

*All Shook Up: The Archival Legacy of Terry Cook.* Tom Nesmith, Greg Bak, and Joan Schwartz, eds. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2020. ISBN 978-1-945246-31-9; 978-1-945246-30-2

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I first met Dr. Terry Cook as a young graduate student in the fall of 1975. I was doing research for the first time at the Public Archives of Canada (later National Archives of Canada, then Library and Archives Canada) and met with Terry to talk about government records dealing with western Canada. He listened patiently to my questions, appreciated that I was still feeling my way, and at one point invited me into the stacks for an informal lesson about record creation before the rows of archival boxes. While Terry was immersed in archival theory and practice, he never lost sight of the importance of actively participating in the research process.

Twenty years later, I held the public advocacy portfolio for the Canadian Historical Association Council. Terry had a similar position with the Association of Canadian Archivists. The big issue at the time was access to historical nominal census records. Terry was a great believer in being well-armed before going into any battle, and I remember how he painstakingly walked me through the government legislation on the issue and made sure that I understood the relevant sections of various acts and how they fit together. We worked together on the file for the next 15 years.

I also taught a public history seminar at the University of Saskatchewan. Terry gladly made the trip to Saskatoon for the “archives” meeting and literally took

over the class. His enthusiastic presentation, and the discussion that followed, convinced more than one student to enter the profession.

I raise these examples to provide a caveat for this book review. I knew Terry as a mentor, a colleague, and most of all, a friend. I am not the most objective person. But Terry would want me to be scrupulously honest – to give a straight-up assessment of the book.

*All Shook Up*, edited by Tom Nesmith, Greg Bak, and Joan Schwartz, celebrates the archival legacy of Cook, a gentle bear of a man who left the archival world a better place than when he started in the profession in 1975. The three editors should be commended for this project. Former Dominion Archivist Sir Arthur Doughty may have his statue in Ottawa, but Terry will have this volume as his memorial.

The book brings together some of Terry's most influential writings in 13 chapters. Leaders in the archival field have been invited to offer commentary on these articles and their impact on the discipline, both then and now. From the time he entered the profession, Terry was at the forefront in insisting that an archivist did much more than serve as a passive records custodian – that an archivist was as much a theorist as a scientist. Indeed, what becomes clear from the collection is that Terry was forever thinking about archives, the profession, and its present and future challenges, even after he retired from the National Archives in 1998 and until his death in 2014.

In an introductory essay, Terry's good friend Tom Nesmith examines Terry's training, influences, reading, and, especially, his thinking. He was not one-dimensional, but immersed himself in the developments and debates of the day through literature, lively discussion, and rock 'n' roll music. Terry was a humanist who looked upon the world in holistic, inclusive ways while seeking to reinvigorate archival thinking and archival practice. His arguments sometimes ruffled the archival community, both in Canada and abroad, and there was occasional push back. But his questioning and prodding were genuine – as was his encouragement.

Terry's articles – and the introductions by archival scholars – reflect the diversity of his thought and his responses to societal changes and needs. He bemoans, for example, the fragmentation of fonds into different media and calls on archives to reflect the complexity of the record. He trumpets the importance of context, the history of the creation of the record, and the ways justice can be served by archives. He writes about the interplay of archival practice and theory

and describes archives and history as partners who need to dance together. And he embraces postmodernism and the development of new ideas about archives, particularly when it comes to electronic records. It is a broad canvas of work, confirmation of his place as one of the world leaders in the discipline. It is too bad that Terry was never able to tackle his planned “big book,” one that would bring everything together and offer a road map forward.

That is what is missing here. The chapter contributors – some more than others – hint about continuing challenges in their introductory pieces, but they tend to emphasize what Terry argued more than where the debate needs to go next. After all, while Terry was ill, the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy hosted an archives summit to address ongoing issues. Then, there were the two expert panel reports: one by the Royal Society of Canada (*The Future Now: Canada’s Libraries, Archives, and Public Memory*), the other by the Council of Canadian Academies (*Leading in the Digital World: Opportunities for Canada’s Memory Institutions*). These publications have undoubtedly figured in discussions within the archival community, but they have not been addressed in any meaningful way in the literature or public forum. Were the archives summit and the two reports little more than, to use Terry’s term, “word fests”?

Records have never been more ephemeral, and if institutions are going to capture a snapshot of early-21st-century society, there must be a long-term strategy. Some agency, group, or individual(s) must step up to the plate and offer a vision forward. And then that vision must be implemented – turned into resources and operational programs. Terry would expect nothing less.