

Whose Handmaiden?: The Archivist and the Institutional Historian

by **DON PAGE***

While archivists may no longer be characterized as merely the hewers of wood and drawers of water for historians, they have been slow in developing a more satisfying substitute. Some have managed to overcome their feelings of professional inferiority by competing rather successfully with historians in a declining publisher's market. Others have become the masters of more sophisticated archival management techniques. More recently has come an acknowledgment that their real identity as a unique profession may lie in the development of a distinctive archival scholarship. "The transformation of historical research interests and methods and the changing source base for historical studies," wrote one archivist, "are bringing about a shift in the centre of gravity in research which makes it all the more necessary for archivists to have a scholarly understanding of the records in their care."¹ That would have been a much simpler task a generation ago when the mainstay of most archivists was collections of private papers. That was before archivists were engulfed by institutional records of voluminous proportions and, in the Public Archives of Canada at least, the prospect of government departments disgoring even more quickly their dormant records in order to avoid the problems arising from the implementation of the Access to Information Act.

Quite apart from the fact that institutional records are usually measured in thousands of metres of shelf space, there are other hurdles for those who seek a scholarly understanding of them. Before their value to outside researchers can be determined, it is necessary to understand who created such records and how they were used. Clues to these questions can usually be found quite readily in correspondence in private collections, but the nature of institutional records makes this more difficult. For one thing they have been written and assembled by thousands of individuals whose relationship with each other must be understood before the contents can be evaluated. While organizational charts and telephone directories will help, they fail to elucidate the important informal network that brings about institutional decisions in the context of idiosyncratic variables. Moreover, in a modern institutional conglomerate, the formulation of policy may not have been the sole prerogative of the chief executive officer or responsible

* The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Department of External Affairs.

1 T. Nesmith, "Archives from the Bottom Up: Social History and Archival Scholarship," *Archivaria* 14 (Summer 1982), p. 22.

cabinet minister. Neither bureaucratic nor political committees engaged in collective decision-making processes are prone to leave many written clues about how decisions were reached. Posterity may be fooled into believing that the prolific memoranda writer was more important than the thinker, the commentator, or the person of influence sitting around the conference table. Thus the questions of authenticity, accuracy, and research value that form the heart of archival scholarship cannot be answered from the records alone. The very nature of institutional records demands that archivists seek closer links with those who were present at their creation.

The traditional link between archivists and institutions has been the records managers. They can provide much technical information that will be useful to the shipper and cataloguer, but they are rarely able to offer insights into how the record was created or why it is deficient. In gathering, cataloguing, storing, and retrieving such records, they are usually unaware of how institutional practices affect the written records. Moreover, it is *their responsibility to manage what they have been given* rather than to seek out gaps in the record. From their perspective, records that are dormant for too long need to be assigned to the archives or the incinerator. Thus neither their knowledge nor temperament are conducive to providing much assistance to those writing the history of record collections as a guide to their usage.

Ideally, archivists would ensure that the basis for their scholarly understanding of *the records was being built at the same time as the records were being created*. But policy-makers are not in the habit of calling in archivists when decisions are being made. Instead, archivists must reconstruct the history of the record long after it was conceived. While many archival institutions have an oral history programme designed to fill in the gaps in the records, it comes into play only after the records are assessed. Relying solely on belated interviews with surviving authors to provide the foundation for archival scholarship is at best tenuous, as anyone engaged in retrospective interviewing will testify. While such interviews may help to penetrate the fictions which institutional actors create to enshroud their activities, any substantial passage of time will distort the interplay between records and recollections. Someone closer to the events being documented must provide the clues as to how the record was compiled and why it was written the way it was. By the time records are assigned to the archives, the institution itself has usually lost interest in them. While institutional historians are not likely to have been present when the records were created, they may have had occasion to use them before they were *consigned to the archives*. In their own self interest, archivists need to develop a closer working relationship with institutional historians who have a concern for ensuring the records' completeness and proper usage long before they are declared redundant to the institution's daily operations.

Being quite independent of the academy, institutional historians work on the basis that the application of their skills can be beneficial to their institution's current operations by evaluating, assessing, and interpreting what is going on in the light of the recent past. Whereas academic historians choose their own fields of research, institutional historians have their subjects given to them. As many archivists appear unaware of what institutional historians do and how such work would benefit them, it may be useful to explain the public or applied aspects of institutional history.

Institutional historians are most often identified by their published works. For a variety of reasons, many institutions like Massey-Ferguson, the Bank of Montreal, Home Oil, Eldorado Nuclear, Labatts, Ontario Hydro, MacMillan Bloedel, and the Public Service Commission prefer to commission the writing of their histories.² While such histories are not without value to archivists, there is more to be gained from liaison with staff historians or researchers who are within the corporate entity and are regarded as a corporate asset. Those who work with an institution's comparatively recent records in order to illuminate the present for the benefit of the institution's operations are not always professionally trained historians. Nevertheless, under whatever guise, they perform what should be, and is increasingly regarded as, the task of the institutional historian.³

In recent years the public or applied history movement in the United States has done much to publicize the role of the institutional historian. We have as yet no Canadian equivalent to the history department at the Wells Fargo Bank or Coca Cola.⁴ In addition to writing an official history of the bank, the twelve-person history department at Wells Fargo, headed by a vice president, conducts historical research for legal, operational, planning, marketing and public relations purposes.⁵ Coca Cola's historian, Philip Mooney, contributes to the development of marketing strategies by assessing programmes of past decades.⁶ Personnel training programmes are also enhanced by the historian's visualization of the firm's evolution as a means of instilling motivational pride based on an appreciation of the company's heritage. Marshalling of evidence for the defence of trademarks is an area where the historian's contribution has paid off in real dollars saved. Staff historians are also used to offset the frequently negative aspects of business history being taught in universities. In this instance, historians develop displays and special programmes to rectify some of these deficiencies and to shift attention onto the positive contributions to society made by the corporation. "Once managers recognize the value of the corporate past," wrote the authors of a recent article in the *Harvard Business Review*, "they can enhance their ability to diagnose problems, reassess policy, measure performance, and even direct change."⁷ Certainly that was the lesson to be learned from *Newsweek's* report of the work of the historian at Polaroid's plant in Waltham, Massachusetts, where an examination of past management decisions provided the clues to the plant's troubles with declining morale.⁸

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- 2 A. Silversides, "Corporate Histories Can Be Costly Vanity," *Globe and Mail*, "Report on Business," 22 January 1983, p. 81; C. Norman, "Business Archives and Business History," *The History and Social Science Teacher* 18 (December 1982), pp. 91-99.
 - 3 See R. Kelley, "Public History: Its Origins, Nature and Prospects," and R. Hewlett, "The Practice of History in the Federal Government," *The Public Historian* 1 (Fall 1978), pp. 16-36.
 - 4 This is not to say that Canadian institutions are not making similar use of their records; rather, it is on a smaller scale at Bell Canada, the Royal Bank, Imperial Oil, etc.
 - 5 M. Price, "Corporate Historians Turning Past Accounts into Big Assets," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 March 1981.
 - 6 P. Mooney, "The Historian in The Pinstriped Suit: The Practical Application of History in the Corporate Environment," (paper delivered at the Fourth Annual Conference on Public History, Chicago, 23 April 1982) p. 5.
 - 7 G.D. Smith and L.E. Steadman, "Present Value of Corporate History," *Harvard Business Review* LIX (November-December 1981), p. 165.
 - 8 S. Dentzer and L. Donosty, "Profiting from the Past," *Newsweek*, 5 November 1982, pp. 73-74.

By stretching the institutional memory, historians enhance the ability of senior managers to direct and cope with change.⁹ In these instances history is not seen, like corporate culture, as the defender of the *status quo*. It can be used to demythologize the nostalgia of the good-old-days syndrome or point out the irrelevant. A tradition that worked well in the past to satisfy certain conditions may be a liability in changed times. The natural tendency is to distort the past by reading into it our own experiences, ideas, and values instead of treating it on its own terms or in fragments. The historian must see and explain the flow of events as a process over time. In this context, assessments of past capital appropriations, personnel decisions, and advertising strategies have a contemporary relevance. Although there is usually plenty of financial reporting and accounting to provide a quantitative assessment of the past, it is the historian who can add the qualitative aspect.

Historians in government institutions can perform similar tasks. Somewhat analogous in size and function to the Wells Fargo history department is the Historical Division of the Department of External Affairs. Unlike other departments, its ties with the archival and historical professions stretch back to its foundation, for it was established primarily as an archival institution charged with bringing together in a more orderly fashion all records pertaining to Canada's international affairs. Its first Under-Secretary, Sir Joseph Pope, believed that Canadian negotiators would be in a stronger position if they were buttressed by a good record collection. Many of its earliest officers had studied history. During the Second World War, it recruited so many historians on temporary assignment that Professor George Brown of the University of Toronto referred to it as the historian's Babylonian captivity.¹⁰ It also played a pivotal role in the establishment in 1944 of the Advisory Committee on Public Records and the writing of wartime histories for instructional purposes. While rapid postwar recruiting in other disciplines and the subsequent managerial revolution may have weakened the department's ties with the historical profession, it did not destroy its sense of history. It is by no accident that every major policy review undertaken by the department has been directed and written by historians or those who were capable of functioning as such. As Secretary of State for External Affairs, Paul Martin, wrote in 1967:

Although the foreign policy of any country must from time to time be adapted to changing circumstances, there are in it continuing threads which represent the ideals, as well as the interests, of a people. A knowledge of past policy is therefore of value not only to scholars who study and interpret Canadian history but also to those who seek a broader understanding than a knowledge of current events can provide.¹¹

In the last decade historians have played a more discernible role in presenting the lessons of the past for the benefit of current operations. Within the foreign-policy-making process, departmental historians have on occasion had unique opportunities

9 P. Drucker, *Managing in Turbulent Times* (New York, 1980), pp. 68-71.

10 University of Toronto Archives, *George Brown Papers, G. Brown to C. Stacey, 3 February 1944*. Included in this number were George Glazebrook, Robert A. MacKay, R. Gordon Riddell, S. Morley Scott, Goldwin Smith, and Frederic Soward.

11 P. Martin in the preface to *Documents on Canadian External Relations, volume 1* (Ottawa, 1967) p. iii.

to utilize their skills owing to the notoriously short institutional memory deriving from a rotational foreign service and more recently from the movement of senior public servants up the bureaucratic ladder through tours of duty in several departments. Management techniques have tended to become more important than a familiarity with past policy developments in running a department. It is no longer guaranteed that the under-secretary and those around him will embody the wisdom of past experiences in international diplomacy. Others must be relied upon to draw the lessons from the past. While diplomats may retain valid snapshots of the past, their normally short two to four year postings to different countries inhibit the transformation over time of these snapshots into a valid moving picture of Canada's past relations with a particular country or issue. Moreover, there are built-in limitations against the foreign service officer performing such a function. While many recruits enter the department with a solid training in research techniques, they quickly lose such skills in diplomatic reporting which requires that reports and analysis be confined to brief telegrams. Before long they have lost their familiarity with techniques used in studying larger subjects. In these situations historians may become the bureaucrat's tool for investigating the background to policies which some of their predecessors would more likely have known first-hand.

History can provide a context for decision-making. Thus it was historians who had to uncover, analyze, assemble, and write the background information for the Stanfield enquiry into the possible change of location of the Canadian Embassy in Israel and for the Royal Commission on Conditions of Foreign Service. When India exploded a nuclear device in 1974, voluminous files had to be examined in order to determine what arrangements had been made with India since 1956 for the use of nuclear technology and reactors acquired from Canada. The historian's brain and adrenalin were pressed into service as the minister prepared to meet the press and Parliament.

The public historian may also be called upon to use his knowledge of the past in providing information on which others can make plans for the future.¹² In preparing for the proclamation of the Access to Information and Privacy Acts, it was necessary to have the historians elucidate past experiences which would bear on the application of the complementary procedures clause. Only when this was done was it possible to establish the criteria for screening files prior to disclosure. Another historian studied South Asia with a view to making recommendations for future Canadian policy in that region. In 1976 it was deemed desirable to develop a new strategy for reaching the United States media with a Canadian message. An historian reviewed past policies for the benefit of a Heads of Post meeting and then went on to a media relations seminar with the experts. After assimilating the lessons of the past with the testimony of the present day experts and the practitioners in the consulates, his wrap-up presentation was entitled "Where have we been and where are we going?" A new information training programme and strategy was launched thereafter. Two years ago the senior historian was asked to join a three-person task force responsible for drafting a cabinet document on what the Department of

12 One must be careful in not claiming too high a profile for public historians. See T. O'Donnell, "Pitfalls Along the Path of Public History," *Public Historian* IV (Winter 1982), pp. 65-72.

External Affairs will require in order to respond to the world of the 1980s. The path to the future must draw on the past for some of its illumination or remain full of impeding stumps.

Programme review is a complementary assignment to the planning exercise. It helps illuminate organizational issues. A review of information programmes between 1945 and 1972 was a prelude to the Director-General of Public Affairs' proposed structural change because it explained why and how the processes had evolved before he came on the scene. When a newly formed Policy Analysis Group was experiencing difficulty in obtaining the attention of senior management, its chairman had an historian study past policy planning exercises with a view to discovering what had made them succeed or fail. In justifying current personnel policies, it has been necessary to rely on guesses of what were perceived to be earlier trends. It was the historians in the department who developed a computer-based research bank on departmental officers in the belief that factually documented trends of the past would assist those wrestling with how to plan for the foreign service of tomorrow. Where you are going very often depends upon where you have been. The institutional historian fights against the natural tendency of managers to distort the past and its lessons by reading it in the light of their own experiences, ideas, and values. By stretching the managers' awareness of the institution beyond their immediate experiences, the institutional historian can enhance their ability to handle change and lingering problems.

Litigation has also been a powerful argument for keeping good records. From these records, historians and lawyers have had to draw up their cases for arctic sovereignty, boundary disputes, and maritime claims, much in the same way that Joseph had envisaged it. In addition to retrieving the relevant documents, the historian also writes a commentary thereon for those who have no time to read them in their entirety.

Education, requiring an interpretation of the past, is also an area in which historians may become involved. Within the department, this may take the form of a briefing for those being posted abroad or an orientation lecture for new employees. Often it is part of the department's public relations programme. This has involved the preparation of a film about the department, the mounting of regular displays, the writing of several histories and white papers on particular aspects of the department's past, the publication of collections of documents, and the delivery of numerous lectures and speeches. This may call for an explanatory defence of past policy on an open-line radio show or a more sophisticated off-the-record contribution to a graduate seminar on a university campus. In each instance, the department uses its historians to reveal insights into past activities as a means of educating selected publics in the reasons behind current policies and activities. When its public historians are not themselves playing such a role as expositors, they can be found behind the scenes writing portions of the speeches for those who will be mounting the public platform.

What all this varied activity of the institutional historian adds up to is that they, or those who perform their function of making the past relevant to the present, have an unrivaled knowledge of the records in which they work and a special interest in ensuring their completeness. The challenge of archival scholarship is to tap the knowledge of the institutional historian who interprets, preserves, and even makes the historical records.

In the course of conducting policy-related research, the institutional historian must ask many of the questions that would at a much later date confront the archivist. What records do we have? How do we know or verify their authenticity and completeness? For what purpose were such records compiled and by whom? What must we read into such records before we can understand them in the context in which they were written? In answering these and related questions, institutional historians have two advantages over archivists. They are already familiar with the daily operational procedures of the institution and the people who participated in the events and made the record. They also have access to the actors while they can still recall such events and check them against the written record.

Unless the institutional historians are aware of how the decision-making process works, then their contribution as interpreters may well be limited to deciphering signatures and marginalia. For example, anyone assessing the contribution of Norman Robertson would be at a severe disadvantage if only the written records were examined. He wrote little himself, but inspired others to develop his ideas or to go deeper into their own. An uninformed posterity would have given too much credit to the writers of the memoranda or dispatches which he may or may not have signed. His biographer had to understand the man and his relations with his subordinates before much sense could be made out of the written record. To fail to do so can lead to unsubstantiated and misleading conclusions, as when two academic historians ascribed to Robertson some anti-Semitic remarks contained in an undated, unsigned, and uninitialled two page document which was attached to a Robertson memorandum on a related subject.¹³ An archivist might have been able to set the record straight from an examination of the document, but it was the institutional historian who was asked to examine it in the context of the man's ideas.

Institutional historians will not be fooled by the paucity of memoranda written by those at the top and the abundance written by prolific juniors. They should know at what level the most fruitful interchange of ideas takes place, when experience and jurisdictional rivalries are pitted against each other, where officials are cowed into being "yes men," who makes a committee or chain of command work, and who really deserves credit for an operation. Admittedly, they will be under pressure to tell the story as it is related to them, but is that any worse than having to rely on only one witness with an aging memory? It is expected that they will be close enough to the scene of action that they can discern reality from propaganda or, at the very least, to ensure that the other side has a chance to have its views recorded so that posterity can judge between them. It is this familiarity with those who make the system work that makes the institutional historian such an asset to archivists who seek to understand and evaluate the record.

It would, however, be misleading to conclude that such a familiarity with the system and actors would allow the institutional historian to write more accurate history than those outside the institution. When institutional historians go public,

13 I. Abella and H. Troper, *None is Too Many* (Toronto, 1982), p. 46. See Public Archives of Canada, RG 25, D3, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, volume 779, file 382. Based on the book, an editorial in the April 1983 issue of *Quest: Canada's Urban Magazine* refers to "the slippery Norman Robertson, now dead and long hailed as a model civil servant," saying: 'We don't want to take too many Jews but in the present circumstances particularly, we don't want to say so.' (page 5). See also the exchange of correspondence on this controversy published in the September issue.

they are under constraints, either real or imagined, that may somewhat distort the truth. Their histories, in the final analysis, can be only what the institution will allow to be published. What was not written may be as important as what was written. Such histories cannot be taken as definitive guides by archivists.¹⁴ The institutional historians' unrivalled knowledge of the records will ultimately be of greater value to archivists than their published histories. Better means must be found for tapping that resource as archival clients will later want to know what was once common knowledge to the institutional historian.

A further reason for archivists working alongside of institutional historians is their joint interest in records preservation. As institutions expand there is a proportionate increase in the paper record. Sooner or later a policy of selective retention or, for the more wealthy and historically minded, a system of microstorage must be adopted.

Like most automatic systems, a records destruction schedule reveals its weaknesses over time. Most have not been designed to preserve records in important auxiliary areas of interest to historians. By being on the spot, public historians can play a crucial role in preserving for their own use, and that of archivists, what file managers might otherwise consign to the incinerator. For example, in the application of the federal government's records destruction schedule, it was recently discovered that the role which the Canadian public played in confronting and prodding the decision-makers during the Nigerian Civil War of 1968-69 can never be documented because the files have been destroyed. A similar fate awaits those who would want to assess the public pressure against an exchange of ambassadors with the Vatican during the 1960s. In both instances, perceptions of the public mood were important factors in the official decision-making process. So it was with the overthrow of the Allende government in 1973, but an historian was able to rescue this file. Without these records, scholars examining this subject in the future would not be able to understand official Canadian attitudes.

The automatic destruction, after a specified period of retention, of federal administrative records offers another example. While many of these are peripheral purchase records, contained in their midst are the records of the Department of External Affairs' struggle with austerity in 1969. No one could possibly understand the morale of the foreign service and the reasons for subsequently closing six posts had these files not been preserved from destruction. An historian, seeking to garner the lessons of this salutary experience for those who would later have to administer cutbacks, preserved these records from destruction.

In addition to learning that one's raw materials have been destroyed, the historian may also be confronted with substantial gaps in the files. In theory, a file in an institution's central registry system should contain the complete record of what has transpired. But who is going to verify its completeness? Records managers are not able to do so and the main actors are too busy. By the time that an outside researcher has the opportunity to examine a declassified file, the means for gathering together

14 O.L. Graham, Jr. "Historians and the World of (Off-Campus) Power," *Public Historian* 1 (Winter 1979), pp. 34-40.

the missing pieces have all but been lost. Surviving authors may be located, but the interviewer usually finds that the precise contents of their dispatches have long since faded into distant memories.

For the archivist who is to inherit an institutional collection, there is a problem in that such files had been kept for operational rather than historical reference. A decision between retention and destruction would have been made to facilitate operational continuation without regard to any hypothetical needs of the historian of the future.¹⁴ Important marginalia were added to the working copies of documents which, for operational convenience, were usually kept by desk officers rather than in the central registry. Working files left for successors unfortunately have a way of disappearing when an issue dies or another officer takes over responsibility.

The files on the World Food Conference held in November 1974 offer a good illustration of what can happen. Three years later an officer discovered in a filing cabinet inherited from his predecessor copies of twenty-two telegrams containing the policy directives which had been sent between Ottawa and the Canadian delegates to the conference. Being unsure what to do with them, the officer sent them to registry. There they were placed in the volume of the file containing material for 1977. That in itself may not have been a problem as long as the archivist or researcher made a thorough study of the subject. By examining the volume for 1974, however, the real value of these later additions becomes apparent. Only half of these telegrams had been placed on the file during the course of the conference. Only through a very laborious process of tracing telegram numbers through other files could the researcher have discovered how many were missing. The problem had not been with the registry, but with half a dozen busy officers. In the course of their passing around copies no one had seen to it that a copy had been placed on the registry file. Assuming that Ottawa would have a complete set of the exchanges, the delegation had destroyed their copies. While an alert officer had belatedly rectified this oversight, in most cases it is left to the institution's historians to discover and, when possible, to rectify such mistakes. This is not very reassuring. There is too much left to chance. Historians are not custodians of records. Archivists themselves must develop and institute better custodial practices for preserving what they deem to be of value.

Equally important is the filling of gaps in a story for which the documentation was never complete. Much business between divisions, branches, and posts is transacted over the telephone. By this means, written instructions may be changed or superceded, thereby leaving a subsequent researcher baffled as to why a representative did not act or vote as instructed. Operational procedures of the time may make it impossible to add a retrospective account or, as often happens, such information becomes so well known to the actors that no one bothers to record it. In other instances, the reasons for a decision, or at least the more sensitive ones, are deliberately kept off the record to ensure secrecy or to prevent others with access to the file from knowing the full story. Politically or personally motivated interventions, for example, are often handled in this manner. While a ministerial call may have prompted an expenditure, the file contains only the subsequent bureaucratic justification for it. The advent of the Access to Information and Privacy legislation is already having a profound impact on what is being recorded. At least one government department has warned its managers to "ensure that all programme

personnel are sensitive to the fact that under the new law comments, opinions and other relevant information in official correspondence may eventually be available to the individuals concerned or to the general public."¹⁵ Public servants used to anonymity are taking no chances. The real reason for a decision or a choice of personnel may no longer be confided to the file. Institutional historians cannot divorce themselves from the reality of bureaucratic politics or they will become redundant. While they may be lowly people on the totem pole, only as they know the centre of power with its undercurrents, rivalries, and idiosyncratic variables will they be able to guide archivists through the pitfalls of too heavy a reliance on the written word that they inherit. The institutional historian will also be a valuable ally when archivists have to organize and evaluate private collections of papers of former ministers or employees of the institution.

Being in a better position than others to discover such gaps, institutional historians may have the opportunity to supplement the written record with oral history interviews. While transcripts of these interviews may be locked up for as long as, or longer than, the written record, at least posterity will not be deprived of the insight they offer. Trusted institutional historians are also at a distinct advantage when it comes to interviewing officials on sensitive issues. Since they share the same level of security clearance as the interviewee, employees are more likely to be frank in sharing their views on sensitive subjects such as the FLQ crisis. Moreover, the institutional historian should have access to classified documentation in preparing for the interview and in checking the accuracy of the testimony. The interplay between records and recollections becomes the basis for the institutional historian's explanation of the past. Transcripts of these interviews will become valuable assets for the archivist. Where they do not exist, archivists would be well advised to encourage and assist an institution in establishing an oral history program.

Although archivists will be the long-term beneficiaries of every management decision to take stock of their institution's historical records, they may find it in their interest to encourage such action by pointing out the uses that can be made of dusty old records as a living resource. In the Department of External Affairs and the Conference Board of Canada, the payoffs have been in planning and the setting of decisions in their proper context. At the Royal Bank, the benefit has been in strategic economic planning. History provides the point of departure in analyzing current problems. Both the Justice Department and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs have found historical research an indispensable tool in litigation connected with boundary and native claims. The Bank of Nova Scotia used its records in defending its operations before the Ontario Securities Commission. At General Motors, the company's history is used to support programmes in management education. Historical research in the files of the Public Service Commission, the Department of Regional and Economic Expansion, and the Air Traffic Controllers have been used to illuminate organizational issues. Regimental and unit histories have sustained morale in the armed forces. The T. Eaton Company, the Bank of Nova Scotia, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have used their histories for building loyalty to the institution among its employees. MacMillan Bloedel and

15 *Unclassified Department of External Affairs instruction to all Heads of Mission, 16 May 1983.*

Home Oil wished to make known their contributions to the community. Corporate history at Bell Canada is a powerful marketing and advertising tool that gives "Ma Bell" a distinctive character. The National Research Council uses comparisons with the past to obtain public support for government funding. The first life insurance company to transact business in Canada, the Standard Life Assurance Company, has enhanced its 1982 annual report by a retrospective look at the company's record of service and growth over the last 150 years. Anniversaries are bound to send people scurrying to the archives to find out what it used to be like. At Seagrams, historical research is being used to mount a huge public relations exercise. If Canadian institutions have on the whole been slow to realize that hiding their past will only darken their future, both archivists and historians have good reasons to encourage a more enlightened view of their records.

Whatever applications the institution's history may have, in the process of identifying and articulating them the institutional historian will be doing a great service for the archivist who will ultimately inherit a fuller and better organized collection. As archivists learn to draw on the expertise of the institutional historians, they will be able to develop a scholarly history of records that will benefit researchers long after the actors and institutional historians have passed away.