

happened and what it meant, for McCord himself, his wife, or his museum. Overall, however, the work is strong and deeply interesting.

David Ross McCord was a visionary. While his colleagues collected European and Oriental art and artifacts, he was busy gathering Canadiana, which in part is why the McCord Museum has such an excellent collection. McCord himself was as much a creator as a collector. He commissioned an artist to render scenes from Montreal with great historical accuracy, an invaluable resource today. Thus, in addition to the museum artifacts, the archives at the McCord, augmented by the Notman Photographic Archives, are also a national treasure, and as such deserve to be treated with the utmost respect that employing a professional archivist implies. Young's book ultimately has a hopeful ending for all archivists: following a protest a month after the closure of the archives, the museum announced that the archives would not be closed. Today another archivist has been rehired under the current director, Dr. Victoria Dickenson.

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History and Electronic Artefacts. EDWARD HIGGS, ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. 345 p. ISBN 0-19-823633-6.

The dust jacket promotes *History and Electronic Artefacts* as the "first major publication to examine the implications of the electronic revolution for historical research." This claim may be overblown, but no one can doubt that there is a great need to continue addressing the complex and rapidly evolving questions posed for historical research by the computerization of contemporary life. In the case of Canada, consideration of these questions has been a central concern of historians and archivists since the 1970s. Long-time readers of *Archivaria* may remember the considerable debate provoked by the Vancouver Island Project during the early 1980s when a new conceptual framework was proposed for creating machine-readable access to historical sources of all types. Similarly at that time, the workings of the Machine Readable Archives division at the National (then Public) Archives of Canada reflected an awareness of the profound ways in which computerization was affecting the future of history.

Unfortunately, though, these early efforts to come to grips with the electronic revolution were significantly undermined by a convergence of forces including underfunding, professional and disciplinary boundaries, and underestimations of computerization's potential impact in our society. The result is that current thinking about the implications of information technol-

ogies for historical research often seems no further ahead than it did twenty years ago. However, *History and Electronic Artefacts* deserves a wide audience since the context within which the key questions are now being addressed is quite different. Money is currently flowing (relatively speaking, of course) into projects for things digital. All professionals in the information fields, as well as researchers, are revising their roles and responsibilities. And no one now doubts that computerization is profoundly affecting the nature of conservation, preservation, access, privacy, and every other aspect of archival and historical work. For these reasons, the timing appears much better for substantial progress on the major issues confronting all those involved in ensuring history's future.

The long-standing pertinence of the questions addressed in *History and Electronic Artefacts* is reflected in the fact that most of the chapters themselves originated in a conference in 1993 and were initially published in a limited distribution proceedings volume. One of the coeditors of the proceedings, Edward Higgs, recognized the continuing significance of the issues addressed at this conference, and he now presents us with an updated version of some of the original papers, together with several new chapters, in an attempt to reach a wide and diverse audience. Higgs is ideally situated for this work since he has, over the past two decades, become an internationally recognized leader in the archiving and systematic study of routinely generated sources for historical research, many of which are now familiar as electronic files. As a result of his work, Higgs is highly respected by both professional archivists and historians, and thus he brings an unusual level of credibility to his role as editor.

History and Electronic Artefacts begins with an introduction by Higgs and an overview of the field by Seamus Ross, the other coeditor of the early conference proceedings volume. The following twenty-two chapters are divided into four sections. Under the heading "The Historian in the Electronic Age," R.J. Morris uses the approach of case studies to illustrate how historians of the late twentieth century will need additional research skills to those of earlier periods in order to examine the computerized primary sources being generated in our society. In the next three chapters, Ronald W. Zweig, Martin Campbell-Kelly, and Daniel Greenstein emphasize how routinely generated computer evidence must be thought about differently from that of paper-based societies. Overall, this section calls for a new type of historian, one who is as much a specialist in information technologies as in questions of historical interpretation and context.

The second section, "Information Creation and Capture," further specifies what difference the medium of computers makes to the character of evidence that may be left behind by modern societies. In separate chapters, Helen Simpson focusses on the corporate environment, Jean Samuel examines e-mail, and Martin Gardner discusses the potential for research using compu-

terized medical records. Edward Higgs closes this section by linking the changing roles and concerns of historians and archivists with proposed new responsibilities of government agencies, including the national archives in the United Kingdom.

The final two sections examine archival issues, beginning with “The Theory of Preservation and Dissemination” and concluding with “The Practice of Preservation from the European Perspective.” The chapters range from predictive and prescriptive essays (by Kevin Schürer, Edward Higgs, W. Boyd Rayward, and Hans Hofman) to more descriptive discussions of archival strategies and practices in specific institutions and countries (by Lynne Brindley, Alice Prochaska, Michael Wettengel, Tatyana Moiseenko, Hans-Jögen Marker, Peter Doorn, and Claes Gränström). Three other chapters deal with certain kinds of electronic records (those by Jeffrey D. Morelli, Doron Swade, and Denise Lievesley).

Two quite different scenarios emerge from the various chapters of *History and Electronic Artefacts*. The first portrays a new world of historical research in which computer-trained, interdisciplinary historians collaborate with computer-assisted archivists and other information specialists in a multi-faceted analysis of unprecedented historical evidence preserved and made instantly accessible in a multi-media research environment. The second scenario involves lonely historians struggling to find hard-copy sources of evidence about a society whose history largely disappeared into cyberspace as data was erased, became unreadable or inaccessible, or was simply lost. Taken together, the authors suggest that historians, archivists, governments, businesses, and many others must shift their paradigm, or else predictions about the end of history will come true. On the other hand, they argue that the reward for thinking and acting differently would be substantial, as a vastly expanded and enriched evidentiary foundation would permit construction of unprecedented understandings of historical change.

From the perspective of the early twenty-first century, *History and Electronic Artefacts* unintentionally illustrates the speed of technological change, since a number of the chapters seem almost quaint in their discussions of computerization. Similarly, both the optimistic and pessimistic predictions already appear simplistic in light of recent attempts to deal with the changing digital challenges; indeed, debates about shifting paradigms have quickly given way to intense and complex discussions involving specific projects, programmes, and policies. However, the volume’s authors are among the key contributors to the new approaches now being implemented in various archival and research settings, and their observations and proposals continue to resonate despite the changing technological, financial, and institutional contexts of the new century. Edward Higgs and his collaborators deserve a wide audience in archives and universities, and in both the private and public sectors. The future of history is still at risk (as it always has been and will be,

albeit for different reasons), but *History and Electronic Artefacts* is a valuable contribution to our ability to face the current dangers.

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The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary. H.V. NELLES. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. viii, 397. ISBN 0-8020-4271-6.

Nation-building is complex, fragmentary, and conciliatory work that requires politicians, business leaders, clergy, cultural and social elites, and the common masses to accept the shared history, stories, and myths that span several centuries. Canada is an interesting example of this compromise and conflict with its alternating amiable and tempestuous relations between French and English, as well as between and within various indigenous native populations and cultural and ethnic groups. Nonetheless, the history of this country remains one of concession and consolidation, antagonism and resolution, war-fighting and peace-making. Our shared history is thus contested ground where memory, perceived rights, and contentious beliefs blend, meld, fuse, even alienate the individual from the state. Exploring some of these issues, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* is a stimulating new work in the burgeoning field of memory scholarship and the construction of identity.

At the heart of Nelles's work is the struggle over the public commemorations surrounding the 1908 Quebec Tercentenary. Initially envisioned as a celebration of Quebec's founding by Samuel de Champlain 300 years before, and thus of the French-Canadian heritage of the country, the pageantry and spectacle of the event were appropriated by English-Canadian imperialists and nationalists bent on celebrating the British Empire, and Canada's place within it. It is this fascinating process of annexation and realignment which Nelles brings to life, with vibrant prose that not only conveys well his scholarly archival research but will appeal to those outside the ivory towers of academia as well. While the re-enactment of history, with a giant pageant involving thousands of costumed players on the Plains of Abraham, is the focus of the book, archivists will be drawn to Nelles's careful analysis of the way the event was shaped and subsequently remembered.

Through persuasion and cajoling, imperial-minded Canadian and British citizens directed the celebrations to accentuate the two races coming together to form one strong nation, with a focus on the victory of the British Wolfe over the French Montcalm, rather than the sole French founding of Quebec.