

**The Canadian Women's Movement, 1960-1990: A Guide To Archival Records/Le mouvement canadien des femmes, 1960-1990: Guide de ressources archivistiques.** MARGARET FULFORD, ed. Toronto: Canadian Women's Movement Archives and ECW Press, 1991. 380 p. ISBN 1-55022-156-6.

The strength of the contemporary women's movement in Canada is due, to a considerable extent, to its broad range of support among women of different backgrounds, interests, and sexual orientation. In their efforts to change social attitudes and behaviour, women have created a host of new organizations and refashioned many existing ones. This *Guide* is a directory of these groups and the documents and publications which they have created. Its aim is to assist those interested in the movement and to help ensure that the history of the "second wave" of the women's movement is preserved better than its predecessor.

The focus is on organizations which have played a role in the modern women's movement, defined as beginning in 1960 with the formation of the Voice of Women. This includes "any organization having as one of its principal goals the improvement of women's social, economic, or political condition." Arts and cultural groups, education groups, women's health centres and shelters, women's professional groups and labour unions, and organizations of native and immigrant women are all covered, as well as the various umbrella lobby groups and advocates for daycare, abortion, affirmative action, and so on. The compilers were particularly interested in grass-roots organizations, which they feel have played a seminal role but are often overlooked by public archives. Many were small and short-lived, perhaps managing only a couple of newsletters, a brief to a government body, or a single demonstration. Lesbian organizations of all kinds dot these pages. Women's committees or sections of larger organizations, such as political parties, churches, and universities, are also listed. The range of groups is quite stunning. Alongside the prominent organizations, such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, and the Elizabeth Fry Society, are the community groups—the mothers' drop-in centres, "Take Back the Night" groups, feminist publications, lesbian support groups, and so on. They range from Women of Unifarm in Alberta to the Halifax feminist film society Reel Life; from The Flaming Apron to the Coalition to Stop Anita Bryant; from On Our Way to Witches Against Nuclear Technology.

The *Guide* includes both groups whose records are in archives and those which still keep their records in their offices. Eight hundred collections in eighty archives across Canada are identified, of which three hundred are in the Canadian Women's Movement Archives (CWMA). Approximately six hundred organizations that retain their files are identified in the second part of the volume.

The entries consist of the standard elements of archival description at the fonds level, but they are extremely brief. In most cases they contain only a sentence or two about the organization, its dates of activity, a list of the types of records and, where known, their inclusive dates, and the total extent. Collections at the National Archives of Canada are simply identified; for information about the records, readers are referred to the Archives' 1991 publication *Women's Archives Guide: Manuscript Sources for the History of Women*. The entries also indicate whether the material is restricted and, somewhat surprisingly, its physical condition. The

location of the records (name and address of the archives or the creating organization) is provided and repository finding aids are noted. Most of the entries are in either French or English, depending on the language of the records; bilingual organizations have identical entries in each language. In both parts of the *Guide*, national organizations (and some aspiring national organizations) are listed first, followed by the groups in each province. This ordering of the entries facilitates geographical access, but there are also extensive English and French subject indexes, as well as an index for group names and acronyms, and titles of periodicals.

This *Guide* is the work of a Toronto organization called the Canadian Women's Movement Archives, which was administered by the Women's Information Centre. Beginning in 1977, a group of women set out to collect information about the activities of feminists across Canada. Letters were sent to women's organizations asking for copies of publications and documents, and emphasizing the importance of preserving records. The holdings of the CWMA began to grow as groups sent copies of their newsletters, briefs, posters, and other material. Some Toronto-area groups regularly gave batches of records and donations also came from individuals. The CWMA defined itself as a "community-based, collectively run archives and resource centre," developed a collection policy, and began to inventory its holdings. It also organized some exhibits and developed a database of Canadian women's organizations, as well as starting work on this national directory with support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. However, like many of the organizations identified in this book, the CWMA eventually found it impossible to survive on grants, donations, and volunteer labour. In 1991 its collection, consisting of documentation concerning more than two thousand organizations, was given to the University of Ottawa Morisset Library Special Collections.

This publication is informative and useful. So is the material amassed by the CWMA. Without this kind of enthusiastic grass-roots collecting, many of these women's groups would have disappeared leaving little evidence of their activities. However, it must be said that the CWMA did not operate as an archives and, to a large extent, this is not a guide to archival resources. The CWMA did not concentrate on the identification and preservation of archival records, that is minutes, correspondence, financial, and other records created as a result of organizational activity and organically maintained as an official and full record. Copies of newsletters, briefs, posters, calendars or even unpublished items collected in "a manilla envelope taped next to the garbage can," as one CWMA representative suggested, are not archives. The CWMA functioned like a resource centre, and, not surprisingly, its own collection and this publication reflect this.

Lack of understanding of the significance of the archival fonds has led to a serious problem in this *Guide*. There is no distinction between the records of an organization and things kept by a member of that organization. Personal papers are not included in the volume, but copies of organizational material held by individuals are presented as additional collections of records of that group. Similarly, the records of a subordinate group pertaining to or received from the head office are listed as records of the national office itself. For example, the National Council of Women is listed as having nine collections: collection (a) is the records of the

Council at the National Archives (NA); collection (b) is identified as part of the Olha Woycenko Collection at the NA; collections (c) to (f) are part of other personal papers at the NA; collections (g), (h), (k), and (l) are part of private papers held at the Universities of Waterloo and Guelph; and the remaining two are part of the records of the Calgary Local Council of Women at the Glenbow Museum and the New Brunswick Council of Women at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. Personal papers of activists probably should have been included in this *Guide*, using the index to refer to their holdings of organizational material. As presented here, these papers are carved up into organizational chunks which obscures their provenance and hides the links and connections so important to the women's movement. This failure to follow professional practice in the identification and description of records by archival fonds is bound to cause considerable misunderstanding among lay users and irritation among archivists.

Finally, an expensive publication format (hard cover, quality paper) seems inappropriate for a guide which, like many research tools, probably was outdated by the time it was printed.

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**Langstaff: A Nineteenth-Century Medical Life.** JACALYN DUFFIN. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993. xv, 383 p. illus. ISBN 0-8020-7414-6 (paper)/0-8020-2908-6 (cloth).

Many archivists joined the archival profession because we harbour a certain fascination for the past. We long to travel back to nineteenth-century Canada, and hope that our proximity to archival materials will give us that vicarious experience. What usually bursts the bubble of our daydreams is remembering the high mortality rates and the poor state of health-care in the last century, and an appreciation of twentieth-century medical knowledge and high-tech treatments. Jacalyn Duffin's new book confirms that perspective, allowing us to look back in comfort at a portrait of Dr. James Miles Langstaff and his medical practice in and around Richmond Hill, Ontario, between 1849 and 1889.

James Langstaff (1825-1889) began his studies with John Rolph (of 1837 Rebellion fame) at his proprietary Toronto School of Medicine in 1844. He finished his education at Guy's Hospital in London, England, and was licensed by the Upper Canada Medical Board in 1849. That year, he started his own career, having bought the medical practice of Dr. John Reid of Richmond Hill, just north of Toronto. For the next forty years, he carried out his medical duties within a five-mile radius of the town, making over 100,000 house calls. A reticent man, he nevertheless joined municipal politics when necessary—to forward the temperance cause, and to improve the state of the rural roads which he felt would have a positive impact on the health of his clientele. He was financially secure, not so much from his practice—indeed when he died in 1889, there were 153 patient debts outstanding—but rather from his speculative landholdings around the province.

From its title, one might assume the book is about Langstaff; the tip-off that it is not a biography is in its topical, rather than chronological, arrangement. In reality,