

The list of further readings includes the standard sources: Berner, Bordin and Warner, Brichford, Burke, Duckett, Lytle, and Schellenberg. Barrow and Cunha represent conservation. Items on records management, micrographics, confidentiality, security, reference and access, and exhibits, as well as on local history, ethnic, religious, college, university, photographic and architectural archives find a place in this short list. Select lists, by their very nature, are easy targets. This one lays itself open less than most to unfair criticism. Only one entry, Densmore's "Understanding and Using Early Nineteenth Century Account Books", seems out of place because of its apparent specificity. More puzzling is the absence of Norton, while an international flavour could have been achieved with the inclusion, for example, of Jenkinson, Cook, and Taylor, although in this day of lengthy intervals between manuscript and actual publication, the latter's ICA Handbook on arrangement and description may have appeared too late for inclusion.

Both Gracy's clean prose style and the pleasing production of this booklet make it easy reading. The sections are clearly indicated in bold type, and an absence of typographical errors bears testimony to the care that went into it.

The reviewer had one final, and to Gracy's intent, peripheral reaction. This booklet is a self-professed introduction, and introductions imply a next stage. It is a sobering reflection that, as Gracy himself states, general archival treatises, as opposed to the experiences of single institutions, can still be counted on one hand. When he succinctly states our principles and procedures in some thirty-six pages, and a special issue of *Communiqué* entitled *Archives in Canada*, with a considerably longer bibliography, takes not many more to cover essentially the same ground, one begins to experience heretical thoughts. It is to be hoped that the archival discipline *can* support more substantive syntheses of its particular theory and knowledge.

In the meantime, this is a booklet to be recommended to those who are deciding whether or not to enter the profession, or to those outside our ranks who wish to understand archival activity better.

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Images in time: A Basic Guide to the Processing and Preservation of Historical Photographs. JEAN E. DRYDEN, Provincial Archives of Alberta. [Edmonton]: Access, 1982. 56 p., illus. ISBN 0-919685-05-6. \$9.95.

Photographs are fast becoming the most widely used of historical documents. Collections are eagerly acquired by archives, museums and libraries, many of whom lack adequate information on their care. It was to meet this need that the publication *Images in Time: A Basic Guide to the Processing and Preservation of Historical Photographs* was prepared.

Images in Time presents the Provincial Archives of Alberta's approach to historical photographs. Through a series of short, well-illustrated chapters it covers topics of acquisitions, descriptive processing, technical processing and reference services. The reproduction of basic forms, sample pages, catalogue cards and so on, make it useful to

custodians of photographic archives who are either starting out or seeking to improve their procedures. Of great significance is the emphasis placed upon proper acquisition and initial control procedures, vital steps often neglected in the rush to make materials available for use. Also valuable is the discussion of technical processing and storage with much-needed emphasis upon care and handling.

What is sadly missing though, is any acknowledgement of archival principles or theory. The closest the author gets to a discussion of arrangement and description is a mere two paragraphs under the title "selection and sorting." Respect for original order is recommended; provenance, however, is never mentioned. Instead the reader is offered such advice as: "If there is no apparent order to the collection, sorting like images together will make the collection easier to use." While this may well be true for the "picture-agency" use to which photographic archives are often put, it is not true for research which requires information on the provenance of a collection.

Similarly, the unqualified urging that "pictures that have no relevance to the collecting mandate of the institution, images that are out of focus, and images that cannot possibly be identified" be weeded out and transferred, discarded or returned, is hasty at best. Do we handle textual records so categorically? By "pictures that have no relevance," I am assuming that the author means photographs whose subject content is beyond the geographical or subject collecting areas of the institution. But what of the information a photograph may reveal about the photographer or agency responsible for generating it, or the individual responsible for collecting it? For example, a photographer may have experimented with "soft-focus" as an art form, or an individual may have travelled extensively. Is it not a great loss if that information is not acknowledged and preserved in some way?

I am not trying to suggest that all collections of photographs possess evidential value. Many simply will defy any attempt at selection or arrangement based on other than informational content. Nor am I trying to suggest that all photographs should be retained regardless of content or condition. No archives could afford such a liberal policy. What I am suggesting is that there is much more to "selecting and sorting" than Dryden reveals. The truth is that many photographic collections do have evidential value, and neglect of this value contravenes fundamental principles of archival science.

Admittedly, a basic guide cannot cover all aspects of the care of historical photographs. Archival principles, however, are basic to the care of all archival documents. Their absence here is a serious oversight. Even the bibliography fails to list a work on archival principles and practices. *Images in Time* would have been much more effective if the author had traded some of the ample photographic decoration for more explanation of the archival nature of photographic records.

Margery Tanner Hadley

The Past in Focus: Photography and British Columbia, 1858-1914. Edited by JOAN M. SCHWARTZ. Special issue of BC STUDIES (No. 52, WINTER 1981-82), 177p., illus. \$6.00 pa.

Archivists have been in the vanguard of historical photographic studies in Canada. Not content to await historians and others to discover the caches of images collected and preserved in their repositories, they have forged ahead with the presentation and interpretation of Canadian photography. From archivists came the *Photographs and Archives* symposium that