

Counterpoint

Linchpin Imperilled: The Functional Interpretation of Series and the Principle of Respect des Fonds

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The author contends that the deliberately broad nature of prevailing definitions of archival series in North America, contrary to the intent of imparting interpretative flexibility, is in fact conducive to misinterpretation and consequently acts to obscure an important aspect of the nature of archives. These definitions fail to give sufficient consideration to the nature of modern records and recorded information systems and, by extension, to certain fundamental archival principles and concepts. In essence, neglecting to consider adequately the functional origin of the series has led to a lack of distinction between record classification systems and classified records systems. As a result, one of the most elemental principles of archival science, respect des fonds, is being contravened as some archivists disregard the principle of sanctity of the original order—and, consequently, provenance—by delineating series inaccurately. With its original qualities thus compromised, and therefore its probative and evidential value severely diminished, the archival series ceases to occupy its central position as the primary documentary system of the fonds and the principal agent linking the abstract external (provenancial) structure and the tangible internal (documentary) structure of the fonds. As an outcome, the integrity of the concept of the fonds d'archives is in danger of being undermined. One solution to this dilemma is reinterpretation of the concept of the archival series on a functional basis.

The principle of respect des fonds lies at the very core of archival theory and practice; it animates, informs, and, indeed, permeates virtually every aspect of archival endeavour. Yet, notwithstanding its centrality to archival science, it remains in English-speaking North America an elusive and oft-misunderstood theoretical concept, whose resulting practical application is frequently one-dimensional and superficial in nature. One factor contributing substantially to this situation, and one that historically has received scant attention, centres around the treatment of the series as a theoretical concept in relation to the fonds.¹ Specifically, the series has not been considered and interpreted adequately in light of its functional links to the archival fonds, that is to say, in terms of its property as a natural and organic end-product of organizational

function or broad personal activity.² Available evidence suggests that the somewhat myopic perception of series that currently predominates stems, at least in part, from the predilection of North American archivists for the practical aspects of their craft, as opposed to cognizance of or concern with the fundamental theoretical, principled, and conceptual basis underlying professional practice.³ Whatever the origin of this condition, the implications are serious and wide-ranging: the series as an abstraction, and consequently its practical dimensions, has been consistently obscured, as manifested in deliberately ambiguous definitions of the concept in North America. As a corollary, an integral component of the principle of respect des fonds, the principle of the sanctity of the original order, is not always observed in practice; by extension this acts to compromise aspects of the principle of provenance. The wider effect of this situation is that the integrity and hence very foundation of the fonds is jeopardized.

It is the intent of this brief discussion piece to elucidate some of the theoretical and practical problems associated with subscribing to a broadly-encompassing and consequently ambiguous conceptual definition of series, and the ensuing neglect and obscuring of the series' functional origin. The writer will also attempt to pose a basic solution to these problems. It is hoped that the concerns raised might contribute in some small way to refocusing the attention of archivists on this long-overlooked issue.

The *Rules for Archival Description* define a series as:

File units or records within a fonds arranged systematically or maintained as a unit because they relate to a particular function or subject, have a particular form or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation or arising out of their receipt and use.⁴

Similarly, the Society of American Archivists' *A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers* offers the following:

File units or documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they result from the same accumulation or filing process, the same function, or the same activity; have a particular form; or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use.⁵

In fact, with minor variance, the same essential concept has a long history on the North American archival scene. Intentionally broad in order to provide flexibility in interpretation by enabling the archivist to "see" the potential available in the concept, these respective definitions in fact contribute notably to the potential for confusion and misinterpretation. With the fundamental conceptual and principled origin of the series in mind, the key element in all of these widely-encompassing and therefore ambiguous definitions would seem to be the reference to "some" relationship arising from creation, receipt, and/or use. The basic character of modern organizational records intimates that central to the interpretation of the concept of the archival record series is the notion that series derive their substance and meaning from their status as natural and organic end-products of the broad functions of their creators, with activities and, in turn, actions and transactions flowing naturally from these functions.⁶ Physical form and subject reflect particular activities and in connection to the series only have meaning within the context of the functions responsible for their creation. To ascribe

the rank of series to aggregates of records solely on the basis of form or subject is to disregard the nature of documents and record systems, and to flout some of the most elemental archival concepts and tenets underlying and bearing upon the concept of the series. Yet, for some archivists, series, very pragmatically and quite erroneously, have come to be identified or established solely on the basis of form or subject reflecting activities, as opposed to functional origin. Indeed, in light of a literal reading of prevailing definitions, where the relationship between function and activity is patently indistinct, with wording that even hints at interchangeability between these concepts, most of the above-noted archivists could justifiably argue that their interpretation of series does in fact do justice to the notion of isolating and conveying the functional origin of archival series.

The practical manifestation of this trend is all too apparent; as Debra Barr affirms, "it is ... common for archivists to reorganize and describe material according to form, e.g., separating bound registers, certificates, and maps, even when media storage requirements are not a concern."⁷ Despite the significance of the issue and the seriousness of Barr's charge, the foregoing is not symptomatic of an existing concerted critical reassessment of accepted precepts. In fact, in this connection, one will find scant offerings in the profession's literature. The basic reason for this general lack of interest in the series might best be summed up in the following sentiment: "could not one's time be used to greater advantage than to muse over such a basic concept, a concept long since dissected in detail and comprehensively analyzed by the archival profession?" If the paucity of relevant literature can be taken as a tacit illustration of a general lack of interest in the subject and an acceptance of traditional conventions, then, equally, the finding aids generated by numerous North American archives would seem to lend credence to the view that a literal interpretation of our current definitions of series influences the thinking and practices of a substantial number of archivists: here, series reflecting documentary form tend to predominate.⁸ Perhaps more revealing of the pervasiveness of this tendency to interpret existing definitions of series literally is the question of how many North American archivists would concur with Barr's assertion of the primacy of function-based series over those based solely on form of material, as expressed in the following example: "... if engineering files for particular projects consisted of photographs, plans, and correspondence, they would constitute a natural series; the photographs would not be a distinct series simply because they have a distinct form."⁹

Notwithstanding the situation detailed above, some contemporary North American archival theorists and writers have, in fact, taken up the issue and delved beneath the surface of prevailing definitions and interpret the series, at root, as a means or instrument of classification. For these individuals the series is perceived not as a classified records system (i.e., a body of documents brought together on the basis of documentary function). Rather, it is viewed as a records classification system, which can be defined as the sum of a classified records system, usually represented as a unique documentary form of material reflecting a specific activity, and a particular administrative function (i.e., a body of records possessing unity on the basis of administrative function).¹⁰ Unfortunately, this fine distinction has been lost in the mist of the legacy of archival writers of the ilk of T.R. Schellenberg, whose ideas continue to exert an inordinate degree of influence on North American archival thought.¹¹ In his consideration of the archival series, Schellenberg asserted that,

...if...a series was [sic] established because a group of records was arranged according to a particular filing scheme, such a series is likely to embody records resulting from the actions of a particular office. Or a series of a particular physical type is likely to denote a particular class of action, for physical types are created in relation to classes of action.... Or a series established in relation to a subject is likely to reflect action in relation to the particular subject of concern to an office or officer.¹²

It is this line of thought that continues to inform contemporary definitions of archival series, and a careful reading thereof reveals its innate weaknesses. Schellenberg's series, as that of many archivists today, is in effect a superficial construct with inherent artificial qualities by virtue of the fact that he viewed the specific documentary forms arising from particular classes of transactions executed by record creators (i.e., classified records systems) as the basis for series.¹³ Such a stance is pure Schellenberg: the methodologist who proved unwilling to examine analytically and critically ideas about the nature and character of archives (i.e., archival theory), and who presented his own basic ideas concerning archival records as "...self-evident truths."¹⁴ Yet, as Terry Eastwood notes in elaborating on some of the ideas expressed above, "... modern ordering of archival documents no longer operates primarily on the basis of the straightforward link between documentary form and documentary function."¹⁵ He goes on to observe that modern archival documents are grouped or ordered by creators in filing or classification systems that are increasingly conceived with the view to assembling all documentation generated in the course of executing a particular function and facilitating retrieval of the information within the resulting body of records. Thus, Eastwood is able to conclude that "archival documents follow administrative function," while, quite distinctly, "documentary form follows documentary function."¹⁶ We can then take function to be the natural basis of the archival series, with documentary form merely reflecting specific classes of transactions undertaken by an agency (with each record form reflecting a particular class of transaction).

These conclusions explicitly illustrate the main problem with our current definitions of series. An archival series can be either a records classification system, or a classified records system, because, as we have seen, these definitions condone series on the basis of any common feature shared by a body of records arising out of creation and/or receipt and use. The subject becomes even more cryptic when viewed in light of the current definition of subseries: "a body of documents within a series readily identifiable in terms of filing arrangement, type, form, or content."¹⁷ The latter, with its stark similarity to the prevailing concepts of series, increases the difficulty of the archivist's task in isolating series and thus further shrouds our understanding of the nature of archives. On a related note, while it may be stretching the point somewhat, it is probably fair to state that further difficulties with our identification or creation of series arise in connection with the American conception of the subgroup, defined by the Society of American Archivists as "a body of related records within a record group or fonds, corresponding to administrative subdivisions in the originating agency or organization or, when that is not possible, to geographical, chronological, functional, or similar groupings of the material [i.e., series] itself."¹⁸ In this context, series may also be confused with subgroups, a fact attested to by archivist Annelie Speidelsbach. In her arrangement and description of the highly-disorganized fonds

of William Irvine (of CCF fame), Speidelsbach wrestled with the artificiality inherent in the American subgroup. Opting finally to adopt an arrangement scheme reflecting her conclusion that, quite exclusively, series were tied to file order and subgroups to origin, she noted that "...the final divisions of the Irvine Collection...might as easily be called subgroups as series, since [the prevailing concept] of subgroups allows subject and functional divisions as well as division by origin."¹⁹

These practical manifestations of an imprecise definition of series have a number of significant theoretical implications. Arguably, the archival record series is central to the maintenance of the integrity of the archival fonds, the protection of which is the *raison d'être* of the principle of respect des fonds. As alluded to earlier, the power and value of archives lie in their organic and natural character as impartial evidence of actions and transactions (including the specific transactional processes responsible for record genesis) and, by extension, as evidence of the programmes, activities, and functions of record creators.²⁰ Indeed, in protecting and illuminating the integrity of archives, as Terry Cook proclaims, "archivists the world over add value to records as evidence and for research, as well as enhance their own unique relationship between each records creator and the resulting records, and between and among interrelated series or grouping of records."²¹ To conceive of the archival series as a documentary form only, in effect, is to flout the principle of respect des fonds: it is to impart superficiality, divesting the concept of its substance, by compromising the impartiality and authenticity of the evidence inherent in an original documentary ordering scheme, and by obscuring the functional link between the record and the record creator. In due course, because of the generally-accepted status of the series as the essential link between the record creator and the physical record,²² the foundation of the concept of the archival fonds is severely weakened. Under such circumstances, the series, conceptually and practically, ceases to be an archival linchpin not only in terms of its status as the central documentary system of the fonds, but also in relation to its role of connecting documentary systems and their originators, and thus providing the crucial link between records and activities. As a result, the series is relegated to a fate roughly analogous to that of the record group vis-à-vis the fonds d'archives. It becomes an inanimate construct rooted in archival administrative convenience, often reflecting or encompassing true series, much like when practical applications of the record group concept encompass true fonds. But any basis in the organic and natural is strictly fortuitous and coincidental, and therefore the resulting "series" is considerably diminished in terms of its evidential and probative value.

To expand somewhat on the ideas enunciated above, the archival series derives its documentary significance from its relationship to the principle of respect des fonds. Respect des fonds consists of the related principles of sanctity of the original order and provenance. Original order is the internal dimension of respect des fonds and "...focuses upon the maintenance of the internal arrangement of...records."²³ This is in contrast to provenance, which is the external dimension of respect des fonds and is concerned with maintaining the integrity of records creators and the contextual evidence associated therewith.²⁴ In connection to sanctity of the original order, Michel Duchéin notes that "the archival document is present in the heart of a functional process, of which it constitutes an element, however small it may be. It always has a utilitarian character, which may only appear clearly if it has kept its place in the

whole of other documents which accompany it.”²⁵ In a similar vein, Heather MacNeil notes that the value of archives is derived directly from their probative character, the integrity of the latter being contingent upon the preservation of those originary qualities “...with which the records are endowed by the circumstances of their creation, accumulation, and use in the conduct of personal or organizational activity[:] ... naturalness, uniqueness, interrelatedness, authenticity, and impartiality.”²⁶ However, the complete protection of these qualities, and therefore the value of archives as evidence, is made increasingly difficult in the presence of a conceptual model of series which obscures significant aspects of the circumstances of record creation by inaccurately delimiting the aggregates into which records naturally and organically form. In effect, then, original order and all associated documentary attributes are compromised by isolating bodies of records that are not in fact natural series.

With respect to the concept of provenance, a similar situation exists. Duchein advises that “...to appreciate a document, it is essential to know exactly where it was created, in the framework of what process, to what end, for whom, when and how it was received by the addressee, and how it came into our hands.”²⁷ Put another way, an understanding of the provenance of records is predicated upon a thorough comprehension of the functions and activities underlying the information system responsible for the records’ production.²⁸ The series is essential to compliance with this imperative, as it is the core of the concept of the archival fonds, which in turn is the heart of the archival discipline.²⁹ We can best understand the fonds, Terry Cook tells us, not as a physical entity, but rather as “...the conceptual summary of descriptions of physical entities at the series level or lower, and description of the administrative, historical and functional character of the records creator(s).”³⁰ More specifically, the fonds is composed of two orders of structure. The external structure of a fonds relates to the functions, activities, and transactions responsible for the fonds’ creation. On the other hand, the fonds’ internal structure is governed by the relationships within and between the various constituent documentary components of the fonds: “the genesis, forms and transmission of the documents within a fonds, the procedural relationships among those documents, and the purposes they serve in a given administrative environment.”³¹ And it is the series that constitutes the essential link between the provenancial and documentary components of the fonds and in so doing provides the key to understanding the nature of the fonds’ external structure. It is the physical record that not only reveals the specific nature of the documentary elements of the fonds, but actually enables the analysis of its contextual basis by exposing organizational hierarchies, functions, competences (i.e., the authority to act in order to fulfill a specific function), etc.

In sum, it is the functional aggregate of records known as the series, through its representation of the combination of the physical integrity of a classified record system and a particular function (i.e., a record classification system) that, in Frederic Miller’s words, “...preserves the values of both provenance and original order.”³² To this, one may add the related assertion of certain authorities that series based on function by their very nature provide a vehicle to “...draw out functional unities not easily perceived in external structures determined in large measure by authority relations, and further obscured by the facts of custody, control, and use.”³³

It would therefore appear that strict adherence to the principle of respect des fonds vis-à-vis the functional origin of the series is crucial not only to the accurate identification and full understanding of series, but also to comprehending and disseminating the true nature of the archival fonds. Thus, while the analysis of a given fonds may reveal easily-discernible aggregates of records sharing common physical, intellectual, or other features, it would seem that there is a compelling argument for looking beyond the periphery of what turns out to be the superficial, and taking the analytical process one step further and heeding the demands of the profession's most important principle by considering the series as an expression of organizational function.

As touched upon throughout this discussion piece, the simplest means by which to facilitate this conceptual reorientation is to redefine the archival series on the basis of function. As Terry Eastwood proposes, in relation to the need for some theoretical mechanism "to address the problem of relating the documentary parts of the whole internal structure of a fonds," the simplest "solution is to define series not as a classified system but as a classification device to group all documents accumulated in the course of an agency's accomplishing a particular function."³⁴ All classified systems of records relating to a given function would be identified as a series. A logical extension of this proposition is Eastwood's suggestion that, in turn, classified records systems, reflecting documentary function, would constitute subseries.³⁵ In other words, the series would reflect a single broad function of a given records creator, with subseries delimited in terms of the record forms, subjects, filing arrangements, etc., that result from specific activities undertaken to achieve that larger function. Eastwood is thus able to pose that a functional interpretation of series, if linked to authority control and a means to connect series with their multiple agents of provenance, "...rounds out the picture of identifying and explaining the dynamism of the archival fonds."³⁶

As we have seen, expositions dealing directly with the issue of the functional basis of the series, with the possible exception of Eastwood and Barr,³⁷ are few and far between. It may, therefore, prove beneficial, prior to drawing this commentary to a close, to provide some of the ideas discussed in this article with a practical dimension by viewing them in the context of the arrangement and description of an existing fonds; indeed, many of the issues broached earlier came to the fore during the processing of a particular fonds. In late 1991, the writer, as an employee of the City of Vaughan Archives, undertook the processing of one of the City of Vaughan's most historically and administratively significant municipally-generated documentary bodies: the Vaughan Township Office of the Clerk-Treasurer fonds. Spanning the period 1850-1968, the fonds provided magnificent documentation of the evolution of local government, and a wealth of associated evidence relating to the social and economic development of the Vaughan community. With a linear extent of some thirty metres, twelve of which pre-dated the advent of World War I, it seemed, ostensibly, that a veritable archival goldmine was at hand. And in fact this was to prove the case, but the mining process would prove somewhat arduous.

While a moderate degree of order graced the fonds upon its receipt by the Vaughan Archives, its analysis, with the principal goal of determining the fonds' provenancial and documentary nature, would prove more difficult than originally anticipated. The Office of the Clerk-Treasurer was to show itself to be a relatively complex agency,

subject to a multitude of subtle administrative adjustments and evolutionary changes reflecting the ever-increasing demands placed upon local government by immigration trends and a burgeoning local economy. Preliminary analysis of the records, coupled with cursory background research, suggested that this functional complexity mirrored a corresponding hierarchical administrative structure in a constant state of flux, and foretold the presence of potential *sous-fonds*. However, as the analysis proceeded, it soon became evident that notwithstanding an incredible degree of functional refinement and evolution, and a marked rise in staff complement, a corresponding administrative hierarchy, even in the most rudimentary form, was not present. All power flowed directly from the Clerk-Treasurer, who was responsible for all municipal administrative functions well into the twentieth century. These ranged from the provision of secretariat services to the Municipal Council and tax collection, to overseeing the electoral process and everything in between. Nor was this perception the by-product of some nineteenth-century registry system whose central organization of records had acted, over time, to obscure lines of authority, administrative hierarchies, etc. There was simply no discernible delegation of responsibility.

Without delving into the minutia of the arrangement of this *fonds*, it is notable that considerable analytical effort yielded, through identification, reconstitution, and creation, numerous aggregates of records based on form and/or subject, reflecting specific activities of the Office of the Clerk-Treasurer. Furthermore, an examination of the nature, scope, and content of these respective bodies of records, in conjunction with evidence gathered relating to the organizational and functional make-up of the Office, clearly indicated that these groups of records found their origin in the various functions of the Township Clerk-Treasurer. Because of the absence of any formal administrative hierarchy in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office, it was obvious that these functional groupings were not provenancial in nature (i.e., they did not represent administrative bodies within the larger Clerk-Treasurer's Office that would be reflected intellectually as *sous-fonds*).³⁸ Moreover, the American concept of "establishing" subgroups on the basis of function or some other commonality shared by a group of series, due to its arbitrary and artificial nature, was not a viable option.³⁹ Therefore, it became evident that the various aggregates of activity-based record forms were merely constituent elements of larger record aggregates. Later findings lent credence to this supposition, as it became apparent that the functional series was not merely a phenomenon associated with an unsophisticated organizational structure, because function-based series generated by clearly delineated administrative subunits of the successor agency of the Clerk-Treasurer's Office were readily identifiable.⁴⁰

In effect, the various administrative functions flowing from the Office of the Vaughan Township Clerk-Treasurer gave rise to bodies of records (series) that reflected, through specific record forms, filing schemes, and/or subject content, and associated actions and transactions, the distinct activities undertaken by the agency in question (subseries). It was also the series based on function that in large measure facilitated the analysis of the external dimensions of the *fonds*, drawing out administrative nuances and functional unities that otherwise would have remained largely obscured or even hidden, in light of the absence of a formal administrative hierarchy in the agency being examined.⁴¹ Thus, to recapitulate, functional series, by enabling adherence to some of the most elemental archival principles, assisted substantially in enabling the comprehension not only of this particular *fonds*' internal dimensions,

but its external structure as well. Moreover, in the course of this process, the integrity of the fonds as a whole (i.e., its status as impartial and authentic evidence of actions and transactions) was preserved.⁴²

In conclusion, the evidence would appear to support the contention that the archival series is a tangible manifestation of organizational function (and broad personal activity), and as a concept is at present inadequately defined in North America. Conceived, at least in part, with the view to providing interpretative flexibility, our current definitions lack precision and in effect encompass both the concept of series and its derivative, the subseries. This results from the failure to differentiate between record classification systems and classified records systems. The delimitation of series, in consequence, is reduced to what amounts to an arbitrary process steeped in artificiality. Moreover, emanating directly from this inadvertent contravention of various aspects of the principle of respect des fonds is the very real danger of compromising the integrity of the fonds itself. One remedy to this predicament is to reconsider the prevailing definitions of the archival series in the context of the character and nature of modern records, documentary systems, and their creators (i.e., on a functional basis). Abstractly, this conceptual reorientation may be seen as an expression of what, according to Terry Cook, is the archivist's province and responsibility: "to get behind the procedures, methods, and technologies of archival work to probe its deeper meaning" by contemplating "the whys" instead of the "whats" and "hows."⁴³ Practically, it holds the potential of divesting archivists of the circumscribing effects of general definitions, posing in the guise of proven and immutable concepts, that have in essence become archival dogma.

Notes

- 1 The writer, at this initial juncture, would like to acknowledge an intellectual debt to Terry Eastwood; it was Eastwood's articulation of certain ideas vis-à-vis the concept of the functional series in his "Introduction" to the Bureau of Canadian Archivists's *The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice* (Ottawa, 1992) that inspired this article.
- 2 While the notion of a precisely-defined, broadly-encompassing conception of series based on the analysis and consideration of the nature of modern records and recorded information systems, and their underlying archival principles and concepts, is oriented to organizational records, the basic concept has a broader applicability to the fonds of individuals and families. This paper, however, will concern itself exclusively with the series as a product of organizational function.
- 3 This appears to be more an American than a Canadian phenomenon and is clearly reflected in the Society of American Archivists' Archival Fundamental Series. The latter's stated purpose is to discuss the theoretical principles underlying archival practice and the functions, activities, and techniques of the profession, but with minor exception it succeeds merely in elucidating current American archival practice. For an incisive review of the series as a whole and in its constituent individual manuals, the reader is referred to Terry Eastwood's "From Practice to Theory: Fundamentals US Style," *Archivaria* 39 (Spring 1995), pp. 137-150.
- 4 Bureau of Canadian Archivists, *Rules For Archival Description* (Ottawa, 1990), p. D-9.
- 5 Lewis J. Bellardo and Lynn Lady Bellardo, *A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Record Managers* (Chicago, 1992), p. 32.
- 6 Heather MacNeil provides a succinct definition of function in an archival context as "the whole of the activities aimed to one purpose," Heather MacNeil, "The Context Is All: Describing A Fonds And Its Parts In Accordance With The Rules For Archival Description," in Terry Eastwood, ed., *The Archival Fonds: From Theory To Practice* (Ottawa, 1992), p. 205.
- 7 Debra Barr, "Protecting Provenance: Response to the Report of the Working Group on Description at the Fonds Level," *Archivaria* 28 (Summer 1989), p. 143.

- 8 This is in no way to imply that the arrangement decisions reflected in these finding aids were arrived at lightly, for the difficulty of wrestling with our prevailing definitions of series in light of the nature of archival records, as shown and as will be further demonstrated, is not as simple as a cursory examination of the issue might insinuate.
- 9 Barr, "Protecting Provenance," p. 143.
- 10 Observed from a slightly different vantage point, a documentary classification system may be viewed as an amalgam of the physical integrity of the classified records system and a particular organizational function. For a brief but extremely lucid and insightful discussion of records classification and classified systems, see Terry Eastwood, "Introduction," in Eastwood, ed., *The Archival Fonds*, pp. 8-11.
- 11 Frank Burke has charged that some of the most influential American archival thinkers were in fact merely compilers of administrative and methodological manuals. Schellenberg, Posner, Holmes, Norton, Kahn, and Buck are numbered among those whose writings were deemed to be steeped in the practical and pragmatic, offering little to our understanding of the theoretical underpinnings informing archival practices and methods. Frank G. Burke, "The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States," *American Archivist* 44 (Winter 1981), pp. 40-46.
- 12 T.R. Schellenberg, "Archival Principles of Arrangement," in Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., *A Modern Archives Reader* (Washington, 1984), p. 154.
- 13 For a more expansive version of Schellenberg's views on and interpretation of the series, see T.R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York, 1965), pp. 167-71.
- 14 Terry Eastwood, "Nailing a Little Jelly to the Wall of Archival Studies," *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993), p. 246.
- 15 Terry Eastwood, "Introduction," *The Archival Fonds*, p. 8.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 17 Bellardo and Bellardo, *Glossary*, p. 34.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- 19 Annelie Speidelsbach, "Subgroup vs. Series Arrangement: The William Irvine Papers," *Archivaria* 23 (Winter 1986-87), p. 116.
- 20 Charles M. Dollar, "Archival Theory and Information Technologies: The Impact of Information Technologies on Archival Principles and Methods," in Oddo Bucci, ed., *Informatics and Documentation* 1 (Macerata, 1992), pp. 45-46.
- 21 Terry Cook, "The Concept of the Archival Fonds in the Post-Custodial Era: Theory Problems, and Solutions," *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993), p. 26.
- 22 Frederic M. Miller in his *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago, 1990), pp. 64-66, summarizes this position most succinctly when in his analysis of the role of the series in arrangement and descriptions he concludes, "the series is the key unit for processing because it combines both the file structure of records and documentation of a record-creating activity."
- 23 Cynthia J. Durance, comp., "Interpretation of the Concepts of Fonds, Collection, and Item in the Description of Archival Holdings: a Position Paper" (National Archives of Canada internal technical study, November 1993), p. 11.
- 24 Claes Granstrom, "The Janus Syndrome," in *The Principle of Provenance: Report from the First Stockholm Conference on the Archival Principle of Provenance 2-3 September 1993*, p. 13. This definition represents the English evolution of the original principle of *le respect des fonds*, established in France in 1841. Standing in contrast to this definition is the similar but distinct German and Dutch conception of the principle of provenance wherein provenance includes respect for the original order. See Peter Horsman, "Taming the Elephant: An Orthodox Approach to the Principle of Provenance," in *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54. The influence of this essential conception manifests itself in English-speaking North America in the writings of those such as Terry Eastwood, whose "external" and "internal structures of provenance" are clearly rooted in Dutch and German ideas. See Eastwood, "Introduction," *The Archival Fonds*, p. 8.
- 25 Michel Duchein, "Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of *Respect des Fonds* in Archival Science," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983), p. 67.
- 26 MacNeil, "The Context Is All," pp. 200-201.
- 27 Duchein, "Respect Des Fonds In Archival Science," p. 67.
- 28 Dollar, "Archival Theory and Information Technologies," p. 48-49.
- 29 For a clear and cogent treatment of the practical aspects of applying the concept of fonds, to supplement the Bureau of Canadian Archivists's excellent study of the theoretical and practical dimensions of the subject (i.e., Eastwood, *The Archival Fonds*), the reader is referred to: Hugo Stibbe, "Implementing the Concept of Fonds: Primary Access Point, Multilevel Description and Authority Control," *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992), pp. 109-137.
- 30 Cook, "The Concept of The Archival Fonds," p. 33.

- 31 MacNeil, "The Context Is All," p. 204.
- 32 Miller, *Archives and Manuscripts*, p. 66.
- 33 Eastwood, "Introduction," *The Archival Fonds*, p. 11.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 37 While Barr and Eastwood address certain germane issues, even their respective treatment of the series is parenthetical to larger topics being focused upon.
- 38 Sous-fonds are generally accepted in English-speaking North America as bodies of records corresponding to administrative subdivisions within a record-creating agency (i.e., provenance-based subdivisions within the parent fonds). Moreover, the Canadian Working Group On Archival Descriptive Standards posited that sous-fonds "...may in turn be divided until the smallest unit of records-creating administration is reached," Bureau of Canadian Archivists, *Toward Descriptive Standards: Report and Recommendations of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards* (Ottawa, 1985), p. 56. It is also of note that the American version of sous-fonds, the subgroup, quite artificially, permits the grouping of series into so-called subgroups on the basis of function, geography, chronology, and other convenient administrative categorizations.
- 39 Certain American archivists have recently decried such practices as antithetical to the most fundamental principles underlying the archivist's craft; most notable among these is Richard C. Berner, who challenged the ideas of Schellenberg and, more recently, individuals such as David B. Gracy II. Berner asserted that Gracy, the author of the SAA's *Archives and Manuscripts: Arrangement and Description* (Chicago 1977), had in fact confused series for subgroups. Berner maintained that subgroups were record-creating agencies, and thus related to provenance, while series were merely an expression of the manner in which records were filed, and therefore related to original order. Richard C. Berner, *Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: a Historical Analysis* (Seattle, 1983), pp. 60-62, 67-69.
- 40 In 1968, in response to pressures brought to bear by increasing service-level requirements and the anticipated annexation of surrounding municipalities, the civic administration of Vaughan Township underwent a massive and fundamental administrative reform. The core of this reorganization entailed the dissolution of the Office of the Clerk-Treasurer, and the establishment of respective Clerk's and Treasury Departments, each with its own distinct functions, competences, and associated activities and internal administrative hierarchy. It is also of note that while the Clerk-Treasurer's fonds has been maintained physically as a single body, in accordance with the principle of provenance, intellectually, the fonds concomitantly constitutes sous-fonds for both the Clerk's Department and Treasury Department. This latter is a broad application of the principle of functional provenance, wherein, in order to document fully the origin of multi-provenance series, it is deemed necessary to document not only (a) record creator(s), but also link records to the agency(ies) that succeeded to the relevant functions of the creator(s).
- 41 This brief analysis of an agency with a relatively simple, but enigmatic, administrative hierarchy would seem to permit the inference that functional series could prove extremely useful to the analysis of the complexities and intricacies of modern organizations and their documentary systems, acting as a vehicle for delineating and comprehending constantly changing organizational structures, functions, competences, procedures, etc.
- 42 David A. Bearman and Richard H. Lytle take the notion of the inherent value of function-based record systems one step further by advocating the use of functional designators or terms, in conjunction with form of material, as intellectual content indicators for bodies of records in a provenance-driven information retrieval system. This system, in turn, constitutes a major component of the authors' attempt to advance "immediate steps for archivists to take in order to improve archival information systems." David A. Bearman and Richard H. Lytle, "The Power of the Principle of Provenance," *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985-86), pp. 22-23, 26.
- 43 Terry Cook, "From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives," in Tom Nesmith, ed., *Canadian Archival Studies And The Rediscovery of Provenance* (N.J., 1993), p. 217.