

Articles

In Search of a Theory of Private Archives: The Foundational Writings of Jenkinson and Schellenberg Revisited



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RÉSUMÉ Les archivistes de fonds privés ont souvent blâmé Sir Hilary Jenkinson et T. R. Schellenberg, dont les œuvres influentes ont circonscrit la théorie archivistique de langue anglaise aux archives de gouvernements nationaux, d’avoir exclu les archives privées de notre littérature professionnelle. Cependant, une lecture attentive de Jenkinson et de Schellenberg révèle qu’ils ont beaucoup écrit au sujet des archives privées et, qu’en effet, ils ont nié le statut ou le caractère archivistique de ce que l’on appelait à l’époque des manuscrits historiques. En faisant une distinction claire entre les documents d’archives et les manuscrits, ils ont contribué – peut-être sans le vouloir – à la définition des caractéristiques théoriques des archives privées. Cet article examine leurs idées par rapport aux archives privées, la relation entre les archives privées et gouvernementales, ainsi que l’applicabilité aux archives privées de leurs concepts d’authenticité, de preuve et de valeur. Même si certaines de leurs idées paraissent maintenant démodées, plusieurs caractéristiques des archives privées qu’ils considéraient problématiques à l’époque continuent aujourd’hui de résonner dans la communauté archivistique canadienne, avec l’accent que nous plaçons actuellement sur l’obligation de rendre compte et le patrimoine. Cet article conclut que leurs idées au sujet des archives privées offrent encore aujourd’hui un point de départ pour le développement continu d’une théorie des archives privées.

ABSTRACT Archivists of private fonds often blame the absence of private archives from our professional literature on Sir Hilary Jenkinson and T.R. Schellenberg, whose influential works cast archival theory in English in the mould of the archives of national governments. But a careful reading of Jenkinson and Schellenberg shows that they said much about private archives and, in effect, denied archival status or character to what was called, in their day, historical manuscripts. In drawing a clear

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distinction between archives and manuscripts, they, perhaps unwittingly, did much to define the theoretical characteristics of private archives. This article explores their ideas about private archives, its relationship to government archives, and the applicability of their concepts of authenticity, evidence, and value to private archives. Though some of their ideas have not aged well over the intervening years, many of the characteristics of private archives that troubled them still reverberate in the Canadian archival community today, with our present emphasis on accountability and heritage. The article concludes that their thinking about private archives still offers a starting point today for the further development of the theory of private archives.

Private archives are a poor cousin to government archives in the family of archival theory. Archivists who work with private archives often lament the absence of a professional literature on which to base their work and thought about the archival endeavour. We point to Sir Hilary Jenkinson and Theodore Schellenberg, the founding masters of archival theory in the English language, as the culprits for this state of affairs for their preoccupation with the records of national governments. But a careful re-reading of Jenkinson and Schellenberg through the lens of private archives shows that both said much more on the subject than many private archivists would expect. Indeed, they say much about private archives explicitly and, if we are willing to read between the lines, much more implicitly in their analysis of government archives. But did they say enough on which to develop a theory of private archives?

Jenkinson and Schellenberg define archives in a fashion, which, in effect, denies “archival status” to private archives, and assert that their principles do not apply to private archives. Schellenberg, significantly, announces early in his seminal work, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, that everything that follows applies only to government archives.¹ In excluding private fonds from consideration as archives, they reflected national traditions of acquisition of private manuscripts by museums and libraries. Though often portrayed as progenitors of two diverging schools of archival thought, from the perspective of private archives Jenkinson and Schellenberg are close philosophical allies. There are subtle and important differences to be sure in their portrayal of private archives but, largely, in their overarching vision they shared a common ground.

The definition of archives as records of government and the evolution of archival theory as the theory of government archives, made sense in the context of the national institutions of Great Britain and the United States. The prevailing tradition of “total archives” in Canada, however, brought together government records and private manuscripts in the same institution

1 T.R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (1956; Chicago, 2003), p. 26; Sir Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration* (1922; London, 1966), p. 8.

under the broad rubric of archives.² In spite of Jenkinson and Schellenberg's profound influence in Canada as the foremost archival authors in English, few Canadian archivists, if any, looked to them for an understanding of private archives.³ The heavy borrowing of their concepts and principles, or reaction to them, for government archives left private archives largely out of the theoretical picture. Terry Eastwood's inspirational and ringing defence of the purpose and object of archival theory, for example, reflected this approach by defining archival theory purely in terms of administrative records that attest to the facts of business transactions. Eastwood enunciated universal qualities of archival records in a manner that virtually excluded private fonds.⁴

Terry Cook and Riva Pollard have both observed the pernicious effect on private archives of the long shadows cast by Jenkinson and Schellenberg, and their Dutch forebears, Muller, Feith, and Fruin. In his magisterial history of archival ideas, Cook remarks that the Dutch manual of 1898 "is about government, public, and corporate records, and their orderly transfer to archival repositories to preserve their original order and classification; it dismisses private and personal archives to the purview of libraries and librarians." Though clearly aware of the absence of private archives from subsequent archival thought, Cook does not belabour the point. After all, he was writing a history of archival ideas, not addressing the vacuum of ideas about private archives.⁵ Riva Pollard's critical review of archival literature on the appraisal of private archives found that since the writings of these pioneers, "the professional literature has almost entirely neglected the appraisal of private manuscript materials."⁶ In defining the terms and language of archival theory, Jenkinson and Schellenberg shaped the course of thought in English in the mould of government archives.

But these two seminal thinkers had more to say about private archives than is commonly accepted. Private archivists perhaps have no one but

2 See Laura Millar, "Discharging our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada," *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998), pp. 103–146, for an excellent discussion of the evolution of the total archives concept in Canada.

3 For example, the ACA Special Interest Section on Personal Archives (SISPA), Personal Archives Bibliography, <http://personalarchivesbibliography.pbwiki.com/>, reveals the paucity of Canadian thinking on personal archives before 1990. Most Canadian archivists have addressed private archives through the framework of total archives; thus in their relation to government archives.

4 Terry Eastwood, "What is Archival Theory and Why is it Important?" *Archivaria* 37 (Spring 1994), pp. 125–26. See also Terry Eastwood, "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal," in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. Barbara L. Craig (Ottawa, 1992), pp. 72–74.

5 Terry Cook, "What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898 and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), p. 21.

6 Riva A. Pollard, "The Appraisal of Private Archives: A Critical Literature Review," *Archivaria* 47 (Fall 2001), p. 139.

themselves to blame for not taking up the challenge to their craft posed by Jenkinson and Schellenberg, or engaging their ideas in print. Without a touchstone or point of reference, archivists who work with private fonds in Canada have largely stood apart from theoretical discussion. From the perspective of the private archivist, working with both personal papers and the records of organizations, much of the theory in scholarly journals ranged from the irrelevant and inapplicable to the dissatisfying. There was a disconnect between the theory of archives and the practice of private archives. Riva Pollard referred to the “rift” between private and public archivists while Adrian Cunningham described their “flinty” relationship in Australia.⁷ Barbara Craig has observed that, “[t]he acquisition by public authority institutions of archives from private sector organizations or from individual private citizens is an area of archives work that has a long history; however, that experience is not well represented in the literature nor do the contributions take a theoretical approach.”⁸

Personal archives are the one area of private archives where embryonic discussions of theoretical concepts have taken hold in recent years; generally these theorists have tried to borrow concepts from their government colleagues.⁹ In a landmark 1996 issue of *Archives and Manuscripts*, leading Australian archivists addressed the issue of personal archives, largely by applying models of government recordkeeping to the problematic terrain of the personal. Sue McKemmish in “Evidence of Me” and Chris Hurley in “Beating the French,” for example, found that the essential concepts of government recordkeeping translated well to personal archives. But was it really so simple? Did government archival theory offer easy answers to the questions of private archives? Adrian Cunningham’s more nuanced approach in “Beyond the Pale” charted the boundaries of the theoretical divide between public and private archives, hinting that archivists who worked with private manuscripts would react strongly against attempts to bridge this divide using public record-keeping theory. Cunningham looked to Canada, with its tradition of “total archives,” and more specifically to the writings of Terry Cook, to develop a more inclusive vision of the archival profession.¹⁰

7 Ibid., p. 139; and Adrian Cunningham, “Beyond the Pale? The ‘Flinty’ Relationship between Archivists who Collect Private Records of Individuals and the Rest of the Archival Profession,” *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 24, no. 1 (May 1996). (More colourful language is often heard in the pub during archival conferences. While private archivists may have little professional literature, we have a rich oral tradition.)

8 Barbara L. Craig, *Archival Appraisal: Theory and Practice* (München, 2004), p. 157.

9 Riva Pollard provides an example of this trend by concluding her article on the appraisal of private archives suggesting that the societal approaches of Hans Boom, Helen Samuels, and Terry Cook, offer insights for private archives to follow; see “The Appraisal of Private Archives,” pp. 147–49.

10 Sue McKemmish, “Evidence of Me,” *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 24, no. 1 (May 1996);

The challenge to this Australian vision of personal archives came from South Africa and Canada. Verne Harris deconstructed McKemmish's approach in "On the Back of the Tiger," an erudite and sensitive exploration of her ideas, in which his gentle probing opened "huge chasms under McKemmish's account of personal recordkeeping." To negotiate these chasms, Harris concluded that McKemmish's framework must be "reimagined in order to accommodate the realities of a realm fraught with complexity."¹¹ Catherine Hobbs specifically challenged the portability of theories of appraisal for government records to the private realm. In arguing that, "personal archives require a different appraisal approach than do administrative or government records," her reflections on the value of personal archives resonated with many archivists who acquired and preserved the fonds of individuals.¹²

Most of the recent literature on personal archives addresses the relationship between the individual, the creative impulse, and the record. What about the larger theoretical framework of private archives (a broader, more complex field than personal archives) as addressed by Jenkinson and Schellenberg? Those who consider that the theoretical constructs of government archives can easily be borrowed for the private realm might be given pause by remembering that Schellenberg and Jenkinson accepted the existence of a profound divide between public and private archives, which is evident through the care with which they defined "archives" to exclude historical manuscripts from its scope and emphasized that their principles and observations did not apply to private archives. For them, private archives was a perilous realm outside the boundaries of archives proper. But if Jenkinson and Schellenberg dismissed private archives from consideration more than half a century ago, what relevance would their writing and thought hold today? Does the study of their ideas promise to illuminate the theory and practice of private archives in the digital age? As Richard Stapleton has argued, "their ideas deserve to be reviewed over and over again" simply because of their profound influence in shaping the archival profession in the English-speaking world.¹³

Those who doubt their continuing relevance should consider the impact of Jenkinson's ideas on authenticity and evidence; the research of the InterPARES project team has reconceptualized his principles in defence of the future integrity of digital records as evidence.¹⁴ Schellenberg's ideas on the appraisal of

Chris Hurley, "Beating the French;" and Cunningham, "Beyond the Pale."

- 11 Verne Harris, "On the Back of the Tiger: Deconstructive Possibilities in 'Evidence of Me,'" *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 29, no. 1 (Fall 2001), pp. 8, 15–20.
- 12 Catherine Hobbs, "The Character of Personal Archives: Reflections on the Value of Records of Individuals," *Archivaria* 47 (Fall 2001), p. 127.
- 13 Richard Stapleton, "Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison," *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983–84), p. 85.
- 14 See, for example, the InterPARES 2 project book, Luciana Duranti and Randy Preston, eds., *International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems*

archives for research by historians still resonate with practitioners of private archives like Mark Greene who crafted the “Minnesota Method,” with its innovative approach to integrating research use and acquisition criteria.¹⁵ If the long shadows cast on the profession by Jenkinson and Schellenberg seemingly closed off avenues of thought for private archives, their careful delineation of the distinction between public and private archives today still offers a starting point for considering the principles of private archives and the enduring question of why archival institutions preserve the fonds of private individuals and organizations. By exploring their concepts, we can take some tentative steps toward developing a theory of private archives.

Defining Private Archives

Those who write about archives find it necessary to define their terminology to ensure a common basis for discussion and understanding. Private archives generally are defined as records created by individuals and corporate entities (including non-profit organizations) outside of the public sphere of governments, governmental agencies, and departments. These non-governmental archives typically include the fonds of persons, families, non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, and even less formal groups of people acting in concert, like a social movement or a one-time conference or special event. Public archives, libraries, museums, art galleries, and other cultural and heritage institutions, often acquire such fonds as part of their mandate. Laura Millar has described these fonds as “non-institutional archives” when acquired by a public archives that not only acquires the record of its sponsoring government.¹⁶

What we call private archives today, would in Jenkinson or Schellenberg’s day have been referred to as private manuscripts, historical manuscripts, or manuscript collections. The evolving terminology is not without its problems for the archivist today, considering the impact and influence of their thought on archives. Private archives is both a more inclusive term than manuscripts in that it more readily encompasses digital records and non-textual media. But it also expressly applies the word “archives” to fonds of private provenance, something that these two seminal thinkers would have denied to “historical manuscripts.” And then there are grey areas that dwell between public and private archives, and personal and corporate archives. Verne Harris has reflected thoughtfully on the difficulties inherent in drawing neat boundaries between concepts like

(*InterPARES*) 2: *Experiential, Interactive and Dynamic Records* (Padova, Italy, 2008).

15 Mark Greene, “The Surest Proof: A Utilitarian Approach to Appraisal,” *Archivaria* 45 (Spring 1998), pp. 148–52.

16 Millar, pp. 104–105.

personal archives and corporate records, noting that, “So often the personal slides into ‘professional’, ‘associational’ or ‘organisational’” and warned us that “... the boundary between ‘personal recordkeeping’ and ‘corporate recordkeeping’ is troubled. It is unclear, shifting and soft.”¹⁷ Still, public and private archives are useful and necessary concepts if we are aware of, and use caution near, their troubled boundaries. To avoid the pitfalls of semantics, I will attempt to discuss the ideas, characteristics, and qualities behind Jenkinson and Schellenberg’s visions of private archives, rather than defining precisely or exactly their concepts.

Personal and family fonds present the least difficulty in terms of defining private archives, and were probably what Jenkinson and Schellenberg had in mind when they most forcefully described the non-archival characteristics of historical manuscripts and manuscript collections. The records of businesses and organizations existed as a grey area for them, ranging in character from personal manuscripts at one extreme, to government agencies at the other in terms of possessing full-fledged archival character. Corporate archives and non-profit organizations, which kept their own archives in-house, best fit their vision of the archival end of the spectrum. Such archives – where creating institutions manage their own records – have characteristics that resemble government archives more than other private archives. They form part of the administrative machinery of the corporate entity, much like a public archives forms part of the government that created and funds it. They are an extension of the institution’s internal records management. For this reason, these in-house, corporate archives are largely excluded from my discussion of private archives.

Sir Hilary Jenkinson on Private Archives

Sir Hilary Jenkinson’s writings on archival principles and practice, in particular his 1922 book, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, have profoundly influenced the English-speaking archival profession. Richard Stapleton and Terry Eastwood, among others, have observed that Jenkinson’s ideas and concerns reflected his schooling in the British archival tradition. After an education in the classics at an English Public School and Cambridge University, Jenkinson joined the Public Record Office in 1906 where he mastered palaeography, and specialized in the arrangement and description of medieval manuscripts. His formative archival experiences and interests occurred or developed in the years before World War I, before the great twentieth-century growth of both governments and government recordkeeping. Steeped in the British tradition of responsible stewardship of archives

17 Harris, pp. 18–19.

handed down over centuries, he believed that archivists first and foremost were guardians of the context and integrity of the records entrusted to their care.¹⁸

In his famous enunciation of the archivist's calling, Jenkinson celebrated a profession devoted to the preservation of evidence: "His Creed, the Sanctity of Evidence; his Task, the conservation of every scrap of Evidence attaching to the Documents committed to his charge; his Aim to provide, without prejudice or thought, for all who wish to know the Means of Knowledge."¹⁹ The sanctity of evidence meant the unflinching defence of the characteristics of impartiality and authenticity found in archival records, just as the archivist received them from the creating agency. Archival records were not created in the interests or for the purposes of posterity, but by a natural accumulation of records created in the course of the conduct of affairs, by a creator who created and kept them for his or her own information. Their impartiality derived from the need of the records creator to transact business in and of the moment, without reference to future consideration or historical interpretation. Their authenticity derived from their preservation by an unbroken chain of responsible custodians, from their original creation through to the present. Archives were not bought and sold, created and discarded, or lost and found; they passed from the hands of the creating agency to its legitimate stewards, as the records of the British government passed to the Public Record Office.²⁰

Jenkinson found private archives problematic in this regard; he admitted that: "Archives as a term must be extended to *collections made by private or semi-private bodies or persons, acting in their official or business capacities*. Local Authorities, Commercial Firms, the responsible Heads of any undertakings may, probably, will leave behind them Archives."²¹ His emphasis in this statement is on records created in the course of official business capacities. This character imbued them with the impartiality so vital to his understanding of the archival endeavour. Personal manuscripts and correspondence, documents created outside of an individual's official or business capacities, in fact, much of what we consider personal archives, failed his test of what constituted archives. The presence of the personal, the intrusion

18 Stapleton, pp. 75–76; Terry Eastwood, "Jenkinson's Writings on Some Enduring Archival Themes," *The American Archivist* 67 (Spring–Summer 2004), pp. 31–34.

19 Sir Hilary Jenkinson, "The English Archivist: A New Profession," in *Selected Writings of Hilary Jenkinson*, eds. Roger Ellis and Peter Walne (Chicago, 2003), p. 258. See also, Sir Hilary Jenkinson, "Reflections of an Archivist," in *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice*, eds. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch (Washington, 1984), pp. 18–21.

20 Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, pp. 11–13; Eastwood, "Jenkinson's Writings," pp. 42–43; and Stapleton, p. 77.

21 Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, p. 7.

of self, compromised the impartiality of the record; no archivist could guarantee the impartiality of a personal narrative written with regard to the future or to justify one's actions in the eyes of others. We do not have to agree with Jenkinson but it is important to understand his perspective.

But the creation of the records in the course of official business capacities in itself was not sufficient to confer archival status. Custody of the records must be unbroken and pass in an orderly fashion to a qualified archival repository. To be archives, the records required an “unblemished line of responsible custodians.”²² The absence of such a pedigree compromised the authenticity of the record. Jenkinson accordingly was suspicious of the practice of acquisition, where an archives acquired a fonds created by another individual or organization, of which he observed: “Turning to the other kind of Archives, that of documents written originally by one person or body and preserved by another, we have not of course the same guarantee against forgery or tampering, because there are now two sides involved and either may have a motive for deceiving the other.”²³ He is perhaps too suspicious, though private archivists do understand that donors will engage in varying degrees of editing or self-selection of documents prior to donation to an archives. Archival acquisition broke the chain of custody and ownership, severing documents from the context of creation and compromising their authenticity. This change of custody and ownership eroded the archival character of private archives even when created in an official capacity.

Jenkinson ultimately denies archival character or what he calls “Archive Quality,” to most personal fonds. In addition to his original condition of qualifying only records created in the course of official or business capacities,” he stipulated four additional conditions which private archives must meet to make them as “secure in their reputation for impartiality and authenticity” as the records of the Crown:

- 1) There must be a reasonable probability of the authority's own continued existence.
- 2) The Archives must be taken over direct from the original owner or his official heir or representative.
- 3) The authority taking over must be prepared to subscribe to the ordinary rules of Archive management directed to the preservation of Archive character.
- 4) The authority taking over must be prepared to take over *en bloc*: there must be no selecting of “pretty” specimens.²⁴

22 Ibid., p. 11.

23 Ibid., p. 14.

24 Ibid., pp. 40–41.

Some private fonds in established public archives would meet his four criteria. Many would not. While these criteria may appear purely theoretical, an archivist in the United States tested the manuscript collections acquired by the Library of Congress before 1931 and determined that only thirty-five out of one hundred and sixty collections met Jenkinson's stringent definition of archives.²⁵

Jenkinson's first two conditions do not seem overly problematic, at least not for a corporate entity. The fourth condition is more troublesome. Most acquiring archives engage in some selection and arrangement that would threaten the "archive character" of the fonds. Selection of documents for preservation by an acquiring archival institution damaged, perhaps irreparably so, the archive quality of the fonds. He argues that,

...no Archivist, even in the cases where these documents have been taken over direct from the original owners and custody has consequently been preserved unbroken, could possibly allow full Archive value to documents which have been violently torn from the connexion in which they were originally preserved, a connexion which in nine cases out of ten is important, if not vital, for the full understanding of their significance There can be no doubt that the latter [archivist] should not, if he can help it, take in, by way of gift or otherwise, documents which have not an Archive quality.²⁶

Ultimately, preservation of the records by the duly constituted archives of the creator was the only, or surest, guarantee of the impartiality and authenticity of the records. When such character was suspect, the archival institution should not acquire the records. In-house institutional archives are, in fact, the only private archives that were worthy of the title "archives." For Jenkinson, archives were kept, not acquired.

He identified two villains in the archival world who, as a matter of course, damaged archival character: first, British museums for their practice of breaking up fonds and acquiring only pretty specimens; second, Belgian archivists, who, in adopting a forerunner of the "total archives" approach (in which archival institutions preserved both government records and private fonds) acquired "documents of a public and private nature from all kinds of sources" in a manner that horrified Jenkinson. He expressed dismay about the otherwise admirable Belgian Archives:

...we cannot help regretting that an Archive Service which is regarded as one of the first in the world should in this matter deviate from one of the chief principles laid

25 Curtis W. Garrison, "The Relation of Historical Manuscripts to Archival Materials," *American Archivist* II (April 1939), p. 98, cited in T.R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (Washington, 1984), p. 31.

26 Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, pp. 41-42.

down in the *Manuel* – that for the Archivist, Archive interests should be primary and Historical ones secondary. For with all respect to the eminent authorities of the Belgian Archives, we cannot think that a stray paper from some dispersed family collection, itself picked up in a sale, is a fit inmate for a National Archive Establishment.²⁷

What is perhaps most significant here from a theoretical perspective is his explicit identification of “historical” interests with the acquisition of private archives, and his association of “archive” interests with government archives. This dualism recurs again and again in archival literature under varying names. Elsewhere, he mused that, “Archives were not drawn up in the interest or for the information of Posterity.”²⁸

Though some of Jenkinson’s words may seem outdated to archivists in an age when appraisal and selection are the norm, for our purposes his careful distinction between private and public archives is relevant. Private archives typically failed his conditions for the authenticity and impartiality that conferred “archive character” to records. If we ignore the semantics of what is and what is not “archival” (many archivists today would accept that private fonds are archival), then we can see that he identified three defining characteristics of private archives:

- 1) *Creation*. Individuals, families, or informal groups unofficially or haphazardly create private archives (i.e., they are not created by government agencies, commercial firms, or the “responsible heads of undertakings” in the course of their official capacities).
- 2) *Custody or Ownership*. The acquisition of private fonds by a public archives or other cultural institution involves a change of ownership; even when the records are acquired direct from the creator, they are still severed from their context of creation. The change in ownership and custody caused by acquisition decreases or diminishes the trust that can be placed in the authenticity of the fonds.
- 3) *Motive for Acquisition by an Archival Institution*. Cultural institutions acquire private archives for historical interests, rather than archival interests.

Jenkinson’s delineation of the characteristics of private archives, arising from his effort to distinguish them from government archives, would find a mirror thirty years later in the writings of T.R. Schellenberg.

27 Ibid., pp. 43–44. Many archivists active in Canada’s “Total Archives” tradition have acquired some documents that would fit Jenkinson’s definition of “unfit inmates” for a national archives. Library and Archives Canada’s MG 55, defined as “Miscellaneous Documents,” holds many such examples.

28 Ibid., p. 11.

T.R. Schellenberg on Private Archives

Schellenberg's thinking and writing on archival principles and practices shaped the archival profession in the United States, and greatly influenced developments in other English-speaking countries. But he too was very much a product of his time and place in the American archival tradition. He attended the University of Kansas for his Bachelor and Master's degrees, and the University of Pennsylvania for his doctorate, which he completed in 1934. He joined the staff of the newly formed National Archives in 1935 and advanced quickly. With the new institution assuming responsibility for legacy records and the rapid growth of government in the New Deal and World War II eras, a voluminous mass of records threatened to overwhelm the new National Archives. In facing this challenge, Schellenberg adopted a consciously modern approach to archival principles. Consigning Jenkinson to the vaults of medieval manuscripts, he argued that the size and complexity of modern governments demanded new principles and techniques for managing archives. His ideas developed over many years, but he honed them in a lecture series in Australia and codified them in his 1956 book, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, which laid out a clear and pragmatic path for the archivist of the record of modern government.²⁹

But like Jenkinson before him, Schellenberg carefully differentiated between public archives and historical manuscripts through a definition of what properly constituted "archives." Two necessary elements had to be fulfilled for archives to exist. The first concerned the creation of the records: "To be archives, material must have been created or accumulated to accomplish some purpose.... If they were produced in the course of purposive and organized activity, if they were created in the process of accomplishing some definite administrative, legal, business, or other social end, then they are of potential archive quality." The second element concerned the motivation for preservation: "To be archives, materials must be preserved for reasons other than those for which they were created or accumulated. These reasons may be both official and cultural ones."³⁰

Schellenberg's first element implicitly excludes much of the content of personal and family fonds from consideration as archival records, while admitting other forms of private fonds, the records of organizations and businesses, to the potential status of archives. Applying the term "historical manuscripts" to personal or private fonds, he describes them in a fashion reminiscent of Jenkinson³¹:

29 Jane F. Smith, "Foreword," in Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives*, pp. viii–xi; Stapleton, pp. 76–77.

30 Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, pp. 13–14.

31 Jenkinson and Schellenberg are much in agreement on private archives. But viewing

While archives grow out of some regular functional activity, historical manuscripts, in contrast, are usually the product of a spontaneous expression of thought or feeling. They are thus ordinarily created in a haphazard, and not in a systematic manner... Whenever textual records that might otherwise be classed as historical manuscripts are created in consequence of organized activity – such, for example, as that of a church, a business, or, even, an individual – they may be referred to as archives; hence the designations “church archives,” “business archives,” “private archives.”³²

Though he included individuals in this list, he likely referred only to individuals whose occupation of an office or a post produced records of purposeful and organized activity – much like Jenkinson’s “responsible heads of undertakings” – that qualify as archival. Most individuals did not qualify as archive creators. Even for those who did, the totality of their fonds would include much more material that arose from, in his words, “a spontaneous expression of thought or feeling” – such as the papers, diaries, letters, photographs, and other documents created and accumulated in the unconscious flow of living – what Catherine Hobbs has called “the flotsam of the individual life.”³³

Schellenberg argues that archival records have an organic quality that historical manuscripts lack in a fashion, which rankles most archivists of private fonds today. Many archivists who acquire and preserve private fonds would argue that he lacks understanding of personal fonds when he claims that individual manuscripts seldom possess an organic relation to other manuscripts within the fonds, and that they can stand alone. But in reality, he was reacting more to the manner in which librarians, historians, and curators had handled historical manuscripts in the United States as much as the actual inherent qualities of private archives. In *The Management of Archives*, published nine years after *Modern Archives*, Schellenberg conceded much “archival” ground to private archives in terms of their potential status as “Archives,” perhaps in response to the criticisms of practitioners in the field. In accepting that, “Recent private papers often have the organic quality of public records” he displayed a more sympathetic and sensitive posture toward private archives.³⁴ The villain in his eyes was not the records themselves but the librarians, historians, and curators who routinely handled historical

them through the prism of government archives, particularly the appraisal of government archives, it is common to view them as antagonists or as founders of differing “schools” because of their oft-cited conflicting approaches to appraisal.

32 Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, p. 18.

33 Hobbs, p. 131. See her excellent description of all the facets of a life that produce documentation that fall outside the functions of employment or office holding. She remarks: “There is an intimacy in the personal archive not present in the collective, corporate, formalized record-keeping system.”

34 Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives*, p. 31. See also pp. 65–66.

manuscripts as discrete items, and imposed chronological and subject-based classification schemes upon them, sundering them from their organic quality.³⁵ But his original arguments and definitions of archives in *Modern Archives* are perhaps the most influential expression of his views.

Unlike Jenkinson, Schellenberg does not attribute the loss of archival status in private archives to acquisition or change of ownership, but he does recognize an important distinction between acquiring and receiving. Reflecting the American tradition of the preservation of historical manuscripts by libraries, he finds significance in the differences in archival and library terminology: archivists accession records through transfers and deposits; librarians make acquisitions through purchases and gifts. Archives are receiving agencies, while libraries are collecting agencies.³⁶ Furthermore, he emphasizes that in the passage of public records from government agency to archives, no change in ownership takes place; it is merely a change in custody.³⁷ His salient point is that, by and large, historical manuscripts – or private archives – fall within the purview of libraries not archives.

Schellenberg also observed the distinction between public and private archives in his well-known discussion of the two secondary values essential in the appraisal of archival records: evidential value and informational value. It seems there are as many definitions of the terms “evidence” and “evidential value” as there are archivists. In a sustained analysis of the concept of evidential value, Terry Eastwood identified the challenges of interpreting this term and rightly observed: “Schellenberg was not unfailingly clear in his explanation.”³⁸ Jennifer Meehan, in her investigation of the concept of evidence in archives, has explored the many meanings of evidence and the difficulty in articulating a coherent definition in an archival context.³⁹ In Schellenberg’s own words, evidential value is “the evidence public records contain of the functioning and organization of the government body that produced them.”⁴⁰ He carefully underlined the distinction between his concept of evidential value and Jenkinson’s “sanctity of evidence in archives,” which derived from an unbroken chain of custody that assured the authenticity of the records. But he asserted instead: “I refer rather, and quite arbitrarily, to the value that depends on the character and importance of the matter evidenced, i.e., the origin and the substantive programs of the

35 Ibid., pp. 38–39 and 45.

36 Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, pp. 19–24.

37 Ibid., p. 125.

38 Terry Eastwood, “Fundamentally Speaking: The Third Version, a Review of the Archival Fundamentals Series II,” *The American Archivist* 71 (Spring–Summer 2008), p. 232.

39 Jennifer Meehan, “Towards an Archival Concept of Evidence,” *Archivaria* 61 (Spring 2006), pp. 128–30.

40 Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, p. 139.

agency that produced the records. The quality of the evidence per se is thus not the issue here, but the character of the matter evidenced.⁴¹ This last phrase, as Eastwood aptly observes, is “enigmatic.”⁴² But if his phrasing thwarts attempts to tie down a precise interpretation, we can discern that Schellenberg’s use of the words “arbitrarily” and “importance” indicates the subjectivity of the concept of evidential value. Jenkinson’s “sanctity of evidence,” in contrast, depended upon an objective construction of impartiality and authenticity. The subjective distinction made by Schellenberg allowed archivists a role in the appraisal of archives.

In a much more straightforward fashion, Schellenberg’s informational value derived “from the information that is in public records on the persons, places, subjects, and the like, with which public agencies deal; not from the information that is in such records on the public agencies themselves.”⁴³ His concepts of evidential and informational value appear portable to personal archives and the records of corporate entities, at least on the surface. The fonds of individuals and non-profit organizations, for example, would include evidence of the actions and decisions of their creators in addition to information about persons, places, and subjects with which they dealt. But this appearance of portability aside, Schellenberg was careful to define evidential value in a manner that explicitly excluded historical manuscripts, at least in the form of personal fonds:

Public records, or, for that matter, the records of any organic body, are the product of activity, and much of their meaning is dependent on their relation to the activity. If their source in an administrative unit of a government or in a particular activity is obscured, their identity and meaning is likely also to be obscured. In this respect they are unlike private manuscripts, which, as we have noted before, often have a meaning of their own without relation to their source or reference to other manuscripts in a collection.⁴⁴

This definition did open the door to evidential value existing in the records of corporate entities, whose records generally would meet his criteria of being the product of organic activity, and documenting their organization and functioning. Many archivists of personal fonds, however, would chal-

41 T.R. Schellenberg, “The Appraisal of Modern Public Records,” in *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice*, eds. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch (Washington, 1984), p. 58. Schellenberg’s phrasing is different in some passages in this article (first published in 1956), which otherwise closely follows his discussion in *Modern Archives*, pp. 133–60.

42 Terry Eastwood, “Fundamentally Speaking,” p. 232.

43 Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, p. 148.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 141. While some archivists might argue that evidential value does exist in personal fonds, it might be that they have a broader definition of the term than Schellenberg.

lenge his argument that private manuscripts do not have an organic quality. But in his exact construction of the definition of evidential value, his foremost concern is evidence of the internal organization and functioning of government departments. “The records of an agency that contain ‘evidential’ value, then, are those necessary to provide an authentic and adequate documentation of its functioning and organization.”⁴⁵ This construction is inelegant, at best, when applied to an individual life. Records with Schellenberg’s evidential value document the functions, administrative units, and hierarchical structures of a government agency and the interrelationships within that agency. These corporate structures and hierarchies have no mirror within the individual person, and this value, as defined by Schellenberg, has no corollary in the personal fonds.

Schellenberg’s concept of evidential value thus offers a forceful expression of his theoretical distinction between public archives and private manuscripts. This value stood apart from any possible use to which the records in archives might subsequently be put by researchers. In his words, “records having evidential value should be preserved regardless of whether there is an immediate or even a foreseeable specific use for them”; for these records contained “the proof of each agency’s faithful stewardship of the responsibilities delegated to it and the accounting that every public official owes to the people whom he serves.”⁴⁶ In the Canadian context today, we would associate this characteristic of evidential value with the concept of accountability. Writing before this term entered popular usage in the public discussion of records and governments, Schellenberg imbued evidential value with the character or quality that held governments accountable to citizens. The fact of the existence and survival of records in a public archives, regardless of any subsequent use of the records, provided the evidence of the functioning and organization of the machinery of government that kept it accountable to citizens. As he explained why such records should be preserved in a public archives: “An accountable government should certainly preserve some minimum of evidence on how it was organized and how it functioned.”⁴⁷

In contrast, Schellenberg’s definition of informational value, the other

45 Ibid., p. 140. His use of the phrase “adequate documentation” allowed his concept of evidential value to survive the judicious selection or appraisal of records, in contrast to the Jenkinsonian formulation of evidence.

46 Ibid., p. 140. To lay aside strict definitions for a moment, we might surmise that he, like Jenkinson before him, is attempting to describe a concept or quality, which evades easy delineation, that exists in public records and gives them an “evidentiary” character. Eastwood links Schellenberg’s concept of evidential value to utility but this passage hints that he envisaged something larger for it than just use, seemingly transcending his distinction between primary and secondary values. As Eastwood observes, Schellenberg is not unflinchingly consistent in his definitions.

47 Schellenberg, “The Appraisal of Modern Public Records,” p. 59.

value he identified in public archives, did not exclude private manuscripts because he ascribed no organic character to this value:

In appraising the value of such information in public records, we are not concerned with the source of the records – what agency created them, or what activities resulted in their creation. The only thing that matters is the information that is in them. Informational values can therefore be appraised piecemeal, for the records are judged solely on the basis of their content and not on their relation to other records produced by an agency.⁴⁸

In identifying informational value, relationships between the records were not important; the content of the records was important. His concept of informational value – what also might be called research value or content value – is intimately connected to the subsequent research use of the records by others. His definition admitted its existence in private manuscripts.

The conception of historical manuscripts or private archives in Schellenberg's writing, to be fair, evolved greatly over time and is simplified here, but its essential elements did not differ significantly from those of Jenkinson written forty years before. In denying archival character to personal fonds and perhaps the fonds of organizations, Schellenberg had identified, even if in the negative, three defining elements or characteristics of private archives:

- 1) *Creation*. Private manuscripts are not created in the course of purposeful, organized activity but rather in a “spontaneous, haphazard personal expression” of an idea or feeling. They lack an organic character in that the relation of individual documents to other documents is not essential to understanding their significance or content.
- 2) *Custody or Ownership*. Private archives are collected or acquired through purchases or gifts instead of accessioned or received through transfers and deposits in the course of regular business activity.
- 3) *Motive for Acquisition by an Archival Institution*. Whereas public archives should be appraised and preserved for both evidential value and informational value, private manuscripts do not possess evidential value and are preserved only for their informational or research value, or their potential for use in research.

48 Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, p. 148.

The Characteristics of Private Archives

In their seminal writings on archival theory and practice, both Jenkinson and Schellenberg took great care to differentiate government archives from historical manuscripts or private archives because they understood that their principles would not apply, or would be problematic at best, in the realm of private archives. They also understood that practices in the acquisition and appraisal of private manuscripts would complicate their efforts to articulate a coherent theory of archives. But in considering and discussing, albeit all too briefly, what characteristics distinguished public and private archives, they went some distance toward laying a theoretical foundation for understanding private archives, even if it was often expressed in the negative or in terms of absence. Three particular elements or characteristics emerge, though perhaps not fully formed, in their analysis of private archives, which find a mirror in the other's writing:

- 1) *Creation*. Individuals, families, or informal groups acting together unofficially, haphazardly, or spontaneously create private archives. The distinction between government archives and private archives in this characteristic, however, diminishes when moving from personal fonds to fonds that are created by persons acting in official capacities or by corporate entities. It is in this manner of creation where corporate archives most resemble public archives. Much of the recent literature on personal archives addresses this element and, hence, throws into stark relief the distinction between personal and corporate or government archives.⁴⁹
- 2) *Custody or Acquisition*. The acquisition of a private fonds by an archival institution, involves a change in ownership of the fonds. Private fonds are "acquired" or "collected," whereas government archives are "kept" or "transferred." Though it sometimes surprises archivists to think of records in terms of private property, private fonds are just that until they are donated to an archives. It is in terms of acquisition by archival institutions that the fonds of individuals and corporate entities most resemble each other and the expressions "non-institutional archives" and "private archives" are most coherent and embracing; private archives are private property until a public institution acquires them. But even here the distinctions between government archives and private archives diminish when we are considering the position of the records of a corporate body preserved within its own institutional archives. A corporate archives is private property but no change in ownership arises from its receipt of records from an office or division within the corporation. The presence of this unbroken chain of custody, with its assurance of authenticity, enabled Jenkinson to confer

49 See, for example, Hobbs, pp. 126–35.

“archival character” upon these records.

- 3) *Motive for Acquisition by an Archival Institution*. On the one hand, archives acquire private fonds primarily for their research or informational value, their utility or potential utility for their clientele or funding sponsor, whereas public archives are kept primarily for their value as evidence of government’s functioning and organization, although they may also hold great value for research. In spite of their differing conceptions of evidence, both Jenkinson and Schellenberg attribute an evidentiary character to public records that they do not find or believe is compromised or problematic in private archives. In Jenkinson’s words, historical interests take precedence over archival interests in the acquisition of private fonds. Private fonds are acquired and preserved for research or other use by present and future generations. Schellenberg’s argument that public records with evidential value should be preserved even if they are never to be used or consulted for research finds no counterpart in the domain of private archives. The exception here again is an in-house institutional or corporate archives whose records would satisfy his definition of evidential value, and which could be preserved even if no research use was anticipated.

A Common Vision of Private Archives?

The two founders of English archival thought have much to say about what makes records archives, what distinguishes public and private archives, and what confers value in archives. Schellenberg and Jenkinson both identify two elements that give records “archival quality” or character; in one of these elements, however, lies a fundamental difference in interpretation. The first element, wherein they agree, refers to provenance or creation. Archives are created through the transaction of organized, official, business activities. The second element, wherein a difference lies, is custodial. For Schellenberg, records that satisfy the first element become archives through the simple fact of preservation by an archival institution. Jenkinson, however, asserts that records keep their archival character only through maintaining an unbroken chain of custody between the creating agency and the archives. This distinction in the custodial element of what confers archival status, allowed Schellenberg to adopt the appraisal or selection of records for preservation. In Jenkinson’s model, selection had jeopardized the integrity of the records as archives.⁵⁰

Reversing their test of archival character, Jenkinson finds that private archives fail in both the creative and custodial elements: the records are not

50 See, for example, the discussion of their ideas on appraisal in Terry Cook, “What Is Past Is Prologue,” pp. 23–27.

created in the course of official business capacities, and the change of ownership in acquisition by an archival institution severed the chain of custody essential to ensuring authenticity. Schellenberg only denies archival quality to private archives through the creative element: arising spontaneously or haphazardly, they fail to reflect purposive and organized business activity. What is significant is that both subscribe to, and express, a theoretical basis of private archives; perhaps it is an interpretation which not so much articulates what private archives are in fact, as an interpretation which expresses, in the breach, what they are not. And what both say they are often not, is “archives.” Nevertheless, they provided a theoretical distinction between government and private archives that allowed them to develop and articulate principles applicable to government archives without fear of compromise by the precepts or practice of private archives.

In turning from the elements of custody and provenance to the assignment of value or motive for archival acquisition or preservation, we find them again largely in agreement on private archives. Schellenberg’s evidential and informational values have a mirror in Jenkinson’s remarks about the Belgian Archives, which he accused of confusing “archive” and “historical” interests in their practice of acquiring both public and private archives. Schellenberg and Jenkinson both, though differing in the specific definitions of their terminology, found a special “archive quality” or character in government records preserved in a public archives that they did not find in private manuscripts. This common archival character in public records originated from their differing concepts of the “sanctity of evidence,” the impartiality and authenticity assured by an unblemished line of responsible custodians, and “evidential value,” the capacity of such records to provide evidence of the functioning and organization of government. Though their definitions varied in strict terms,⁵¹ both endeavoured to approximate an intangible quality that made it vital to preserve government records in a public archives. For Jenkinson it is the complete record; for Schellenberg it is only the sufficient, minimum, or essential record. This intangible quality would, in Canada today, be framed in terms of “accountability.” Records imbued with this value or quality must be kept in a public archives to hold government accountable to its citizens, even if these records will never be consulted for use in research. Candace Loewen has meditated on the relationship between accountability and evidential value, and noted the emergence of the term “accountability value” in American archival parlance.⁵² Neither Jenkinson nor Schellenberg would find

51 Ibid., p. 27. Cook explores the differences between Jenkinson’s “sanctity of evidence” and Schellenberg’s “evidential value.”

52 Candace Loewen, “From Keep and Destroy to Remember and Forget: Dimensions of Accountability Value,” *Archivaria* 58 (Fall 2004), pp. 202, 208. Loewen urged “archivists to examine continuously their reasons for appraisal choices: what do informational value,

this accountability value in historical manuscripts. In denying an evidentiary character to private archives, they drew a theoretical line in the sand dividing them from government archives. In essence, their distinction between the two types of archives hinges on the nature of their creation or provenance and the assignment of value to the records. Neither believed that historical manuscripts that are acquired by an archival institution possess the evidentiary character or organic process of creation that is an essential element of government archives. Archives acquire private fonds primarily because they contain research or informational value, in Schellenberg's terms, or historical interest in Jenkinson's.

Archivists today may take issue with Jenkinson and Schellenberg's denial of the evidentiary character of private fonds. Jennifer Meehan has remarked that archivists' interpretation of the word "evidence" has suffered "from a narrow conceptualization that inextricably links the notion with legal rules, accountability, and corporate memory."⁵³ In this narrow vision of evidence, we have followed and absorbed the teachings of Jenkinson and Schellenberg. Meehan believes that our constructions of this evidentiary character, as a "supposedly inherent nature of the records," have reinforced "conceptual distinctions between public and private records."⁵⁴

Schellenberg's concept of evidential value, as he defined it, is perhaps harder to find in private archives but not impossible. Corporations, non-profit organizations, churches, and private citizens do, in fact, keep their own archives for evidential value. Evidential value in the records of corporations and non-profit organizations hold them accountable to their shareholders or members – and, at a remove, to society at large. Their records are an asset, maintained to fulfill legal obligations, ensure proper business practices, and enable sound management. But again, this is largely the distinction between keeping and acquiring. Private archives best retain their legal and evidential value when kept by the creator. It is more difficult to find evidential value or value for accountability in a personal fonds but we can perhaps find it in legal requirements to keep revenue and tax records for a fixed period of time. But again, this purpose requires individuals to keep records themselves rather than to transfer ownership to an archives. When evidentiary character is vital in private affairs, government legislates that records are kept by the creator and accepted, well-defined practices followed.

Perhaps the real issue for both Jenkinson and Schellenberg was not that

evidential value, legal value mean in the current context? What could they mean in the future?," recognizing the mutability of archival values over time. A recent high profile use of the term "accountability" in Canada is the *Federal Accountability Act*, 2006, which bestowed enhanced responsibilities upon Library and Archives Canada.

53 Meehan, p. 127.

54 Ibid., p. 144.

private manuscripts did not possess any evidentiary character; both accepted in certain circumstance that these records could be considered “archives,” but that the primary *motivation* for the acquisition of private fonds by a museum, library, or archival institution was its value for research and not its evidentiary character. Schellenberg is often held up as the leading advocate of use-based archival appraisal in which archivists catered to the research needs of historians and other scholars. But in his own writing, he consistently emphasized the importance of evidential value in the appraisal of government records. Through appraisal, he argued archivists should identify and preserve records that documented the organization and functioning of government.⁵⁵ In the acquisition of private fonds, evidentiary characteristics are a secondary consideration, if a consideration at all. Jenkinson certainly believed that the process of acquisition damaged or weakened these characteristics irreparably. Rephrasing this issue of value in terms of accountability, who would donate personal or corporate records to an archival institution if its primary purpose in acquiring them were to hold the donor accountable to society at large? Preserving evidentiary character might, however, be the foremost concern of donors in cases where the financial burden of preserving their own records was too great or problematic; it would not, however, motivate an archival institution to acquire them and accept the cost of preservation unless it anticipated some future research use.⁵⁶ Jenkinson understood that the change of ownership implicit in acquisition compromised, at least to some degree, the quality of records as authentic and impartial evidence.

If we conceive research or informational value more broadly to incorporate all forms of active societal use and not limited to the research of historians and other academics, it is easier to see that its presence in private fonds answers the fundamental archival question, “why acquire and preserve these documents?” Whether it is termed historical, heritage, cultural, memory, informational, content, or research value, the presence of this value is what motivates archives, museums, and libraries to acquire archival fonds created by individuals, non-profit organizations, and businesses. It is difficult to imagine an archival institution indefinitely incurring the cost of acquiring and preserving a private fonds if it believed the fonds would never be consulted or used (archives do acquire documents for display or exhibition value but that is,

55 See for example, Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, pp. 139–60, where, perhaps significantly, he places evidential value before informational value; and Cook, “What Is Past Is Prologue,” p. 29. Cook, for one, has recognized that Schellenberg’s successors emphasized use-base appraisal “more than he did.”

56 It is easy to imagine a scenario like a corporate scandal where it would be desirable for the courts and a public archives to intervene and preserve the private records for their evidentiary character before the owner could destroy them. It is very unlikely, however, that this criterion for acquisition would be stated explicitly in the mission or mandate of the archival institution.

of course, a form of use). Those outside the milieu of private archives sometimes have difficulty accepting this essential fact. Richard Cox has remarked with disapproval that “In the United States many individuals working as archivists seem predisposed to acquiring records as historical information to serve specific research clientele.”⁵⁷ He attributes to an unhealthy predisposition what actually might be attributed to the defined mandate of the archival institution or the purpose of its sponsoring agency in making the funds available for long-term preservation of the records. In this respect one thinks of the “total archives” tradition in Canada in which governments have funded both their own recordkeeping and the acquisition of private archives to meet the needs of future research and specific clientele. In describing these individuals as *working as archivists*, Cox implies perhaps that they are not really archivists at all, echoing Jenkinson and Schellenberg’s enduring distinction between archives and manuscripts. But without an expectation of subsequent use in some form, there is no motivation for a publicly funded archives to incur the cost of acquisition and preservation of private fonds. Some might argue that its purpose instead is to document society. But in this seemingly insurmountable task it is bound to favour the acquisition of records for which it foresees a potential future use over those it believes will never be consulted or removed from the vaults.

Library and Archives Canada (LAC) has formally adopted the term “heritage value” as the basic criterion for the acquisition of private fonds. This heritage value is what makes a personal or private fonds worthy of preservation for future generations – and ultimately justifies the acquisition of private archives. LAC finds heritage value in documents that “reveal typically Canadian experiences or stories; document events or trends (cultural, political, economic, social, demographic, scientific, and religious) with a national scope; provide valuable insights into the activities of a diverse and developing society; or are of a rarity and importance that allows them to be considered national treasures.”⁵⁸ Much debate in the archival appraisal of government records has concerned the relative merits and roles of informational and evidential value. This debate holds little meaning for private archives in which the basic determination of value rests primarily upon only one of these values. Government archivists at LAC have repudiated Schellenberg’s taxonomies of value at the theoretical level in using macroappraisal and functional analysis to determine value. But if, in aspiring to document society through government functions, macroappraisal methodology focuses on the interaction of function and structure in an institution rather than the records themselves,⁵⁹

57 Richard J. Cox, *Managing Records as Evidence and Information* (West Point, 2001), p. 6.

58 Library and Archives Canada, *Collection Development Framework* (30 March 2005).

59 Terry Cook, “Appraisal Methodology: Macro-Appraisal and Functional Analysis, Part A: Concepts and Theory” (National Archives of Canada, Government Archives and Records

then it does so at least in language reminiscent of Schellenberg, who found evidential value in records that documented the “functioning and organization” of government agencies.

Increasingly we may be seeing a polarization of the two pillars of archival value⁶⁰; perhaps in the Canadian archival system evidential and informational value are evolving into accountability and heritage value? Government archivists speak in terms of evidence, functions, structure, and accountability,⁶¹ while private archivists speak in terms of memory, heritage, research, and cultural value. Some archivists fear that this polarization threatens the basic tenets of the Canadian archival system, including total archives. Laura Millar has urged the archival community to “move beyond an ‘institutional’ versus ‘cultural’ dualism,”⁶² while Terry Cook has mused about the positive aspects of the tension between evidence and memory: “Perhaps they are two sides of the archival coin, in creative tension, each worthless without the other despite the contrary implications they have for the archival endeavour.”⁶³ Though this polarization is perhaps not without its dangers, its persistence reflects the continuity and enduring nature of the two archival values over many years – whatever we have called them.

The idea that much contemporary archival theory is not relevant to the practice of private archives is a bitter pill to swallow for some archivists, but it would not have been surprising to Jenkinson or Schellenberg who consciously crafted much of their thinking about archives to exclude private manuscripts. In doing so, perhaps unconsciously, they identified and elaborated upon the defining characteristics of private archives, laying the basic foundations for the future development of a theory of private archives.

Disposition Division, Summer 2000), pp. 3–5. The theory and methodology of macroappraisal, as developed by Terry Cook, Richard Brown, and others at Library and Archives Canada, is far more subtle and nuanced than portrayed here by necessity, where my intention is merely to point out the commonality in terminology of deriving value from documenting the functions and structures of government agencies. See also Terry Cook, “What Is Past is Prologue,” pp. 31–32, and in more depth, Terry Cook, “Mind over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal,” *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. Barbara L. Craig (Ottawa, 1992), pp. 38–70.

60 At Library and Archives Canada, incidentally, government archives and private archives are now further apart organizationally than at any time since the creation of the Public Records Division out of the Manuscript Division in 1973. Government archives and private archives report to the Librarian and Archivist of Canada through different Assistant Deputy Ministers, with private archives now more closely integrated with the library or published heritage divisions of LAC.

61 Millar, p. 130. Millar has observed this “increasing emphasis on the legal, financial, and administrative importance of records, perhaps to the detriment of an examination of their informational, intrinsic, or historical value.”

62 *Ibid.*, p. 139.

63 Terry Cook, “Archives, Evidence, and Memory: Thoughts on a Divided Tradition,” *Archival Issues*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1997), p. 179.