America, the impact of the trade on Indian culture, the social and labour history of the fur trade. Historians appear to be playing a diminishing role in this work, the impetus in fur trade studies now being with the geographers, anthropologists, enthnologists, conservationists. Our current interest in northern resources and native land claims has provided an incentive to look at old records with a new purpose. The opening of the post-1870 records of the Hudson’s Bay Company has extended our view in such traditional areas of interest as the relationship between settlement and railway routes, and invited exploration into new areas such as the land business of the Company and the development of capital investment in the west. The beginnings of urban development in the West will have to be re-written in the light of the Company’s land records.

Fur trade correspondence, journals and reports can tell us more than the story of a business activity. Sylvia Van Kirk’s (University of Toronto) pioneering study of the role of women in the fur trade represents the use to which the records may be put as new approaches to a broader interpretation of history and other disciplines are undertaken. Through some of the fur trade records can be traced the territorality of individual Indian hunters, the composition of Indian groups, and residence and kinship patterns—all of interest to the anthropologist. The Hudson’s Bay Company’s shipping registers, which record the British firms from whom trade goods were purchased, might inspire a researcher to undertake a study of the association between the fur trade and the growth of the British industrial and manufacturing community. The great number of Grants, Rosses, Simpsons, Hargraves', Mactavish’s, and so on, in the fur trade and the tendency of sons and relatives to enter the trade suggest the possibility, perhaps for a sociologist, of a study of the Victorian family unit living in isolation from “civilized” society. The Hudson’s Bay Company archives’ extensive collection of employees’ wills, contracts and accounts, and biographical files would be of great assistance in such a study. One project already underway based on the Company’s records involves the study of deviant behaviour, personality disorders, and the effect of isolation on behaviour patterns and personality.

As the approaches to history and other disciplines change, and as new techniques within the disciplines evolve, so will the use to which fur trade records will be put. Computer technology makes manageable the statistical data in the records and will lead to studies in quantitative history. The only limit to be placed on the use of the records is the limit of the researcher’s imagination. The fur trade conference indicated how that imagination has been broadened in the last few years and led participants to express a feeling of anticipation for the results of this new research at future conferences. [Editor’s note: Papers of the conference will be published in 1979.]

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International Military History Colloquy

Representatives of twenty five countries met in Ottawa, 19-29 August 1978, for a session of the International Military History Colloquy. This gathering, held at irregular intervals and sponsored by the International Commission for Military History, took for its theme “Armed Forces and Colonial Development”. Papers from a distinguished group of academics and official historians ranged in time from imperial Rome to the policing of modern Palestine and in extent across the globe. The strongest impression left by the conference is that military history, long a highly specialized and distinct area of study, is rapidly moving into the historical mainstream while at the same time intensifying its emphasis on comparative studies.

A number of contributions dealt with established considerations like strategy and
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tactics but the most notable pieces attempted to incorporate the techniques and find-
ings of intellectual history, demography and social structure analysis. Indicative of the
trend was John Sly (USA) whose provocative paper on the North American colonies of
France, Spain and Great Britain hypothesised that the military development of these
colonies provided the central dynamic of their growth. Several Canadian papers were
presented: S.F. Wise on “The employment of Indians during the American Revolu-
tion. British military attitudes”, Fernand Ouellet on “Military officers and the social
structure in Quebec, 1662-1812” and R.A. Preston on “Military dependence and poli-
tical independence. The case of Canada”. It is not surprising that discussion among
such a group as this was stimulating. Wise’s paper, for instance, sparked a discussion
on the general use of native auxilliary forces and of colonial attitudes to them while
Ouellet initiated a controversy over the comparability of social and military structures
in France to those of the colonies. Conference proceedings are to be published and
archivists might do well to note from them the character of military historians’ widen-
ing interests.

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Public Archives of Canada

ICA Round Table

The eighteenth International Archival Round Table Conference was held in Nairobi,
Kenya, 10-13 October 1978. It was the first meeting of the Round Table in a developing
country. Indeed only two other conferences, those in Jerusalem in 1970 and in Ottawa
in 1974, have been held outside Europe. Sixty eight archivists from 42 countries parti-
cipated in the conference. This included 13 observers from Kenya and is somewhat
below the attendance at recent conferences. As a federal state Canada had three repre-
sentatives, Wilfred Smith, Bernard Weilbrenner and François Beaudin. The meetings
were held in the splendid new Kenyatta Conference Centre.

The single theme of the conference was “Standards for the establishment and organ-
ization of archival institutions.” Prior to the conference a “plan of inquiry” was sent
to 226 archival institutions requesting the submission of draft standards on aspects of
such subjects as security, transfers, appraisal, disposal, arrangement, description, staff
and budget. Participants in the conference were provided with an analysis of the replies
from 38 institutions (including 5 in Canada) and an Archival Statistical Model develop-
ed by Erik Katelaar of the Netherlands for UNESCO.

The theme was discussed in four sessions entitled maintenance (buildings and equip-
ment), mission (appraisal, arrangement, description and access), means (staff and
budgets) and archival statistics. There was a consensus that standards are useful as well
as evidence of professional maturity, that they will be difficult to develop because of
great differences in repositories and practices, that they must be flexible. Much discus-
sion centered on the location of archives buildings, on the number of staff needed per
metre of records, on the significance of standards: should they state ideal or minimum
conditions or should they indicate a reasonably good level that all institutions should
try to attain? No firm conclusions were reached. In resolutions the delegates recom-
manded that the International Council on Archives in collaboration with UNESCO,
work toward the definition of professional and technical standards on all aspects of
archival work, including conservation and access to users; singled out more specific
tasks: a survey on impediments to freer access, a study of the possibility of creating an
international reader’s card, and the preparation of a multilingual glossary of archival
terms. A pilot project on archival statistics will be carried out early in 1979 since the