

Book Reviews



Archivaria

The Power and Passion of Archives: A Festschrift in Honour of Kent Haworth. MARION BEYEA, REUBEN WARE, and CHERYL AVERY, eds. Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 2005. 269 p. ISBN 1-895382-26-2.

What is the true measure of a man? Judging by the description of Kent Haworth offered here by numerous colleagues and friends, his life merited special honour. The legacy he left as archivist, scholar, advocate, lover of life and nature, was of such magnitude that a symposium and subsequent book were deemed fitting celebration of a life devoted to the “power and passion” of archives. The organizers chose the title, as Marion Beyea explained, to capture the spirit Haworth brought to his work and his belief that archives provided a powerful social and cultural force, underpinning democracy and justice through the custody of truth and knowledge. Unfortunately the tribute was bittersweet as Haworth died a mere two months before this gathering of his many admirers convened at the University of Toronto, Faculty of Information Studies on 21 March 2003. For those readers who did not attend or who are not familiar with the contributions Haworth made to the archival profession, this *festschrift*, edited by Beyea, Reuben Ware, and Cheryl Avery, stands as a record of the proceedings of the day and serves as a permanent tribute to the legacy of a much admired man.

The host of speakers represented a broad spectrum of Haworth’s thirty-year career, recounting his achievements, his writings, and the people he influenced. Scanning the list of speakers and their affiliations, (David Wallace and Margaret Hedstrom, University of Michigan; Verne Harris, South African History Archives; Ian Wilson, Librarian and Archivist of Canada; and Peter Horsman, Archives School of the Netherlands, among the many notable contributors), it is impressive to observe the impact one individual had on the international community of archives. In addition to this worldwide scope, his influence was equally exerted on archives at the local level in all of the communities in which he lived during his career. A major tenet of his own professional philosophy was a belief in the conjoining of local, provincial, and national interests. Archives are bound by jurisdiction, but as professionals, archivists share interests that transcend borders. Haworth was driven by a

profound commitment fueled by an indefatigable enthusiasm and dedication. He was a builder, visionary, mentor, theoretician, and a man readily prepared to practice what he regularly preached. However, many of the tasks he took on were not considered sexy – if such things exist in the field of archives – yet he advanced much needed reforms of standards, description, and education. On a more human side, his nature was described as consisting of a deep sense of humanity, which he combined with a ready laugh and a sense of mischief. He was equally at home in a canoe or at a podium, engaged in impassioned debates, or roaring around the dance floor at ACA banquets.

With respect to the construction and content of the *Festschrift*, one of the best pieces in the collection is the paper by Reuben Ware, as he elaborates on the obituary he published in *Archivaria* 55 (Spring 2003). It is a moving tribute to the man and his work. There is also an entry outlining the chronology of Haworth's career and another thorough bibliography of his writings, including lectures and editorial contributions. Lest the reader conclude that this is a 269-page eulogy, be assured that it is far more. Many of the authors used the occasion to challenge conventions by introducing new ideas about archives and archival theory. There are provocative papers on the use of archives, including "Children's Use of Archives," by Pina D'Angelo Felletti, where she exhorts the range of methods available to introduce children to history, social science, and archives by direct exposure to historical records. Other topics include the crisis of diminished accountability and access in a digital age, ethical considerations regarding research use of personal information, and the need to re-examine descriptive practices for electronic records. It is impossible to mention all the articles and assess their merits but the editors of the publication provide a useful abstract for each, which gives a sketch of the topic and thesis. There is also a list of contributors with additional information about each. While there is no index, the tools mentioned above serve to inform a reader about those worthy of further examination.

One is drawn to the book because of the contributors' intent to offer a tribute to a life lived in the service of a profession many of us share. It is an assessment of a career and a farewell to a much loved colleague and friend. The publication is made even more personal by the inclusion of a number of photographs provided by Haworth's wife, Noemi Volovics, and friends. The test of this book as a work of archival scholarship, however, will be best judged with the passage of time. As with Haworth's career, revisiting it in a decade will put into better perspective the value of his efforts and those of the authors published here. What cannot be underestimated is the true passion and dedication Haworth brought to his profession. Such strength of will and character serve as a beacon to those who follow in the path of archives.

Doug Whyte
Library and Archives Canada