

“What the Papers Say”: Archives in the English-Language Canadian Public Press, 1989-1994

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Résumé

Une recherche dans la presse canadienne-anglaise de 1989 à 1994 a permis de découvrir que les institutions d'archives y figurent à 365 reprises. Ces articles concernent des acquisitions particulières, les activités de conservation de certaines institutions et des commentaires d'ordre général sur le rôle de l'archiviste comme intermédiaire entre les documents et les utilisateurs. Bien que certaines conclusions ne conviennent pas à l'archiviste professionnel, le rôle des archives, bien que superficiellement exprimé, y est parfois décrit de manière étonnante. Des stéréotypes peuvent s'y dissimuler, mais ceux-ci sont souvent éclipsés en nombre et en importance par des considérations d'ordre général à propos des institutions d'archives et leur rôle en politique, pour la mémoire culturelle ou la vie personnelle. Les documents archivistiques sont décrits dans la presse comme des objets véhiculant une signification supérieure à leur valeur pour la recherche à l'âge de l'information. Les archivistes pourront trouver utile cette sensibilisation de la presse à ce sujet pour la défense et le développement des programmes qui touchent différentes couches de la population.

Abstract

A search of the English-language Canadian press from 1989 to 1994 located 365 reports featuring archives. These stories included specific acquisitions, the preservation activities of certain institutions, and more general comments on the role of the archivist as an intermediary between documents and users. While some conclusions do not suit the knowledgeable archivist, the sense of archives in the press, however untutored, has some surprising features. Stereotypes can be found, but they are often eclipsed in number and importance, by larger ideas about archives and their role in politics, cultural memory, and personal life. Archival documents are portrayed by the public press as objects which carry much more than data into the information age. Archivists may find awareness of

press reports to be useful in advocacy and in developing programmes that appeal to diverse sectors of the public.

In the last ten years or so, and at least since 1980, archival institutions and archival documents have been featured prominently and quite often in the English-language Canadian press.¹ Reports involving archives, either directly or by implication, inevitably convey images of archives and those who work with them. Archivists in both Canada and the United States are more aware than ever before of the importance of a public image, of themselves as professionals, and of their holdings as information sources. Archives depend on support that is increasingly shaped by the image of archives and of their programmes held by their communities and sponsors.² Many archivists are unhappy with what they frequently see as a negative public image³--as in the bald proclamation in the May 1994 Ottawa *Citizen* that archivists are dead-file freaks.⁴ These notorious examples are selected from a surprisingly large number of news items that feature archives. Are negative images of archives really dominant in the press? Examining reports over a period of time would go a long way towards replacing our anecdotal sense with a fuller picture sketched from a larger number of archives stories. A more systematic examination of reporting would also help us understand what information about archives the press conveys to the general "public," that is, to those people who have no formal contacts with archives in their work or leisure activities. This group largely derives its knowledge and perceptions about archives and archivists through its exposure to public information sources.

Using the Canadian Business and Current Affairs (CBCA) index (on-line) and the press clippings kept by the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa,⁵ I located and examined 365 reports from sixty English-language daily and weekly newspapers from across Canada during a five-year period from 1989 to 1994.⁶ My overall purpose was to find out what information the public gets about the work of archivists. What image of archivists do these reports convey? And what themes, if any, recur again and again as "sub-texts" to the substance of the report? The results of this review are surprising. The image of archivists is not negative but strikingly ambiguous. The collective portrayal of the archivist's job and his/her responsibilities is patchy and imprecise, showing the same ambiguities that mark the archivist's image. By contrast, the concept of archival materials that emerges from these reports is unexpectedly complex and subtly nuanced.⁷

Acquisition, Preservation, and Use as Seen in the Press

As might be expected, none of the reports demonstrate anything beyond a simple appreciation of how archives operate. Nowhere is this more evident than in the stories related to the vital function of acquiring historical records.⁸ The generous and favourable coverage in the national press of the acquisition of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives by the Provincial Archives of Manitoba was unique.⁹ Among all of the reports that prominently featured acquisitions, I was unable to find any story that gave complete information about how archives actually acquire materials. Omissions that are obvious to the archivist render these reports less than accurate. The operation of the tax-break mechanism (a subject for constant comment when the award did not seem justified by the gift) was not placed in any context, either of national interest or of institutional budgets and market forces.¹⁰ In the case of the

dispute between Edward Drew and the National Archives of Canada--concerning the trusteeship of the papers of George Drew, former Premier of Ontario and leader of the federal Progressive Conservative Party--the unhappiness of the Drew Family was played up and national divisions were emphasized for dramatic effect, while the role of the NAC and the arguments of its legal counsel, although accurately portrayed I believe, were delivered in a low key.¹¹ Several stories based on the archives of the German government during the Nazi regime, seized by the allies during the war and repatriated only in July 1994, had broad coverage in part because of the unusual manner in which the archives was acquired.¹² Even in the case of the police investigation in Ontario into the Grandview Girls' School, which hinged directly on the existence of specific documents in the archives, no report discussed either the process by which the documents came to the archives or how the decisions were made to select certain materials.¹³

By contrast to the quixotic and myopic view about the actual process of acquisition by archival institutions, the press demonstrated considerable understanding for the problems posed by preserving archives for the long-term.¹⁴ Preservation and preservation issues seem to find a welcome place in the Canadian press. Its sympathies were most clearly evident in stories featuring direct threats to the survival of materials and actual damage done in disastrous occurrences. Considerable attention was given to the problems of the structure and environment of the National Archives building, brought to public attention by the disasters of the leaking roof and broken pipes. The reports of the flood brought out all the latent hyperbole associated with threats to the nation--"Losing legacy of generations," "Protect the archives," "Deplorable situation," "Penny wise, heritage foolish."¹⁵ The press also featured stories on the planned new quarters for the National Archives, running interviews with key archives officials, architects, and civil service planners.¹⁶ New technologies were highlighted in stories related to preservation, appearing, Janus-like, as potential threats to the longevity of archives and as possible saviours of materials from the past.¹⁷ The press overwhelmingly supports archival work in preservation, suggesting a deep seam of interest. High-tech solutions to archival problems apparently are sure hooks for public attention.¹⁸

The use of archives received the lion's share of coverage, and by a wide margin.¹⁹ But use, as it appeared in the press is frequently construed within its particular public context in which personalities and power are dominant. Consequently, the slant of many of the most widely reported stories about the use of archives often highlight their relationship to the motivation of those in power and, by implication, to those excluded from full participation in social and political life. Use, as perceived within this public and political discourse, has two opposing sides or manifestations: exclusion and access--or, phrased another way, secrecy and revelation. Some reports emphasized archives as places in which secrets are effectively hidden by those who have control.²⁰ Other reports, featuring the revelation of secrets, seemed to cast the archives in a positive public role, as a place where past actions are effectively documented. Archives, at least by implication, can check extravagant political postures by providing evidence to prove or disprove claims.²¹

The transformation of the European political map, with the re-unification of Germany, the fall of the iron curtain, and the eclipse of the Communist Party in the

Soviet Union, established new political agendas and provided the reason for making public, at last, the details of past events that had previously been kept under wraps. Foremost were the opening of the Russian state archives, the secret archives of the KGB, and those of the Communist Party. The result was a host of stories reporting state secrets and purporting to give the real truth behind international incidents as diverse as the fate of American MIA's in Vietnam, the contents of the black box of the doomed Korean Airlines Flight 707, and the inside plans of the Soviet Union to assassinate Marshall Tito. The Russian agreement with Germany concerning the partition of the Baltic states in 1939--a collusion long denied by the Soviets, who wanted to dampen Baltic nationalism--was published in the Russian and western press. Several reports appeared in Canadian papers.²²

Secrets are not the preserve of totalitarian regimes. Many papers gave extensive and continued coverage to the de-classification and subsequent opening of American documents concerning the assassination of President Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald, and the ensuing investigations by the FBI and the Warren Commission. No other event in the recent past has generated as much public focus on archival sources. The archives has become a great arsenal in the war between the proponents of a conspiracy theory and those who believe in the lone gunman scenario. The issue and the media attention it has generated brings archives into a public spotlight in an unusual way, with cameras in the reading room filming the delivery of hitherto forbidden boxes to the tables, where they are opened and their contents examined by eager reporters and other researchers.²³

The corollary to the revelation of secrets is that of their keeping. The use of archives as a place to sequester materials that are secret and potentially threatening to those who hold power received considerable attention in these five years. Particularly emphatic was the story of the Austrian who systematically copied and published closed documents in the French departmental archives. These records, from the Vichy period in France, pertained to the internment camps for Jews and the procedures used by the French government to confine their Jewish citizens and foreign Jews resident in France. This case, more than any other, highlighted archives as a place where secrets can be successfully hidden; the press reports questioned the political motivation that had placed such a long ban on public access. Local examples, perhaps more prosaic, were the stories of the reports on UFOs at the National Archives and the supposedly "lost" ministerial papers of Pat Carney, who was a key participant in the free trade negotiations with the United States. These reports were either amused or deeply suspicious of bureaucracy and its controls over public access.²⁴

Archives in the Information Age

In an era in which discourse is dominated by information as commerce, as a commodity, and as a metaphor for reality and truth, the historical archives is an anomaly as an information agency--just as the archivist is an anomaly as information worker. Press reports do not treat archival documents as merely sources of information of an historical nature. Rather, these documents are represented squarely, consistently, and unambiguously as cultural objects--to be protected, to be prized, and to be fought over. Again and again reports characterized the special nature of archival information in terms of a document type and of its unique and special characteristics: the formal

agreement between Stalin and Hitler over the fate of the Baltic states rendered authentic and tangible by the red seals and contemporary register marks,²⁵ the home movies of Hitler with their disturbing domestic conventionality,²⁶ the routine FBI report on the habits and potentialities of Lee Harvey Oswald submitted months before the November events in Texas,²⁷ the manuscripts of unpublished Beatles music in holograph.²⁸ Clearly, neither the press nor presumably the public see archival information as an independent commodity distinct and separate from its moment and form of objectification. This conclusion should give pause for thought in plans for massive conversions of documents to another format and medium. Is the picture--in this case the optically scanned and digitally stored document--really going to be worth the thousand words it replaces, at least in the minds of the public?

Press and public interest in the Watergate tapes and the Hitler diaries, generated in part by the fascination with the spectacle of power brought low by hubris, and their intense interest in the Kennedy assassination materials and the KGB archives, seems to be related to the intimacy with powerful personalities and their human condition achieved by using the documents associated with the protagonists. In part, however, wide coverage also could be attributed to society's interest in the conduct of public affairs. Public business is closely bound to the documents that accomplish it; these documents have inherent interest because of their capacity to speak from the past with a clear voice.

Newspapers no doubt report that which sells copy and gains them attention. Even bearing in mind the most cynical interpretation of the motives behind certain reports relating to archives, however, it is clear that there is an intimate and resilient connection in the press between historical truth and archival documents. Archives are certainly *about* the past, but even more importantly it seems, they are *from* the past. These documents, because of their organic relationship to events, are perceived to speak truthfully. The objectification of information in a document and this document's continued existence, together have power to move and authority to command. The unequivocal and strong support for preservation projects and the unanimous concern over the possible destruction of archives broadly underscores the continuing relevance of the original item in the eyes of the community.

The press portrays archives as a potent form of memory, for both public and private purposes and uses. This archival memory is complex, less like random bits of information and more like an organism with a "natural" history. Memory undergoes a profound transformation as it moves from being active or manifest to being latent or cultural. Archives embrace both forms of memory. The recent interest in the campaigns of World War II and the celebrations commemorating its formal conclusion was, in part, a function of active living memory that also draws upon archives as a participant. Living memory will inevitably cease as the principals who were involved in the events pass on. The death of a generation then alters memory by transforming it from the active memory of individuals to the potential memory of a culture. The archives of each generation, however, do not cease; they continue and grow, transcending the barrier between active and cultural memory by providing a vital link between the two. The transition from active to cultural memory is in the process of happening for the events of World War I. A clear example arose in this five-year period. In 1989, Turkey opened its archives concerning the events in Armenia in

1915. The Turks claimed that the archives prove that no massacre took place; the Armenians claimed, with equal intensity, that the documents do just the opposite. This confrontation is the twilight for an active memory that is on the verge of passing on with the remaining participants.²⁹ The events surrounding the deportation and its aftermath will continue to be witnessed by the documents in the archives. Remembrance may be incorporated with a broader cultural memory whose potential power as myth may affect current politics. The uses of this latent cultural memory are very complex, as we see by the continuing relevance of the American Civil War, the Industrial Revolution, or the execution of Louis Riel. Living memory and cultural memory exist together with archival memory. Their relationships are complex and powerful. Archivists should examine the concept of the archives as a form of memory more systematically than has been done by its quick use as a handy metaphor for our materials.

The new information environment, its technologies, its social networks and links, and its metaphors and myths will inevitably embrace archives. Transformation is a natural rhythm for an institution whose holdings over time naturally reflect changes in technology and in its metaphors. The changes we currently are experiencing, however, have the potential to heighten a tension, now certainly manifest, between demands on archives to provide instant information and the strong social imperative, also clearly manifest, to preserve archives as cultural objects. Archives are not just information of interest; more significantly, they are also objects of interest. The clear connections drawn in the press between historical truth and historical documents have implications for archival advocacy and for the public programming of archival institutions.

Archives Advocacy and Public Programmes

This review of archives reporting in the Canadian public press should urge archivists to become actively involved in cultivating public awareness of archives and archival work. We should not expect the press to do this job for us. The knowledge purveyed to the public in the press is anecdotal. It focuses on people, personalities, conflicts, and the shocking discovery revealed by documents in situations with inherent drama. Professional discussions do not take place in sources that entertain as much as inform. Given these purposes of the press, certain features of archives are highlighted because they contribute to the subject's fascination as entertainment--the capacity of archives to hide, the secrets they contain, the revelations waiting to be made--while other aspects are not discussed at all. No explicit connection is made between archives and the public audit of policy, old fashioned accountability if you will. Rarely are documents associated with their greatest potential, which is to provide a multiplicity of visions of the past that are authentic and trustworthy.

Clearly, there is a latent bridge in the press, and presumably in the public's perception of archives, between use and preservation--documents will not be there to be used if they are not preserved in the first instance. The press treatment of archives, however, does not effectively link these two functions to the job of acquisition. This lack of an explicit connection between preservation, effective use, and systematic acquisition is particularly worrisome because of the association that is clearly drawn between archival documents and the truth. One goal of our advocacy and public programmes

should be to build effective bridges that connect acquisition with preservation and use, showing that the continued use of historical documents, their enjoyment on a personal level, and their participation in politics and society at large, cannot take place without careful attention to their identification and preservation in the first instance.

Rather than lamenting our relative impotence to effect changes in the style of the press, advocacy groups might play up what seems to interest the public, perhaps by emphasizing the anecdotal that appeals, while at the same time addressing the larger issue of the gaps in knowledge through planned programmes of services that will educate in the widest sense. Press reports indicate that significant community interests can be stimulated by local exhibits, well-placed historical stories, and consistent media cultivation. Significantly, the attention naturally devoted to the larger institutions, and in particular to the NAC, suggests that these archives have great potential to be omnibus advocates, using their pre-eminent position to promote archives generally through their public programmes.³⁰

The uses of archives for people and communities should be highlighted in public programmes. These uses, many of which received comment in the press, are complex and do not altogether fit neatly into simple categories. A large number of reports emphasized the many personal and professional uses of archives for groups as diverse as historians, genealogists, stamp collectors, geographers, and teachers. Although these stories were often plainly factual, a small number were thoughtful reviews of archives exhibits and public activities. Most favourably covered the conscious activities of the archives to interpret the historical reality contained in documents as a worthy and surprisingly entertaining community service. In the case of the Metropolitan Toronto Archives exhibit, "Concrete Dreams," the report showed a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the documents and the social environment that spawned Toronto's civic fascination with expressways. Numerous brief items, reviewing books based on archives sources, announcing exhibits, and promoting participation in heritage activities and history fairs, answered the universal question, "what to do this weekend," by encouraging people to visit archives and to use archival resources.³¹ These examples demonstrate that the uses of archives can be actively cultivated and their fruits loudly proclaimed.

It was no surprise that reports were divided between stories on institutions and those relating to records or documents. What was unexpected, however, was the divorce of the records from their custodians, as if the documents lived a life independent of their place of keeping and from the people who are responsible for them. Silence in the press about the archivist's role may be wilful, but more likely it is not. Whatever the reason for silence, it is not a shield, protecting us from public scrutiny, but a barrier to understanding. It can have the effect of rendering us defenceless when archives issues are exposed for public discussion.

One undesirable result of the general silence about the archivist in the press is that what emerges is not a negative image but an incoherent one: an elusive protagonist with a blurred image. In fact, the ambiguity of the archives, as the place for hiding or the site of revelation, has its parallel in the equally ambiguous role of the archivist that is conveyed in the press. On one hand archivists are seen to protect and save real cultural treasure, while on the other they can be portrayed as the obedient supporters

of powerful vested interests in cases where citizen rights and larger moral issues are at stake. Ambiguity continues when the reports on acquisitions are examined with their emphasis on money, tax breaks for the rich and famous, and legal disputes. And finally, when the truths of the past are at last revealed, circumstances can suggest that the archivists' privilege of inside information is not justified by their role as mediators between past and future. Is the archivist a keeper, an interpreter, a facilitator, or a partisan?

If ambiguity is a political construction of what in essence is a healthy plurality, then archivists need to promote the plural uses of archives. Archives are supposed to be a window through which we view ourselves in society. If, in fact, they are a foundation for the vitality of our culture and if they support the resilience of our democratic institutions, it should follow that archivists, by their professional commitment to this material, are the guarantors of its virtues and the pluralists of memory. Archives stories from local papers do indeed reveal a strong sense of community that gathers around the institutions. This corporate sense provides a social cohesion transcending political conflicts focused on current local issues.³² However, imagery is often as important as the truth. In addition to vocal public programmes, perhaps we should also consider developing a metaphorical image of archives rich in its associations and easily grasped. While I am not a designer, I can speculate on a possible image: one of a garden and its gardener would, for example, convey the ecological virtues of variety, diversity, symbiosis, and perpetuity. Archivists cultivate and protect a diversity that feeds and refreshes users. The public should see this; it is our job and no one else's to ensure they do.

Notes

- * Article based on a paper presented at the annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists, Ottawa, 26 May 1994. I am grateful to Chris Halonen, David Enns and Ken Lavin for their help in searching for relevant articles in the English-language Canadian press.
- 1 An example that springs quickly to mind is the Hitler diaries fiasco that was widely reported in the press and on television in 1982. The lost diaries, found by a fortuitous set of circumstances by a German journalist, were offered to the *Times* newspaper in London, England, for publication. The paper, in its eagerness to scoop the opposition, announced the discovery prematurely, before the provenance of the diaries had been thoroughly investigated and their authenticity and genuineness confirmed. The result was acute embarrassment for the paper and for its historical advisors--avarice and credulity combined to create willing dupes in the greatest forgery since the Donation of Constantine. See Josef Henke, "Revealing the Forged Hitler Diaries," *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984-85), pp. 21-27.
- 2 David Gracy, during his term as president of the SAA, focused attention of the American profession on their public image, which Gracy was convinced was of prime importance to the future success of the archival enterprise. Gracy, adopting the theme of archives in society for his presidency, commissioned a study of the archivist's image, which was undertaken by Social Research Inc. The report, "The image of archivists: resource allocators' perceptions," was published in 1984. Known as the "Levy Report," after its chief investigator, the study was the first scientific and systematic investigation of the public image of archivists, in this case, among those who allocate funds to archival programmes.
- 3 For a review of image as presented in a prominent American paper see Richard J. Cox, "International perspectives on the image of archivists and archives: coverage by the *New York Times* 1992-1993," *International Information and Library Review* 25 (1993), pp. 195-231. Also see report on an address by the Archivist of Ontario, Ian Wilson, to the Ontario Museums Association, "Group has Image Problem," *Brockville Recorder and Times*, 2 October 1992.
- 4 "This story has it all: history, exotic settings and government money," *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 May 1994. For examples of references to basements and dust see "Its your history," *Guelph Mercury*, 18 August 1992; "Archival treasures worth seeing," *Guelph Mercury*, 4 April 1992; "Archivist promotes accessibility," *Brampton Times*, May 1991; "Librarian battles...."

- 5 CBCA covers nine English-language daily newspapers published in seven cities across Canada including Halifax (the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* and the *Halifax News*), Montreal (the *Gazette*), Ottawa (the *Ottawa Citizen*), Toronto (the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*), Winnipeg (the *Winnipeg Free Press*), Calgary (the *Calgary Herald*) and Vancouver (the *Vancouver Sun*). The index was searched using archives, archive, and archivist in the title and subject fields. The NAC clippings, provided by a commercial service, are national in scope covering all major dailies, weeklies, and other periodic community news vehicles. Any report that contained the word "archives," or "national archives," or "archivist" in the title or body of the text was clipped. The clippings are from both the English- and French-language press. I used only the English-language clippings.

I am indebted to David Enns, National Archives of Canada, for helping me track down the clippings not in the CCIDA, and to the staff of CCIDA for keeping me supplied with clippings on their excellent interlibrary loan service.
- 6 *Amherst News, Barrie Examiner, Belleville Intelligencer, Brampton Times, Brockville Recorder and Times, Calgary Herald, Cambridge Times, Cambridge Reporter, Cape Breton Post, Charlottetown Gleaner Patriot, Cobourg Star, Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Sun, Fredrickton Gleaner, Fredrickton Standard, Gazette (Montreal), Globe and Mail (Toronto), Guelph Mercury, Haldimand News, Halifax Chronicle Herald, Halifax Daily News, Halifax Mail Star, Hamilton Spectator, Kelowna Courier, Kemptonville Advance, Kingston Whig Standard, Kitchener-Waterloo Record, Moncton Times Transcript, Nanaimo Free Press, Niagara Falls Review, North Bay Nugget, Orillia Packet & Times, Oshawa Times, Ottawa Sun, Ottawa Citizen, Owen Sound Sun Times, Port Elgin Beacon Times, Red Deer Advocate, Regina Leader Post, Renfrew Mercury, Sarnia Observer, Saskatoon Phoenix Star, Sherbrooke Record, St. John Telegraph Journal, St. Thomas Times Journal, St. Catharines Standard, St. John Times Globe, Stratford Bacon Herald, Summerside Journal Pioneer, Thunder Bay News, Thunder Bay Times Journal, Toronto Star, Toronto Sun, Vancouver Province, Vancouver Sun, Victoria Times Colonist, Welland-Port Colborne Tribune, Windsor Star, Winnipeg Sun, Winnipeg Free Press.*
- 7 It is important to note that these 365 reports actually covered only 238 stories. For example, the alleged discovery of Adolph Hitler's skull in the secret archives of the Soviet Army, as a story, appeared in six newspapers over a period of months. Forty-seven per cent of the stories, 111 in number, were about local events. These were carried only by the newspaper most closely associated with the region of the story and were prepared exclusively by the newspaper's own staff. Fifty-three per cent of the stories, 127 in number, were divided between articles devoted to foreign reports--thirty-three per cent or seventy-eight stories--and those that were domestic in origin--twenty-one per cent or forty-nine stories. Most of the sensational national stories and all of the foreign stories were prepared by a wire service, Southam, Canadian Press and Reuters being well represented, or by a newspaper that has an international clientele, notably the *New York Times*, *La Stampa*, and the *Guardian*.
- 8 Acquisition reports, seventy-seven in number, accounted for twenty-one per cent of the 365 reports I examined.
- 9 "Mac library receives Westinghouse archives," *Hamilton Spectator*, 5 February 1991; "National gallery gets photographer's prized archives," *Gazette*, 13 October 1990; "Staging dramatic rescue" [theatre archives to Guelph], *Globe and Mail*, 31 August 1991; "Dominion Textiles leaves files at Yarmouth museum," *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 7 January 1992; "Archives acquire Callaghan papers," *Halifax Chronicle Herald, Montreal Star*, 17 July 1992; "Women's archives finds home at University of Ottawa," *Ottawa Citizen*, 11 October 1992; "Hudson's Bay Co. donates its treasures; archives and artifacts dating to 17th century valued up to \$60m," and variations, *Globe and Mail, Vancouver Sun, Gazette, Winnipeg Free Press, Toronto Star*, 16 March 1994.
- 10 Acquisitions involving large amounts of money attracted comment, particularly when these brought tax credits to donors. "Artists cash in on archives," and variations, *Vancouver Sun*, 25 March 1992, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 24 March 1992; "All you need is papers to strike it rich," *Regina Leader Post*, 23 November 1992; "For sale: secrets of the KGB," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 18 February 1993; "Ex-PMs papers deluge archives," *Globe and Mail*, July 1993; "Double-dipping donation: its just money for old papers," *Ottawa Citizen*, 21 August 1993; "Mulroney may get tax break for donating personal papers," and variation, *Halifax Chronicle Herald, Gazette*, 13 June 1994. The story that received the widest coverage concerned the million dollar tax credit awarded to Pierre Trudeau for the donation of his personal and professional papers to the National Archives of Canada. "Trudeau to get hefty tax credit for papers," *Toronto Star*, 11 November 1992; "I'm entitled to tax credits too, Trudeau says," and variations, *Gazette, Brandon Sun, Halifax Daily News, Vancouver Sun, Cape Breton Post, Cornwall Standard Freeholder, Kelowna Courier, Red Deer Advocate, Owen Sound Sun Times, Welland-Port Colborne Tribune*, 12 November 1993; "\$1m draws Trudeau shrug," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 12 November 1992; "All aboard the perk express," *Ottawa Sun*, 21 November 1992; and letters to the editor, *Halifax*

Mail Star, Kelowna Courier. Generally speaking, the reports displayed irritation by the award, perhaps in recognition that the option can be used by very few Canadians.

- 11 Two prominent examples of legal disputes involving archives is the on-going saga of Watergate, particularly the controversy surrounding the ownership of the tapes and the rights of access to them, and the suit to recover the archives of George Drew from the National Archives of Canada. "Nixon owed for seized Watergate tapes," *Gazette*, 18 November 1992; "Nixon affliction; 18 years after Watergate, he can still stir up controversy," *Vancouver Sun*, 18 July 1990; "Group seeks release of Watergate tapes," *Toronto Star*, 20 March 1992; "Nixon moves to block tape release," *Gazette*, 4 August 1993.
- In 1992 Edward Drew sued the Archives for possession of the papers so that he could then donate them to the Guelph University Archives. He argued that his father would not have donated his papers if he had known that they would be kept outside the capital. In denying the Drew suit, the judge ruled essentially that an institution's national stature was not dependent upon its physical location in the national capital. This one story appeared in at least five Canadian papers and was followed through to its conclusion when the court ruled that the papers would remain with the National archives. "Family wants Drew papers kept in Ontario, not Quebec," *Ottawa Citizen, Gazette, Toronto Star, Vancouver Sun*, 23 March 1992; "Drew papers to stay with National Archives" and variations, *Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen, Gazette*, 28 March 1993; "Family doesn't want archives to store George Drew's papers in Quebec," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 23 March 1993.
- 12 "US army gives Germany Nazi Party files," *Gazette*, 2 April 1994; "Old bones of Nazi bureaucracy are transferred to German control," *Gazette*, 9 July 1994. "Baltic deal on microfilm in archives, Germany says," *Globe and Mail*, 3 June 1989; "Soviets open Nazi archives to western scholars: expect to make start on 100 million pages of captured documents," *Gazette*, 19 February 1990; "Germany to wait four years before getting Nazi archives," *Globe and Mail*, 6 October 1990; "Lithuania to open archives to disprove Nazi repression," *Gazette*, 9 August 1991; "Eichmann memoirs in hand," *Ottawa Citizen, Calgary Herald, Gazette*, 14 January 1992; "Archives confirm Argentina provided haven for war criminals," *Globe and Mail*, 12 February 1992; "Historian took Nazi papers from archives," *Ottawa Citizen*, 7 July 1992; "Hitler lauded attacks on Jews," *Toronto Star, Gazette, Ottawa Citizen, Calgary Herald, Halifax Daily News*, 6 July 1992; "Relinquishing the spoils of war," *Vancouver Sun*, 27 February 1993. While the stories based on captured materials have much to tell us about the use of archives and about the way they are perceived by the public, they have nothing relevant to say about the archival function of acquisition, beyond suggesting "acquisition strategies" not favoured by the profession!
- 13 "Abuse at schools known to police thirty years ago," *Toronto Star*, 10 May 1990; "Still need probe at schools," *Toronto Star*, 13 May 1990; "Police charge 19 former, current brothers," *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 February 1991; "Massive search turns up few records," *Toronto Star*, 15 February 1992; "Police concerns cited in decision to freeze report," *Guelph Mercury, Toronto Star, London Free Press*, 11, 14, 15 April 1992; "Grandview report to be released today," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 13 April 1992; "Archives misses deadline to release Grandview report," *Sarnia Observer*, 15 April 1992; "Police report confirms 64 'criminal acts' at Grandview school," *Toronto Star*, 17 September 1992.
- 14 The reports dealing with preservation, eighty-nine in number or twenty-five per cent of the total.
- 15 "Canada's oldest collection of atlases damaged by water from burst pipes," and variations, *Ottawa Citizen, St. Catharines Standard, Kingston Whig-Standard, Winnipeg Free Press, Globe and Mail, Gazette, Vancouver Sun, St. John Times Globe, Niagara Falls Review, Windsor Star, St. Thomas Times Journal*, 6, 10 July 1990; "Penny wise, heritage foolish," *Vancouver Province*, 6, 10 July 1990; "Loosing legacy of generations: archives damage shows low priority for heritage," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record, Gazette, Haldimand Daily News*, 7 July 1990; "Protect the archives," *Vancouver Sun*, 16 July 1990; "Deplorable situation," *Cobourg Star*, 20 July 1990; "Action must be taken," *North Bay Nuggett*, 11 July 1990; "Salvaging damaged documents will cost archives \$650,000," *Halifax Chronicle Herald, Vancouver Sun*, 4 August 1990.
- 16 The most eloquent example is "Building a treasure chest for the nation's memory," *Globe and Mail*, 30 November 1991.
- 17 "Preserving the past: National Archives moves to save historical audio-visual material," *Gazette*, 21 December 1993; "Librarian battles printed word's self destruction," *Fredricton Standard*, 14 February 1990; "Government must protect public records," *Charlottetown Gleaner Patriot*, 20 April 1990; "Keeping data difficult in videotape era," *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 May 1990; "Film archivist fights a loosing battle against time, technology," *Oshawa Times*, 11 August 1990; "Archives anti-theft system installed," *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 17 December 1991; "Archives sets pace in document restoration," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 17 February 1993; "Digital tape to salvage rotting CBC film history," *Toronto Star*, 10 April 1993; "Archivist post warning on note tabs," *Globe and Mail, Gazette*, 24 July 1990.

- 18 A particularly exciting example was the story of the robots that have been suggested for work in the vaults of the new NAC building in the Gatineaus. This vision of the future where archives might possibly be staffed by "archivist-oids" may pose some unexpected challenges to archives educators. "Robot workers could keep National Archives files in fine fettle," *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 January 1993.
- 19 Fifty-four per cent of the reports, 199 in number, were related to the use of archives and to users.
- 20 "Runcie in Vatican archives to peek at king's love mail," *Toronto Star*, 3 October 1989; "Radio archives hide treasures of a golden age," *Globe and Mail*, 4 November 1989; "Vatican archives bulge with secrets," *Globe and Mail*, 23 December 1989; "Russia's big secrets may stay that way," *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 27 February 1992; "Caricature museum is a well kept secret," *Toronto Star*, 15 February 1992; "U.S. scholars coach Russians on buried secrets," *Vancouver Sun*, 12 March 1992; "Group seek release of Watergate tapes," *Toronto Star*, 20 March 1992; "Psst! Do you want to know 30 million secrets," *Gazette*, 1 March 1992; "For sale: secrets of the KGB archives," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 18 February 1993; "Unlocking Vichy's secrets. Man, 72, fights to open France's war archives," *Gazette*, 18 April 1993; "CIA to release less than 10% of JFK files," *Gazette*, 19 August 1993; "Top secret: Federal government has decided that free trade documents on culture will not be revealed to Canadians," and variations, *Halifax Daily News*, *Toronto Star*, *Vancouver Sun*, *Ottawa Citizen*, 6, 7 August 1993; "Group wins first round of fight to see town documents," *Gazette*, 22 December 1993.
- 21 From among numerous examples, the following are characteristic; "Dirty politics: secret police archives stir Czechoslovakian dispute," *Gazette*, 13 May 1990; "Moscow to open archives in Wallenburg mystery: scholars told diplomat may not have died in prison," *Globe and Mail*, 28 August 1990 and variations, *Toronto Star* and *Vancouver Sun*, 30 September 1992; "Lithuania to open archives to disprove Nazi repression," *Gazette*, 9 September 1991; "JFK plot theorists get more ammo from files," *Calgary Herald*, *Gazette*, 14 February 1992; "Russia sent POWs to Gulag camps," *Gazette*, 11 February 1992; "South African issue split Cabinet," *Globe and Mail*, 8 February 1992; "Paper show Diefenbaker Cabinet saw threat of war," *Toronto Star*, 1 February 1992; "Dithering on the brink: cabinet papers show Diefenbaker froze in Cuban missile crisis," *Toronto Star*, *Ottawa Citizen*, 5, 7 February 1993; "Pentagon helped war criminals escape," *Halifax Daily News*, *Calgary Herald*, *Gazette*, 16 March 1992; "CIA directs Oswald files to archives," *Calgary Herald*, *Vancouver Sun*, 13 May 1992; "Diary of Siberian mystic Rasputin found in archives," *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 25 May 1992 and further in *Gazette*, 19 July 1993; "KGB files point to bishop as spy," *Calgary Herald*, *Gazette*, 16 May 1992; "KGB recruited spys at Oxford files reveal," *Toronto Star*, *Vancouver Sun*, 25, 26 June 1992; "Opening secrets can have unexpected effects: archivist," *Gazette*, 11 September 1992; "The dead still rise from the battlefields of Stalingrad," and variation, *Gazette*, *Toronto Star*, 28, 31, January 1993; "Archives release Kennedy papers," *Toronto Star*, 23 August 1993; "LBJ moved quickly on civil rights," *Gazette*, 25 September 1993; "LBJ twisted arms to get leaders to serve on Warren probe," *Gazette*, 23 September 1993.
- 22 "Downed South Korean airliner's black box found in KGB archives," and variation, *Gazette*, *Toronto Star*, 11, 12 September 1992; "Wallenburg clues held in KGB archives," *Toronto Star*, *Vancouver Sun*, 20 October 1992; "Secret carve-up revealed," and variations, *Vancouver Sun*, *Calgary Herald*, *Gazette*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Toronto Star*; "Lenin hanged 100 peasants for revolt, papers show," *Toronto Star*, 16 June 1992; "Stalin planned to kill Tito by infecting him with germs," *Ottawa Citizen*, *Toronto Star*, 21 May and 12 June 1993. The same archival sources revealed the extent of Russia's losses at Stalingrad, and the draconian measures to halt any mutiny, putting a new light on the national memorial much vaunted by the Communist party. New men in power, eager to disassociate themselves from the acts of their predecessors, opened the secret archives of the Communist party. "Cold war's other side: archives expose myths of Soviet 'monolith,'" *Toronto Star*, 28 January 1993. "The plot to destroy Solzhenitsyn: A set of secret documents recovered from the Communist Party archives reveals how Soviet leaders planned exile for the dissident author," *Vancouver Sun*, 2 October 1993.
- 23 "JFK buffs drool over documents: archives dispel some tales about Oswald and fuel others," and variations, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Toronto Star*, 23, 24 August 1993, *Gazette*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 29 August 1993; "CIA to release less than 10% of JFK files," *Gazette*, 19 August 1993; "LBJ..." *Gazette*, 23, 25 September 1993. A similar but less dramatic opening occurs annually in Canada as Cabinet documents are released for public inspection. In the 1993 round, the Cabinet documents and minutes from 1962 exposed the consternation of the Canadian cabinet at the United States' handling of the Cuban missile crisis. "Dithering..." 5, 7 February 1993.
- 24 "Amateur unclocks war secrets," *Calgary Herald*, 2 June 1992; "Unlocking" 18 April 1993; "Gathering star dust: Government files away 100 UFO reports a year," and variation, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Calgary Herald*, 28 November, 31 December 1993; "Pat Carney paid \$20,000 for lost trade documents," and variations, *Globe and Mail*, *St. Catharines Standard*, 20 October 1991, *Windsor Star*, *Vancouver*

- Province, Vancouver Sun, Edmonton Sun*, 1 November 1991, *Victoria Times Colonist, Toronto Star*, 13 November 1991.
- 25 "1939 agreements carving up Eastern Europe see light of day," *Vancouver Sun*, 30 October 1992.
- 26 "Films pleasant images of Nazi leader provocative but 'disturbing'," *Ottawa Citizen* 12 November 1992.
- 27 "Archives dispels some tales about Oswald, fuels others," *Toronto Star*, 24 August 1993.
- 28 "Beatles still selling big," *Vancouver Sun*, 24 July 1993.
- 29 "Ankara to open archives on Armenian 'incident'," and variations, *Globe and Mail, Gazette, Toronto Star*, 4 January 1989.
- 30 In 1992, a series of historical press releases by the National Archives of Canada provided interesting copy for many local newspapers. I neither counted nor analyzed these reports in detail and they are not included in the totals reported here. However, these vignettes are clearly products of a planned campaign to make information from the archives more accessible to Canadians. As a spin off, they highlight the role of the NAC in the preservation of history and they reflect well on the role of local archives in the community. The series was often headed by "Its your history." A similar series of local stories from the Simcoe County Archives, prepared by Peter Moran, was carried by the *Barrie Examiner* and the *Orillia Packet & Times* under the by-line "From the archives." Catchy titles like "A blast from the past" seemed to be extremely important in drawing attention to the archives and to the communities' shared past.
- 31 "History fair launches new reference guide," *Guelph Mercury*, 17 October 1989; "Exhibit planned on Canada's role in the Battle of Britain," *Edmonton Journal*, 10 November 1989; "Historic arm chair tour," *Guelph Mercury*, 27 April 1990; "View historical photographs," *Summerside Journal Pioneer*, 1 December 1990; "Gulf war shoots down cartoon show. NAC puts off exhibit of humour under fire from the 1940s," *Globe and Mail*, 15 February 1991; "Archives on TV," *Stratford Beacon Herald*, 5 February 1991; "Celebrating heritage week," *Stratford Beacon Herald*, 13 May 1991; "Share your photos with the archives," *Guelph Mercury*, 23 November 1991; "Exhibit tells history of poverty," *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 March 1992; "Archives coin display harks back to colourful 1800 ceremony," *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 14 May 1992; "A lavish panorama," *Ottawa Citizen*, 17 October 1992; "Exhibit marks 75th anniversary of explosion" and variation, *Halifax Daily News*, 14 November 1992, *Globe and Mail*, 2 December 1992; "Classic Glenn Gould emerges from CBC archives" and variation, *Toronto Star*, 9 January 1993, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 3 October 1992; "Concrete dreams," *Toronto Star*, 14 February 1992; "Magic assembling: Metropolitan Toronto store fronts and street scenes," *Globe and Mail*, 18 March 1993; "Archives wants us to get in touch with history," *Toronto Star*, 24 April 1993; "United States and France killed 1.7 million German prisoners of war, Toronto author claims," *Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen*, 21 May 1993; "Small firms mine archives for rare historic recordings," *Calgary Herald*, 30 July 1993; "Diversion: things to do in the capital," *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 July 1993.
- 32 For clear examples see "Book a family album," *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 4 November 1989; "Heritage groups fight plans to send documents to Toronto," *Cambridge Times*, 21 April 1991; "Archives provide rare glimpse of Montreal..." *Gazette*, 1 June 1991; "Environmental papers donated to University of Western Ontario," *London Free Press*, 22 July 1991.