

The Spanish dollar was, for most of the period covered, the most common coin in the colonies. However, when McCullough uses the term "dollar," it is not always clear, especially in the nineteenth century, whether it is the Spanish dollar, the American dollar, or the Canadian dollar that is being discussed. For those using the volume as a handbook it might have been useful to have had slightly more discussion of exchange rates between the British North American colonies and the United States, and a table of exchange for the American dollar such as that provided for sterling (table 40). McCullough has not done so because of the problem of locating adequate sources and while this is no doubt true for the early period it seems strange that the information could not be found for the mid- to late nineteenth century.

McCullough's study originated as a Parks Canada research report and is available in Parks Canada's microfiche report series. Dundurn Press is to be congratulated for its participation in the co-publishing programme. It has produced a volume which is appealing to both an academic audience and the general reader. The text is supported by extensive endnotes and the bibliography provides a useful listing of both manuscript and published sources, the latter indicating that numismatic research in Canada is more extensive and useful than many realize. There are some annoying typesetting errors: overprinting of part of a table (p. 203); \$5.00 rather than \$500 (p. 275); and run-on bibliographic references (p. 318); but these are obviously publisher's errors.

Besides its general value to researchers, this volume provides archivists with new understanding of the research potential of financial records. What is now needed is a volume of similar scope on colonial accounting methods and financial records keeping.

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**Guide to the Holdings of the Archives of Ontario.** BARBARA L. CRAIG and RICHARD W. RAMSAY, eds. Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, 1985. 2 vols. 698 p. and an index of 95 p. ISBN 0-7729-0925-3 \$9.00. (Available to the public from the Archives of Ontario only in microfiche edition.)

Though the appointment of a provincial archivist dates to 1903, the Archives of Ontario has only now published a most welcome guide to the eighty-five thousand cubic feet of government records and ten thousand cubic feet of private papers which it holds. Offprint in a two-volume spiral-bound hard copy for institutional use and in a microfiche edition for public sale, it provides a simpler entrée to these records than existing sources, notably the *Union List of Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories*. As such, it will undoubtedly become a valuable aid to those wishing basic information on the archives' holdings.

The guide begins with a short introduction describing the development of the institution, its current organization, and the way in which the guide itself is set up. The collections are described in individual entries which follow, first for the holdings of government bodies (394 collections, including 210 sets of municipal records), and then for the archives' remarkably diverse assemblage of private papers. To make the guide more useful, the editors have adopted a standardized format: each holding is given a numbered entry which includes, at a minimum, the name of the collection, its extent, and a short description of the content of the records. Where applicable, the editors include

information on restrictions and the availability of finding aids; for some sets of papers, they include an introduction explaining its provenance and/or the historical importance of its subject. To overcome vagaries in archival organization — for example, the papers of more than one individual within a single collection — the editors have added an index by name and subject. This feature alone goes a considerable distance towards making the holdings of the Archives of Ontario accessible.

Simply to have created such a listing makes this a worthwhile project, and the editors are to be congratulated for offering a sourcebook which will undoubtedly be a valuable addition to the shelves of the province's libraries and research institutions. Though one may regret that the economies of publishing dictated a format which hardly ensures widespread accessibility, any researcher familiar with the problems of dealing with the Archives of Ontario and the growing complexities of the *Union List* will applaud the simplicity and organization of this new guide.

In projects of this type, the level of achievement is measured by the scope of the original design, the resources one had to work with, the support one received, and the demands of the audience one is aiming to serve. In this instance, one cannot but sympathize with the daunting challenge faced by the editors in undertaking such a project. To impose a standardized format on so much material is a forbidding task, particularly when the archives own aids show the mark of many hands of varying degrees of professionalism over many years. During much of its existence, the institution's collection policies in private manuscripts could most charitably be regarded as eclectic, while it has been saddled throughout with what has often been an incautious government records policy. The Archives of Ontario has never received the kind of government support it has needed to become the senior archival institution it ought to be.

It is a favorite activity for researchers to curse archival institutions and their guides for their sins, real and imagined, and users of this finding aid will no doubt fault it for errors of both omission and commission. In future editions, the editors might wish to review several of their decisions in areas of format and approach. To its credit, the guide brings together standardized information on the holdings, both government and private, of the Archives of Ontario. The format chosen is easy to understand, the organizational principles are simple and straightforward, and the entries appear to be complete and helpful. The use of the word processor, offset printing, and spiral binding for hard copy and microfiche for scholarly distribution makes sense in today's publishing world, whether we like it or not. On all of these points, the sponsors and editors of this guide deserve praise.

Making these choices entails costs, however, and some of the decisions made are puzzling. Why were the generally more informative entries in the *Union List* not used more extensively in this guide? Compare, for example, the different treatments of the records of the Canada Permanent Mortgage Corporation. The *Union List* describes them as follows:

Original, 1553 pages, 1857-1877.

Two letterbooks. Blotter copies of outgoing letters relating to settlement of estates, real estate insurance, mortgage payments, signed by J.H. Mason, Secretary and Treasurer.

The guide's entry for the same collection reads:

4 inches. 1857-1877

Consists of letterbooks of J.H. Mason, Toronto Agent for the company.

In every case checked, the *Union List* entry is more informative (if often less detailed in terms of archival organization) than the guide entry.

The guide also imposes, imperfectly, an alphabetic listing of its private manuscripts. Several collections are out of alphabetical order, and this slip makes it difficult to find them without recourse to the index published at the back of volume 2. To take only two of several examples, entry 0434, which describes the Johns C. Steele Diaries, is incomprehensibly lodged between the Lyman Barclay Papers and the Alexander Barnet Family Papers; the records of Planned Parenthood Ontario are carelessly inserted between the Hinman Family and Lt. Col. Thomas Hodgetts Papers. This problem is partially solved by the index, but its reliability and completeness are open to question for there is no consistency in what is included. In many cases, papers relating to institutions located in personal collections were not indexed: the researcher will never know, except through serendipitous meandering, that the Harriston Collection contains the corporate records of McCready's General Store, that the Charles H. Heels Collection deals with Canadian National Railways material (though one can find this out through the index entry under railroads), or that the H.D. Morgan Collection relates to the local history of Brockville and Leeds County (even though there is an index entry for both).

The consistency in setting up individual entries and the overall proofreading is less than perfect. One of the advantages of using a word processor is the ease with which a uniform format can be adopted and the quickness with which typographical errors can be corrected. Inconsistencies in format and inadequate proofreading are invariably irritating, and sometimes interfere with the usefulness of the entries themselves. Finally, one must regret, even if one understands the bizarre ways of publishing, that a guide of enduring usefulness is produced in this manner when other, arguably less important, publications of the ministry are given far better treatment. The spiral-bound volumes are cheaply produced and unlikely to stand up to intensive use, while microfiche is an unhappy format unlikely to be referred to by many researchers.

The editors provide three justifications for the guide's production: to assist staff of the Archives of Ontario by providing a central reference source for its collection; to inform government ministries of the holdings of the archives; and to assist researchers (particularly those distant from Toronto) in identifying archival holdings which would be of potential interest. With all of its problems, the guide will be an effective, if sometimes difficult, tool for any of the three target groups.

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**Catalogue of the CBC Television Drama Collection.** YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES. Downsview, Ontario: York University Libraries Publications, 1985. 4 microfiche. \$20.00.

The collection described in this catalogue consists of over five thousand Canadian Broadcasting Corporation files deposited in the York University Archives. They contain

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