

is unavoidable. However, blindness or indifference to the sociological and historiographical implications of our choices is at best intellectually lax. At worst, it can result in the disregard of important bodies of records.

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A Guide to the Holdings of Queen's University Archives. ANNE MACDERMAID and GEORGE F. HENDERSON, co-editors. Second Edition. Kingston: Queen's University, 1986. ix, 351 p. ISBN 0-88911-466-8 \$15.00.

As the title indicates, this is a guide to the not inconsiderable holdings of the Queen's University Archives. Owing to the lack of standardization currently rampant in Canadian archives, however, the word "guide" can mean anything from a bare list of record groups to a compilation of archival resources, including full-blown biographical notes and administrative histories, explanations of record context, and possible research uses. The Queen's guide falls somewhat closer to the former description. It is comprised of entries for over two thousand collections of textual material, listed by creator or title. The entries are divided into two sections, one on university records, the other on outside records. The latter includes public affairs and business records, literary papers, and regional collections but is not subdivided as such. Visual and aural materials will be described in an upcoming publication. Each entry is brief and to the point; one might almost say spare. Included (sometimes but not in all cases) are the title, the type of record, inclusive dates, extent, a short description of content, accession number, donor name and date of receipt or designation of purchase and date, and ULM number. Entries are in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Chapter Four of the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* (2) and Steven Hensen's manual, *Archives, Personal Papers and Manuscripts* (1983). Canadiana authorities were consulted in creating main author and title entries. This basis was also used in indexing, presumably where applicable. Finally, the entire guide was produced through the university's mainframe IBM computer.

In comparison to the first edition published in 1978, the second appears favourable. The university records are separated from the external collections. The operating mandate of the institution outlines its collection interests and the reasons for these interests in the introduction. The anomalies in subject entries in the edition, however, continue into the second despite the use of the Canadiana authorities. For example, although a typical entry might be exemplified by "Berry, Leonard Gascoigne," the use of types as the main entry is prevalent. Two such entries are "Account book, 1812-1814," and "Account book, 1926-1930." The first entry relates to the fur trade, while the second refers to records of maple syrup sales. The index overcomes, in part, some of these problems, but like most indexes it is not complete. A thesis on the Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, is listed under the author, "Dolan, G.R." In the index one can find "Qu'Appelle River, Sask." (if one was expecting to find something on the Qu'Appelle in the Queen's Archives), but it is not listed under "Saskatchewan." This has occurred presumably because the name Saskatchewan does not appear in the text of the description of the contents from which the index was computer-generated. The astonishing entry of "Disraeli, Benjamin, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield, 1804-1881," is not indexed under "Prime Minister," "England," or

“politician;” indeed any of the more obvious choices. Since one would hardly expect to find the papers of a British Prime Minister in a Canadian repository, such an oversight could create difficulties for outside researchers.

The comparison of the Queen’s guide to that recently published by McGill (Marcel Caya, ed., *Guide to Archival Resources at McGill University*, 3 vols., Montreal, 1985) is like that of night and day. One can hardly believe that the two are both classified as guides. The McGill guide emulates the second type of guide previously referred to. Its entries include biographical information, lengthy content descriptions, and explanatory notes. The Queen’s guide alerts you to the fact that certain collections exist, whereas McGill’s lets you know what they have and whether it’s worth your while to pursue an enquiry. Yet the wealth of information provided by McGill is almost a deterrent to cracking the cover. Some interesting questions arise. Should guides aspire to the example of McGill’s effort? Is the Queen’s guide easier and therefore possibly better to use? Should all guides necessarily strive towards a standard format and presentation?

This brings the reviewer to reflect briefly on the nature of guides in general. Canadian archives are encouraged to produce guides to their holdings, although *Toward Descriptive Standards* noted that few guides have been produced in Canada and few are controlled by any standard. (p. 40) Both the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada’s Canadian Studies Research Tools Program, and the Canadian Council of Archives’ Arrangement and Description Program, encourage the production of published finding aids, although not necessarily at the guide level. It would be interesting to find out who uses these guides and for what purpose. When I showed the Queen’s guide to a Masters level history student I know, his remark was, “I’ve never heard of things like this.” Many of the archival guides in our own library have a coating of dust, a fairly good indicator of level of use. Certainly we can hardly begin to standardize our guides if we only have a vague understanding of who uses what and why. *Toward Descriptive Standards* states, “If a prime aim of description of archives is to inform researchers of the general nature of the holdings of archival repositories, the lack of guides seriously undermines any pretensions of realizing that goal.” (p. 40) The publishing of a printed guide is only one step, however, in a general programme of outreach. Such a programme which delineates the nature and uses of a guide should be tied to its production.

The Queen’s guide is clearly laid out and simple to use. Deficiencies in the index can in part be overcome by browsing. Entries give one a fair idea if something of interest is held by Queen’s. The *Guide* would probably be improved by separating the entries of outside collections into the four major collecting areas, with overlaps covered by the index. For another university archivist, possibly the most interesting aspect of the guide is the incongruity between Queen’s collection mandate and its actual collection. In the Foreward, Charles Pullen, Chairperson of the Archives Advisory Committee, states: “There is no great university, and indeed no intellectually respectable university of any size which does not hold itself responsible as a repository for the cultural history of the society it serves.” (p. v) To that end, Pullen adds that Queen’s Archives is a “haven” for the “local, regional and national memory of our political, social, religious, economic and cultural life.” (p. v) Although the Archives itself would probably hold that its sights are considerably lower than that lofty vision, a quick check reveals that only one hundred and eight *fonds* out of over two thousand, measuring six hundred metres in total, are in fact university records. For an institution which started in 1841, the amount is slender indeed. Queen’s Archives would probably point out that if it did not collect these myriad

outside collections, 3 355 metres of records (accumulated by 1981) would be scattered in bits and pieces across the country or, more than likely, lost. There is also the more convincing argument that university records are not as exciting or prestigious as the records of Dorothy Livesay or the Liberal Party of Ontario. In spite of any deficiencies which may exist, the guide remains useful, and one would hope more are produced in the future.

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A Guide to Labour Records and Resources in British Columbia. LOUISE MAY, compiler. GEORGE BRANDAK, ELAINE BERNARD and MARK THOMPSON, co-investigators. Vancouver: Special Collections Division of the University of British Columbia, 1985. 197 p. free of charge.

The resurgence of the academic study of "labour" which accompanied the rising ferment and eventual rebirth of activism in the 1960s has generated unprecedented demands for archival sources which capture the whole of working class historical experience. No longer content with an understanding of labour's past as confined to formal trade union structures *per se*, the new social historians largely abandoned this institutionalism as it proved itself to be totally inadequate to the task of explaining the successive waves of "wildcat" labour actions which had arisen throughout Europe and North America. Following in the new pathways cut by historians such as E.P. Thompson in Britain and Herbert Gutman and Gregory Kealey in North America, these scholars have instead sought to explore the larger socio-historical reality outside the world of official unionism.

In recent years, archivists charged with collecting labour records have found themselves increasingly besieged with requests for documentation concerning the behaviour of labour's rank-and-file, including women, blacks, and virtually all ethnic groups — many of whom had as yet remained untouched by the formal unionization process. Given these influences upon the course of labour historiography, historians have begun to integrate much of what the new social history has unearthed into a far richer and more sophisticated understanding of unionism than had been possible under the rigid institutional approaches of the John R. Commons school. As labour history has begun to come full circle, archivists find that the demand for both newer and older forms of documentation continues unabated. But whether a researcher is more oriented to one of these forms or the other, the one enduring problem is that of access to the more local records, precisely the geographical focus of intensive research that has so far informed much of the best of those studies rooted in the Thompson/Gutman tradition.

This guide, compiled under the direction of Louise May, takes us several giant steps forward in providing the fullest possible forms of documentation essential to current research of the local/regional scene. In addition to records pertaining to the various trade union leaderships and organizations, one finds an abundance of source material in the form of company records and those of governmental authorities which will allow researchers to investigate the complex roles assumed by capital and their counterparts in the state, at both the municipal and provincial levels of intervention. Records pertaining to a full range of social historical subjects also figure prominently in the collections surveyed. Yet for anyone expecting this guide to stand as definitive, it must be stressed from