

day's archivist is regaining something of this status as an erstwhile role of handmaiden to historians evolves into a more universal acceptance by other disciplines and the general public.

Clanchy also observes that "making documents for administrative use, keeping them as records and using them again for reference were three distinct stages of development which did not automatically and immediately follow from each other." Charters were issued long before charter and chancery rolls to record the fact were maintained by lay and ecclesiastic administrators. Even then a lack of indexes made retrieval from the rolls extremely difficult when the Crown sought, for example, to gather evidence on a subject's title to land. Rolls favoured the grantee who had a dated patent which he only had to compare with the entry on the roll to prove genuine. This has been the favourite nightmare of bureaucrats ever since, despite improved filing systems.

Again and again, the author treats us to insights arising from the nature of the record: seals became the last surviving symbolic objects of the non-literate which used to be exchanged in earnest of a deal (besides being difficult to forge) and which finally yielded to signatures; crosses did not necessarily denote illiteracy (and certainly not an ability to read) but were often used on account of their sacred symbolism which transcended both non-literate and literate societies. In the age of the manuscript, before the onset of moveable type "medieval reading (*lectio*) was primarily something heard rather than seen until the invention of printing, and writing (*scriptura*) often continued to be admired for its calligraphy rather than its textual accuracy. The laity was gradually coaxed towards literacy by ensuring that it changed the old ways of hearing and seeing as little as possible." We in our day are being coaxed into accepting the new media by similar steady pressure. Our present society is perhaps less literate than we like to believe since, for western man, literacy is less central to life than it was. Yet, as we involve *all* our senses our perceptions may be that much sharper.

This is a sensitive, finely researched work about media of record. It is, too, a memorable addition to archival literature for a generation of archivists who are becoming increasingly aware that the nature of the medium does indeed contain its own message. There is more to archives than the configuration of symbols on their surface.

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A Guide to the History and Records of Selected Montreal Businesses before 1947. ROBERT SWEENEY, under the direction of RICHARD RICE and BRIAN YOUNG. Montreal: Centre de Recherche En Histoire Economique du Canada francais, (1979). x, 314 p. (Available from CRHECF, Chambre 440, 5255 avenue Decelles, Montreal, H3T 1V6)

Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives. Coordinated by ALAIN CLAVET. Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1979. xix, 222 p. ill. indexes ISBN 0 662 50346 5 (Ministry of Supply and Services cat. #SA2-108/1979) \$14.95 Canada, \$17.95 Overseas.

Both of these guides deal with much-neglected areas of Canadian historical research and archival responsibility. As trailblazers they are most welcome. Since, by and large, they are also well-thought-out, effectively organized and easy to use, their publication should be greeted with fervent applause. There are, however, some caveats—particularly those associated with the photographic guide—which force a reviewer, however reluctantly, to sit on his hands.

The Montreal business guide is a most satisfactory volume, and it deserves imitation in every major business centre across the country. Admittedly, its scope is narrower than the photographic guide but since, in large measure, Montreal before World War II was the centre of Canadian business the guide has a national significance as well. Moreover, it has been the co-operative product of three scholars who know their subject intimately. Richard Rice and Brian Young of McGill University have full familiarity not only with the general development of Montreal and Canadian business, but they have a fine grasp of Imperial business history too. They have been ably assisted by Robert Sweeny, their chief researcher, and as a result of this scholarly triumvirate the guide emerges as a mini historical encyclopedia of principal Montreal businesses. Without a doubt the brief, pithy accounts (and some are not so brief) of Montreal firms—virtual capsulated biographies—are as valuable as the inventories of their archival holdings.

Rice and Young tell us something about their methodology in the introduction. In the spring of 1976, they sent a broad questionnaire about holdings to some 1400 Montreal businesses established prior to 1946. Two hundred responses were received which eventually led to 50 inventories. Follow-ups, the addition of other firms to the list and the pursuit of personal contacts, pushed the number of Montreal inventories to 127—both in English and French (English being used where the principals were English, French where the principals were French). Not all sectors of the business community responded either to the questionnaire or gentle “arm-twisting”. The guide reflects their absence: little is there about Quebec’s important garment industry, nor the development of the professions, especially law and accounting. Missing too are a number of key companies who put the researchers on “permanent hold”—Alcan, Bell Canada, the Royal Bank, Northern Telecom, and significantly, Canadian Pacific. If the completed guide were to be shown to these firms they might well reconsider their reticence.

The format is clear. The various firms are arranged alphabetically and an historical sketch (frequently with unobtrusive references to secondary literature) introduces each subject. A brief description of the records follows, and that is followed by the inventory of holdings. The ideal inventory is arranged thus: executive papers, financial records, internal accounts, legal records, personnel files, and then special categories such as “Reassurance records” referring to takeovers and mergers between insurance companies, and “Investments”, a heading used when the size of a company’s involvement in other firms is sufficient to warrant separate listing. A miscellaneous column catches everything else and, considering the wide-ranging interests of some of the more diversified firms, it is absolutely necessary.

Occasionally, the editors have been sloppy. There are many typos and spelling mistakes which should have been caught. (It would seem that one way or another that old scoundrel Horatio Bottomley still catches the unwary—even if it’s only in the spelling of his name.) There are also some blind references and an occasional error in pagination. But the most serious limitation is that there is no separate section in the inventory for photographic and other visual records. Rice and Young have taken the traditional historian’s path of downplaying visual documentation. Occasionally, photographs are mentioned in passing but no particular effort has been made to search them out. As far as business records are concerned, this is a most important oversight. The visual record produced by and for transportation companies, lumber companies, and services industries is most important in explaining the understanding of their functions. As far as banks and other financial institutions are concerned photographs also show a record of branch development, the patronizing of the architectural arts, the development of security systems, modes of advertising, and so on. Particularly disturbing it is that the inventories relating to newspapers—the *Gazette* and the defunct *Star* in particular—show no mention of the existence of their (presumably mammoth) photo holdings.

Is this problem overcome with the “Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives”? In a word, no. The guide offers the reader no explanation of its methodology yet it purports to be a catalogue of holdings and collection of photos in “over 110 Canadian institutions.” Businesses, unfortunately, comprise less than 10% of the survey. Why, one might ask? If the authors of the Montreal business guide are to have their wrists slapped for overlooking photographs, then the compilers of this official guide are to be slighted for failing to pursue business firms for their photographic holdings. It is evident by the success of the Rice/Young survey that a photographic inquiry likely would not be rebuffed.

In other ways the guide does its job adequately, occasionally admirably. It is a preliminary effort, so comprehensiveness should not be expected. Overall, there are 2,800 entries arranged alphabetically by title. The trouble is with those titles. They are based on either the name of the individual donor, or former owner, or organization or whatever or whoever is responsible for bringing together the records. If one looks up H.R.H. Princess Louise, one finds that the Public Archives of Canada has 123 varied photographs of Rideau Hall, Victoria, New Westminster, Nanaimo, and Yale, B.C., plus some scenes of hunting in Canada, all taken by a number of photographers in the late nineteenth century. Since one would normally expect to find a photograph or photographs relating to the Princess under such a heading, it is obvious that the arrangement has great limitation unless backed up by an extensive index and a substantial descriptive entry. (Worse than the poor Princess is the misleading case of Sir John Franklin, where the entry listed under a compiler named Cyriax, states the existence of 495 photos “ca. 1845” and the descriptive paragraph suggests they relate to his expedition of that year—a clear and obvious impossibility.) The hub of the problem with the guide is that, of course, it’s really only as good as the index and the index simply is not good enough. For example, there is no entry for “hunting” so the Princess Louise collection would be lost to a researcher interested in that theme. Neither does the “Sport” entry break into divisions such as hunting, so that it becomes obvious the cross-referencing needs attention too.

It is true that the guide can only be as good as the information supplied from participating repositories. One feels, however, that the compilers could have asked more pointed questions. I have always liked the work of Robert Maynard, the British Columbia photographer, and am well aware of the large collection of his fine photos at the British Columbia Provincial Archives. No mention is made of Maynard in the catalogue’s main entries. There are two references in the index: one shows the existence of certain of his photographs in the Leon Jacobson collection at the Public Archives of Canada (with many other photographers); another reveals he is included in the Princess Louise Collection mentioned above. But there is nothing in the guide—not even in the “catalogue-by-repositories” section (which, otherwise, seems most useful)—to indicate that this important collection exists. Is this an exception? Perhaps, but even so, it is troubling.

On the other hand, it would be wrong not to praise this volume for its objectives—and most of its achievements. It is the photographic equivalent of the *Union List of Manuscripts* and it underscores the central importance of visual records in the understanding of this country’s history. The recognition of that importance has been slow in coming (*vide Archivaria No. 5*), and it is high time that such a guide was produced—and all historians and other researchers made aware of it. A little more “development” will sweep away its limitations and I trust the finished product will be a most satisfactory one. Certainly the Public Archives of Canada, which has downplayed its role in the production of the guide, requires the complete co-operation of other archival repositories in the country. Everybody profits from that kind of federalism.

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