

but boring. The articles contain new and stimulating ideas, questions, and approaches to archival organization. We look forward to reading future issues of this encouraging and forward looking journal.

Diane Beattie
Library and Archives Canada

Preserving Women's History: An Introductory Guide to Preserving the Records of Women's Lives. PATRICIA A. MYERS. Edmonton: Alberta Women's Archives Association, 2002. 40 p. ISBN 0-9697203-1-9.

Patricia Myers, in conjunction with the Alberta Women's Archives Association, has produced a highly readable, well illustrated, and accessible guide to the preservation of records in women's history. It is a follow up to an earlier guide published in 1993 by the same group, entitled *What's Cooking in Women's History: An Introductory Guide to Preserving Archival Records About Women*, a book which focussed on improving the dearth of records in women's history.

Much in this book could apply equally well to any aspect of history, particularly in the realm of social history; however, Myers' little guidebook is especially helpful to would-be collectors of women's invaluable historic memories. Immensely practical, and written in plain, accessible language, free of professional jargon which might alienate its readers, the guide is illustrated with relevant and attractive photographs, all of which serve to highlight the importance of recording women's historic accomplishments, even those which may not appear to be important. For anyone thinking of gathering, collecting, or preserving their own records or those of a colleague, a loved one, or a women's organization to which they belonged, this guide provides encouragement and practical advice. As well, it encourages collectors to work with archivists and other professionals in recording precious memories for the future. Throughout, Myers weaves her narrative into a pleasing and sustained metaphor of filling pails with plums, so that they may eventually be transformed, with care and diligent effort, into jelly.

Women, far too modest in such matters, often need to be convinced that anything they did could possibly be considered important enough to be included in the historical narrative. Myers takes on the "Who ... me?" attitude, gently but persuasively. Beginning with a convincing plea for the inclusion of women in the telling of the Canadian story, Myers then tells her readers that while the "Women Worthies" are not to be forgotten, even ordinary women, living everyday lives, "are significant parts of the fabric of history." Records outlining the lives of all women can help weave a more balanced view of the past.

Having convinced her women readers that their past is worth remembering, Myers further encourages them to gather and preserve the historic records of future generations, by finding, saving, and donating the gems, the “plums,” depositing them into their pails, and so that some day they can be carefully nurtured through to their final product, the jelly. Her advice is refreshingly practical and respectful of basic archival principles without overwhelming the reader with specialized language. She explains what a fonds is, why it is important to preserve original order and introduces the reader to *Rules for Archival Description (RAD)*. She discourages the popular practice of scrap-booking in favour of maintaining the records’ integrity; notes that action photographs are more telling than formal shots; and reminds the reader that failures are often as important to document as successes. Myers also provides some tips on preserving electronic records, and provides an entry into the world of oral interviewing, an excellent technique to record the lives of groups who leave behind few written records. Links to some useful Web sites are provided, as well as a kind of “what to expect when donating your archival material to a public archives,” section. In the end, all of this saving, preserving, and donating will lead to the fruits of one’s labour: the tasty plum jelly that will put women back into the picture that future generations have of the past.

Dianne Dodd
Parks Canada