

University, Kingston K7L 3N6. We welcome inquiries, and look forward to receiving comments and suggestions from archival colleagues.

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Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Archivists

The Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Archivists was established recently, and at its founding meeting Memorial University Folklore and Language Archivist Philip Hiscock was elected chairperson for the coming year. Over fifty archivists and collectors from all parts of the province met in St. John's on February 3-4 at the Colonial Building to launch the provincial association which will provide a forum for communication between those involved in the collecting and care of archival material throughout the province and a link with other provincial and national groups.

In addition to the business of the meeting, the members were addressed by William Frost, Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs, and by Nancy Stunden from the Provincial Archives of Manitoba who talked of the experiences of their provincial association. Dan Moore from the Public Archives of Canada led another session of the conference, answering a wide variety of questions from the members most of whom had a good opportunity to meet informally with both speakers during the two days. Others elected to the executive committee were Lawrence Jackson, vice chairperson; Margaret Chang, secretary; Heather Wareham, treasurer; Naboth Winsor, communications; David Davis and Nancy Grenville. The association will be publishing a newsletter and a directory of archival collections in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Philip Hiscock
Association of Newfoundland and
Labrador Archivists

Guide to Archives in the Toronto Area

The Toronto Area Archivists Group has just published in January 1983 the third edition of its *Guide to Archives in the Toronto Area*. The 174 pages of this new edition include 134 Archives in the Toronto Area and Southern Ontario, more than twice the number of institutions described in the second edition (1978).

The *Guide* is organized according to type of repository. Categories include business, educational, government, medical, performing and visual art, religious, and ethnic and special interest archives. In addition there are sections devoted to special collections, historical societies, and museums and art galleries. Entries generally contain the following information for each institution: founding date,

address, head of institution and special contacts, hours, restrictions, facilities, mandate, holdings, and publications.

The cost of the *Guide to Archives in the Toronto Area* is \$7.00 for members of the Toronto Area Archivists Group, \$8.50 for non-members, plus a postage and handling charge of \$1.75 for Canadian orders. For further information, or to purchase copies (prepaid), write *Guide*, Toronto Area Archivists Group, Box 97, Station F, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2L4. Cheques should be made payable to the Toronto Area Archivists Group.

The Video Disc Project: An Update

In 1978 the Public Archives of Canada decided to investigate the possibilities of video disc technology as a means of handling some of the access and conservation problems of a modern archives, given the variety and unusual nature of archival material and the special needs of archives users.

A feasibility study concluded that technology was developed sufficiently to allow off-the-shelf purchases for a pilot video disc system. The system consisted of a video disc player manufactured by Thomson CSF of Paris, France; a vectographic MZ 80 microcomputer; a Hewlett Packard 2645A keyboard and terminal; and a Sony 12-inch television monitor.

Demonstrations in October 1979 and January 1980 showed the video disc's excellent colour and audio qualities as well as its enormous storage capacity and convenient access capabilities.

Since then a video print unit has been added to the PAC system. This unit provides the capability of producing hard copy printouts, in either black and white or colour, of images stored on the disc.

In a recently printed report of the pilot project, the subject of recording information in a digital format was discussed. This technology has now been greatly developed, and by January 1984 digital optical recorder systems will be available for the commercial market from Thomson CSF, N.V. Philips of Holland, and McDonnell Douglas and Storage Technology Incorporated, both of the United States. The Library of Congress in Washington has awarded a contract to Teknekron Controls Incorporated for a large-scale optical disc system based on the Thomson CSF recorder/player.

The Thomson and N.V. Philips technologies are quite similar; both use a 30-cm disc with a metallic recording medium and both are worth about \$20,000. The McDonnell Douglas recorder disc is 33 cm and is a photographic film. This system is capable of recording analog, digital, or video, and has nine audio tracks with a facility for thirty seconds of audio with each still frame. The photographic image is protected by a plastic coating and the company claims an archival life of 99 years. These and other developments are being followed closely by the Public Archives. A number of other governments are also interested in this technology.

The PAC has formed a video disc committee and established a departmental policy. The first two applications of the system will be to have a computer tape from