in photographs, "*how* photography communicates, how it persuades, how it alters behavior, if, indeed, it *does* any of these things", and more especially the definitions of the terms "photography" and "history", the declared topics of the conference. A polished performance by a perceptive observer, this speech ended the conference on an upbeat note and suggested fruitful directions for future meetings.

For someone attempting to become familiar with a specialized and rapidly developing field, the conference provided a marvellous learning experience. The general sessions and workshops were equalled in value by the exchanges with other specialists in the field, made accessible through the complete list of names and addresses of speakers and registrants in the conference booklet. The book display and numerous exhibits, tours and special events allowed for total immersion and a consequent broadening of outlook and approach. As with most good conferences, one went hoping for answers and came away at least knowing a few of the right questions.

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## Canadian Conference on Historical Resources

The Canadian Conference on Historical Resources first met in 1960, at the instigation of representatives of the provinces of British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Ontario. It now encompasses all thirteen federal, provincial, and territorial governments. Each government sends representatives from agencies directly or indirectly concerned with heritage preservation, the largest proportion being from museums and historic sites agencies. The purpose of the Conference is largely to provide an informal forum for government agencies in the field to exchange information and discuss mutual problems.

The eighteenth annual Conference took place in Victoria, B.C., from 16-20, October 1978. In addition to a panel discussion on archives and records management, the agenda dealt with certain topics in detail: National Museums policy and provincial priorities; latest developments in archeological research; the need for a definitive inventory of historic sites in Canada; area conservation. One of the most interesting sessions concerned the need for public education in area conservation presented by Michael Middleton, Executive Officer, Civic Trust of Britain. The Conference ended with a dinner (featuring one of the founding fathers of the Conference, Willard Ireland, as guest speaker) and a tour of historic sites in and around Victoria.

The session of most direct relevance to archivists was that on "Archives and Records Management", chaired by John McFarland, Director of the Historic Resources Branch in the Government of Manitoba. Panel members were the Provincial Archivist of B.C., Allan Turner, his counterpart in Manitoba, John Bovey, and myself. Considering the fact that so few archivists were present (the only others being Bill Ormsby, Archivist of Ontario, and Bill Open, Yukon Archives), the session was well received by the thirty or forty persons present. At the close of the morning it seemed that the relevance of archives and records management was quite clearly understood by the user agencies. The meeting expressed particular interest in the state of conservation in archives across Canada.

What is the future role of archives in this Conference? Most delegates naturally view

archives and archivists as essentially a service—but this should be expected and, within the context and purpose of the Conference, it seems proper. Nevertheless, archives are peripheral to the interests of most Conference delegates. That being the case, is participation by archives worthwhile or a waste of time? The dilemma is complete, for I left the seventeenth Conference in Fredericton in 1977 convinced that archival participation was useless, and emerged from the eighteenth Conference feeling that there was potential relevance. In fact, archivists will only get out of the Conference what they are willing to put into it. While ignoring the event would save the federal, provincial, and territorial archives some time and expense, it would also deprive them of a potentially useful forum. The archives in each jurisdiction will have to determine, in discussion with the appropriate government officials in the museum and historical sites community, the extent and nature of its participation in each future conference. My feeling is that they should promote quite active involvement and focus annual reports to the Conference on resources and facilities available for heritage research, and on problems directly related to them. Their objective should be to stimulate understanding and sympathy for archives within the historical resource community.

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## **North American Fur Trade**

In welcoming the several hundred participants to the Third North American Fur Trade Conference in Winnipeg, 4-6 May 1978, Professor W.L. Morton suggested with gratification that their attendance was evidence that fur trade studies had not been consigned either to oblivion or to the antiquarians.

The phenomenal increase in the use of the Hudson's Bay Company archives since they were transferred from Beaver House in London to Winnipeg is sufficient testimony to support Morton's observations. The papers presented at the conference were further confirmation of his remarks, and the enthusiasm engendered—indicated in preliminary plans for a fourth conference—provided grounds for believing that fur trade studies were "alive and well".

Many of the papers presented challenged any assumption that the history of the fur trade has been completed. Arthur Ray's (York University) paper on the Indian as a consumer, containing references to complaints by Hudson's Bay Company factors regarding the poor quality of trade goods may lead eventually to some revisions of Harold Innis' history of the fur trade and of his thesis in respect to the superiority of English over French trade goods and the relationship between that supposed superiority and the fall of New France. It is always disturbing to realize that Innis, who produced a work consistently referred to as the "standard" or "classic" study on the fur trade, did his research before the Hudson's Bay Company archives were open to historians.

Readers of Hudson's Bay Company history will have noted the profuse employment of Orkadians to whom the Company appeared to be addicted. Part of the reason was provided in an imaginative and seminal paper by John Nicks (University of Alberta) who had investigated local records in the Orkney Islands and presented some conclusions on the social, family and economic conditions in the area. This paper and that of Carol Judd on the ethnicity of the Hudson's Bay Company employees in the nineteenth century serve to illustrate but one of the many new avenues of research being followed in fur trade studies.

Other avenues could be mentioned: the fur trade and the mapping of North