

**The Art of Description: Finding a Place for Works of Art in  
Archival Descriptive Standards and Practice**

by

**Blythe W. Koreen**

**A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
In partial Fulfillment of the Degree Requirements  
for the Degree of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**Department of History (Archival Studies)  
University of Manitoba / University of Winnipeg  
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**© November, 2006**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA**  
**FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
\*\*\*\*\*  
**COPYRIGHT PERMISSION**

**The Art of Description: Finding a Place for Works of Art in Archival Descriptive Standards and Practice**

**By**

**Blythe W. Koreen**

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of**

**Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree**

**Of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**Blythe W. Koreen © 2006**

**Permission has been granted to the Library of the University of Manitoba to lend or sell copies of this thesis/practicum, to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and to University Microfilms Inc. to publish an abstract of this thesis/practicum.**

**This reproduction or copy of this thesis has been made available by authority of the copyright owner solely for the purpose of private study and research, and may only be reproduced and copied as permitted by copyright laws or with express written authorization from the copyright owner.**

## Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The Development of Archival Descriptive Standards in Canada	10
Chapter 2: Visual Records as Primary Sources	48
Chapter 3: Current Approaches and Possible Alternatives	77
Conclusion	110
Appendix A: Schematic of Arrangement and Description	115
Appendix B: Franklin Carmichael fonds level description	116
Appendix C: Commercial Art and Design series description	120
Appendix D: Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana at the National Archives of Canada – collection level description	121
Appendix E: Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana at the National Archives of Canada – ArchiviaNet item level description	124
Appendix F: Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana at the National Archives of Canada – finding aid item level description	125
Appendix G: Fort George (Que.) and district reports series description	126
Appendix H: Fort George (Que.) and district reports series listings	129
Appendix I: Categories for the Description of Works of Art (CDWA) Core Categories	131

Appendix J:	Library and Archives Canada, Item Level Description Description Procedures (minimal fields) for Works Of Art	134
Bibliography		135

## Abstract

Archival descriptive standards, while multi-media in intention, have been developed within the archival profession with the needs of textual records in mind. This thesis examines the current descriptive standards for visual materials, highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach, proposes possible improvements, and indicates areas that need further research and development.

The traditional version of history, as it has been taught, researched, and trusted, is now being challenged on a daily basis. History must now include those people, groups and regions that have previously been marginalized by society, habitually excluded from its history. This questioning of the traditional version of history has caused an explosion of alternative histories to emerge, drawn from a variety of previously underused sources. Many of these new resources are visual. As works of art become more and more sought after by the researcher as a means to illuminate forgotten and overlooked elements of the historical record, how these sources are treated in archival description and practice as viable primary source records becomes more important. Regardless of media, archival records must be presented as equal through description and practice.

The *Rules for Archival Description* (RAD) is the Canadian archival profession's embodiment of descriptive standards. However, all visual media, regardless of how distinct they may be, have been lumped into one place, RAD Chapter 4, on "Graphic Materials." If archives are going to give the time, funds, space and energy needed to house these visual items, and researchers are beginning to discover their value as

primary source documents, the archival profession needs to examine better ways to describe visual records and present them to researchers.

To understand how archival description neglects visual materials, this thesis traces the development of archival descriptive standards from the origin of the concept of the fonds to the landmark Dutch Manual of 1898, and on to present practice. Through a qualitative analysis of existing literature on archival descriptive standards in Canada, this thesis discusses how RAD favours some forms of media, and neglects others. In addition, this study examines challenges to archival orthodoxy in Canada concerning description in general, and then in particular the description of visual materials.

While the analysis and conclusions of the thesis may be applicable to other visual materials in archives, such as film, photographs, or cartographic records, the focus here is on works of art (paintings, drawings, watercolours, etchings, prints, posters, etc.) that are found in the holdings of most archives.

Postmodern insights highlight the need for increased visual literacy, as well as the need for more attention to the contextual origins of works of art. Current approaches to the description of art are examined, using examples from Library and Archives Canada and the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. The shortcomings of the RAD approach are exposed, exemplifying the need for more attention to context at all levels of description. The alternative series system of archival description, as well as descriptive approaches developed outside of the archival profession, are explored to suggest ways of improving the current approach to the description of visual materials are made.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mother and father, Diane and Richard Koreen, for redefining the term “support.” Their understanding, advice, and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis has been invaluable. I would also like to thank my late grandfather, Adam Muzychuk, and the world’s greatest Baba, Anne Muzychuk, for all of their love and support.

A special thanks to Ryan Koreen for peeling me away from my computer when it was clearly in my best interest, in particular, on July 1, 2005. Thank you Alisha Talbot for repeatedly saying “you will finish,” and for putting up with a very challenging roommate during those last dark days of writing. Lisa, Leah, Bronwen, Kathleen, and Heather, thank you for cheering me on no matter how miniscule my progress.

Last, but definitely not least, I would like to thank my advisor, Terry Cook, for his understanding, encouragement, suggestions, editing advice, and sense of humour. You are the advisor everyone hopes for.

Blythe W. Koreen  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
November, 2006

## Introduction

Archival descriptive standards are a set of rules and conventions developed to ensure that archivists in every kind of archival jurisdiction are describing their records in the same way. While multi-media in intention, these standards have been developed within the archival profession with the needs of textual records primarily in mind. Do these standards really work adequately for visual records? This thesis will examine the current descriptive standards for visual materials, highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach, propose possible improvements, and indicate areas that need further research and development.

Many see history as being rediscovered and revitalized by scholars drawing from previously overlooked sources. In addition to the records of previously marginalized groups, these new sources are often visual or archaeological.<sup>1</sup> The traditional version of history, as it has been taught, researched, and trusted, is now being challenged on a daily basis. History now needs to include those people, groups and regions that have traditionally been marginalized by society, and therefore excluded from its history. This questioning of the traditional version of history has

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard Swift, "Myth and Memory: Truth in History is Elusive," New Internationalist 247 (September 1993): 5.

caused an explosion of alternative histories to emerge, drawn from a variety of previously underused sources. Historian Richard Swift notes that in many key areas of the historical record, “the official stories that are supposed to give us meaning are looking more and more bedraggled.”<sup>2</sup>

To those brought up on, and educated with, a history based almost exclusively on textual records, the written word had acquired a certain unquestioned status as the most-trustworthy documentary evidence. Yet Canadian archival theorist Hugh Taylor calls this a “deceptive precision.” Taylor points out that archivists and historians are well aware that textual records can be biased, inaccurate, selective, and misleading -- so why are they given more evidentiary value as primary source records than visual resources? Taylor argues that it is because these textual sources are presented chronologically, through well-worded statements and logical arguments, in archival finding aids.<sup>3</sup> Simply put, they are researcher friendly, and perhaps what researchers think they are looking for. No one checks a book out of the library in a language that they cannot read. When researchers are given a choice between confusing item-level descriptions of art, where contextual origins are not apparent or blurred, or poorly organized, and the chronological fonds-level descriptions for textual records, they choose the latter.

As discussed earlier, these textual records can often be compromised, and this researcher-friendly version of history can lead those same researchers astray.

Concerning the role and responsibility of the archivist, James O’Toole wrote:

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh A. Taylor, “Documentary Art and the Role of the Archivist,” The American Archivist 42 (October 1979): 420.

No matter what institution an archivist is working in, or how varied the collection, the archivist has the responsibility of preserving the integrity of the records, both intellectually and physically, through certain common activities and duties.<sup>4</sup>

These professional sentiments tend to be applied with less rigour to a group of media, commonly referred to in the archival profession as “graphic materials,” where those common activities and duties have not been adequately developed or defined. The *Rules for Archival Description* (RAD) is the Canadian archival profession’s embodiment of descriptive standards. This set of standards has had a major impact on the development of descriptive standards worldwide. However, it seems as though all “questionable” or “troublesome” media, regardless of how distinct they may be from each other, have been lumped into RAD, Chapter 4, on “Graphic Materials.” It is as if these visual records are being swept under the theoretical and practical rug, so as not to disturb the consensus based on the textual records that make up the vast majority of archival holdings. Perhaps these “graphic” records are being avoided by archival professionals due to a lack of visual literacy. How does one describe something one cannot understand? If archives are going to give the time, funds, space and energy needed to house these visual items, and researchers are beginning to discover their value as primary source documents, the archival profession needs to examine better ways to describe them and present them to researchers. A great leap forward would come from increased visual literacy among archivists.

---

<sup>4</sup> James O’Toole, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1990), 3.

Archival principles, as we have come to know them, have been developed by archivists working in government bureaucracies, based on the needs of administrative record-keeping systems. This is the world of the central registry office and the filing cabinet.<sup>5</sup> This worship of the written word has left very little room for the development of specific guidelines for the description and practical handling of works of art in the archival environment.

For the researcher who has been taught that the written word is more valid than visual communication, this bias is reinforced by how works of art, photography, film, even cartographic records, have been marginalized in archival practice. When visual records are poorly described, they will always be overlooked in favour of their textual counterparts.<sup>6</sup> More often than not, such visual records will not be used for the evidentiary value, informational content and creator context they reveal; rather, they will be used as mere illustrations for a book or an article, illustrations used to reinforce conclusions supported by research conducted overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, with textual records.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps Hugh Taylor put it best in 1979:

I wish to bring before you the watercolour and the oil painting, and I would plead for their legitimacy at a time when I believe many of you have grave doubts about these media, for are they not works of art altogether too wayward in conversation for their more staid companions, the record and the manuscript? Most of us have examples of these charming pieces in our repositories, but are not too certain how they will fit into our scheme of values. If they are "good," should they go to an art gallery; and if they are not "good," what kind of rating can we give them? I think

---

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, "Documentary Art," 419.

<sup>6</sup> Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature In Africa* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Jim Burant, "Visual Archives and the Writing of Canadian History: A Personal Review," *Archivaria* 54 (Fall 2002): 94.

there is a small voice in all of us which says: "You can't really trust those painter chaps!"<sup>8</sup>

More recently, Canadian archival scholar Joan M. Schwartz asserts that graphic materials have fallen victim to a "linguistic othering," a marginalization through lack of attention to them as specific media. Chapter 4 of the *Rules for Archival Description* is devoted to "Graphic Materials." Graphic materials are defined as pictures, photographs, drawings, watercolours, prints, and other forms of two-dimensional visual representations. Art and photography share this common group designation, but maps, film, and other visual materials that share the root "graphos" are given their own chapters.<sup>9</sup> Schwartz sees this marginalization as forcing these media to the margins of archivy. They are organized with an emphasis on the item level of description, rather than in logical, navigable, collective groupings, such as the fonds or series, with little regard to their contextual origins or historical relationships.<sup>10</sup> This thesis will examine the marginalization of works of art through archival description.

As works of art become more and more sought after by the researcher as a means to illuminate forgotten and overlooked elements of the historical record, how well these sources are treated in archival description and practice as viable primary source records becomes increasingly important to researchers. Is it any wonder that the historical record is incomplete, when the records being perused by scholars are primarily limited to the written word, because archives have erected this visual-media-unfriendly filter? Regardless of media, archival records must be presented as equal in

---

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, "Documentary Art," 417.

<sup>9</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, "Coming to Terms With Photographs: Descriptive Standards, Linguistic 'Othering,' and the Margins of Archivy," *Archivaria* 54 (Fall 2002): 149.

value through description and practice. If the academic world wants accessibility to the historical record to be complete, archivists must allow researchers to gain a fuller appreciation of the past. This can only be done by representing all records as equal, making all records equally accessible through descriptive practices, and respecting the unique attributes of each medium rather than lumping them together.

To understand how works of art landed so firmly in the “margins of archivy,” this thesis will examine the development of archival descriptive standards from the origin of the concept of the fonds in 1840 in France, to the landmark Dutch Manual of 1898, and on to the standards and practices of the present. Only after an examination of this evolution will the reader fully understand how these records strayed so far from their textual counterparts in descriptive theory and practice.

Some believe the very notion of archival theory to be superfluous. American historian and archivist John Roberts has denounced the very idea of archival theory. He argues, “Save what is historically valuable – there; that is the theory,” and that “archival work is intrinsically, inescapably ad hoc. There is no big picture.”<sup>11</sup> However, developments in archival theory during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have dramatically shaped and changed the way and indeed the very assumptions by which archivists approach their work. In fact, archival theory is an articulated and well-understood set of principles about preserving society’s collective memory. Archival theory guides archivists in their day-to-day work, and sets a

---

<sup>10</sup> Bureau of Canadian Archivist, Towards Descriptive Standards: Report and Recommendations of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1986), 65.

<sup>11</sup> John Roberts cited in Terry Eastwood, “What is Archival Theory and Why is it Important?,” Archivaria 37 (Spring 1994): 122.

continuity of conduct and procedure within the profession.<sup>12</sup> However, that theory is not perfect, and one of its blind spots has been visual materials.

The topic of descriptive standards and archival practice for visual records has gone relatively unaddressed. Most of the scholarly effort into the exploration of visual records has focused on defending their value as archival records, rather than on developing standards for their description once in the holdings of an institution. Descriptive standards, along with electronic records and records appraisal, is one of the most discussed and debated subjects in archival literature. In the nineteenth century, archival theory in the emerging archival profession began as a “descriptive science” intended to bring order to the perceived chaos of older textual records inherited from a distant past. Dialogue and professional exploration concerning description are as old as the profession itself.

Unlike the majority of archival scholars, those in the library sciences and collections management fields have not been apprehensive in examining graphic materials. Journals like Collections Management and Art Libraries Journal are very good sources for examining access, retrieval, organization and bibliographic description techniques for art in other (i.e., non-archival) cultural collection environments. None address the specific needs of works of art in the archival environment. They are professions preoccupied with item-level issues and collections management, not researcher-friendly descriptions of fonds or the contextual collections found in archives.

---

<sup>12</sup> Tom Nesmith, “Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the ‘Ghosts’ of Archival Theory,” Archivaria 47 (Fall 1999): 137.

Works written by archival scholars examining art tend to fall into two categories: those extolling (as noted above) the virtues of documentary art as bona fide records, and those examining a specific medium or artist (for example, *The Paintings of John Smith on Some Theme in the Archives of Some Place*). Both serve to secure and advance an understanding of visual records within the archival profession, not to examine descriptive standards and practices surrounding each media.

The title of Hugh Taylor's 1979 article, "Documentary Art and the Role of the Archivist," suggests the need for a further examination into the role of archivists in daily practice concerning works of art. However, the article simply highlights this as an area in need of further attention. Joan M. Schwartz, twenty-three years later, wrote an article titled "Coming to Terms with Photographs: Descriptive Standards, Linguistic 'Othering,' and the Margins of Archivry." Although her article addresses the concerns of photography in archival holdings, her article clearly articulates the result of the neglect that all visual records have received in descriptive practices. Much of her analysis holds true for all graphic materials lumped together, and thus marginalized, in the new descriptive lexicons. Schwartz asserts that graphic materials have fallen into the margins of archivry, and clearly points the finger at the Rules for Archival Description (RAD) as the culprit.

Through a qualitative analysis of existing literature on archival descriptive standards in Canada, this thesis will explain how RAD favours some forms of media, and neglects others, namely visual records. In addition, this study examines general challenges to archival orthodoxy in Canada concerning description and to the description of visual materials in particular, as well as provides a discussion of the

description of works of art in archives as the specific case study. To find possible solutions to the problems of current archival descriptive practice, this thesis explores alternate archival standards for description, as well as descriptive standards developed in museums and art galleries. This thesis is cross disciplinary in nature, seeking new insights for archives via comparative analysis.

The first chapter will examine the development of archival descriptive standards in Western Europe and North America, from the announcement of *respect des fonds* in the nineteenth century to the establishment of RAD as the current standard for description in Canadian archives. The second chapter will explore the evidentiary nature of visual records, and their unique attributes as records. Postmodern insight will highlight the need for increased visual literacy among archivists, as well as the need for more attention to the contextual origins of works of art. The third and final chapter will analyze current approaches to the description of visual records, using examples from Library and Archives Canada, as well as the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. The shortcomings of these RAD-based approaches will be exposed, thus exemplifying the need for more attention to context at all levels of description. Alternate archival methods, as well as descriptive standards developed outside of the archival profession, will be examined. Suggestions on improving the current approach to the description of visual records in archives will be made, as well as indicating areas for further research.

## Chapter 1: The Development of Archival Descriptive Standards in Canada

This chapter will examine the development of descriptive standards in Canada, from the annunciation of *respect des fonds* in the nineteenth century to the establishment of Rules for Archival Description (RAD) as the professional standard for archival description in Canada. The circumstances surrounding the development and adoption of these standards will also be discussed, exposing a descriptive tradition that favours textual records. The importance of description as an access tool will be examined, as well as the process by which records become available to the researcher.

A researcher entering an archives for the first time is bombarded with a litany of unfamiliar terms and concepts: the fonds, series, sub-series, record group, file, item, finding aid, thematic guide, not to mention those little white gloves. The initial reaction is to cling to the kind archivist sitting behind the reference desk. This person will give researchers their first introduction to conducting archival research. Once alone, the researcher often depends on descriptive standards to bridge the gap between the records and themselves.

Similarly, when one uses a library for the first time, one often seeks an orientation from the on-duty reference librarian. This person explains the physical

layout of the library and the available reference tools. Once on their own, researchers use the descriptive standards developed for libraries to bridge the gap between the researcher and the bibliographic holdings. However, these descriptive standards are unique to the library environment and have been developed solely for that environment. Library standards focus on the item, be it a book, journal or newspaper, and its author(s), title, and informational content. These become in turn the access points for retrieval and use. The archival environment, by contrast, focuses on groupings of records (often vast in size) at the level of the fonds or collection, and on the context of its creation.

Once the researcher becomes comfortable doing research in the archival environment, the process should be easy. Finding aids become simple guides to fonds and collections, outlining their contextual origins and content. The development of this bridge between the record and the researcher, archival descriptive standards, has been a long process, spanning three centuries and several continents.

Before the researcher gains access to materials in the archival setting, the records have gone through several steps. In broad terms, this process starts with appraisal and acquisition. Appraisal is the act of determining the worth of records based on their primary values, such as their administrative, legal, or financial usefulness, or secondary values, such as their historical, informational, evidential or research values. Acquisition is the act of obtaining records for the archives, through donations, transfers, loans or purchase.<sup>1</sup> Between appraisal and acquisition, and eventual use by researchers, there are numerous steps. The first of these steps is

---

<sup>1</sup> Laura Millar Coles, A Manual for Small Archives (Vancouver: Association of British Columbia Archivists, 1988), 189.

referred to as accessioning. Accessioning is the process by which an archive takes physical and legal custody of a body of records, and creates a very general description of the records. During this time, a general inventory of the records is taken and any conservation needs are noted. Should the records need any repair or restoration, they are brought to the attention of a conservator. A conservator is a professional specializing in the physical care and maintenance of archival materials.<sup>2</sup> Only after the records have been accessioned and treated for any conservation issues, can the records move on to the processing stage (see Appendix A).<sup>3</sup>

Processing is comprised of two components, arrangement and description. Simply put, it is the ordering and listing of records, accompanied by research into the context of the records creation to prepare descriptive entries. The basic concepts governing archival arrangement and description are *provenance* and *original order*. The principle of provenance dictates that a body of accessioned records must be linked to its creator. It must not be physically broken up and rearranged in accordance with some artificial classification system devised by the archivist, that obscures or erases its creator's identity. Original order requires that the internal structure and arrangement of files within these groups, as established by the creator, are maintained whenever possible.<sup>4</sup> These organic groupings are called fonds. "Fonds" is a French term for the records of a particular individual, institution, or organization.<sup>5</sup> The development of these principles will be discussed later in further detail.

A body of records accumulated from numerous creators, or by theme or

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>3</sup> Frederic M. Miller, Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1990), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 5.

subject, with an imposed classification system, or a deliberate intention, is a collection, not a fonds. When an individual makes the decision to acquire multi-provenancial records from many creators according to some thematic, media, or genre criteria, the result it is no longer an organic grouping or accumulation arising out of routine activities. A collection, rather than a fonds, is created when one *collects* the records of a person, place or event, say everything by and about “artist x” – the collector, unless it is “artist x,” alone is deciding what is valuable to the collection. The collector is imposing his or her own values on the records, taking the records out of their original context, and putting them into the thematic context of the collection, reflecting the enthusiasm and interests of the collector. In this way, the body of records has been stripped of the organic characteristics of the fonds, and, therefore, is referred to as a collection.

Arrangement and description, although closely linked, are two very distinct stages in the processing of records. Archival arrangement is the process by which the archivist identifies or brings together intellectually sets of records originating with a common source, which have common characteristics and structure. It is the intellectual and/or physical process of organizing documents in accordance with accepted archival principles, to respect (and when necessary, to restore) provenance and original order. Archival description is the means by which the archivist researches, captures and provides access to information regarding the origin, character, context, provenance and organization of the arranged records, bridging the gap between the record and the researcher.<sup>6</sup> Description is the creation of an accurate representation of, or surrogate

---

<sup>5</sup> A Manual for Small Archives, 190.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

for, the material, providing the possibility of clear access. It is usually only after the records have gone through these steps that they are made available to the public.

The finding aid is the end product of all of the above arrangement and description work. Finding aids present, at various levels and layers of detail, the essential descriptive information for the researcher, giving a clear outline of the context of creation and content of the fonds or collection, and their internal parts. Concerning finding aids, British archival educators Michael Cook and Margaret Proctor wrote:

The theory of finding aids can be simply stated. The original materials can themselves only be arranged physically in one particular order which demonstrates or preserves the system which brought them into being. However, users who wish to gain access to the information held in the materials need to have some way of assessing how that information might relate to their subject enquiries. The finding aids which help them to do this in affect [sic] allow the archives to be scanned in different and various alternative orders. This is the more necessary since users cannot normally scan the original materials themselves, which are boxed and shelved in closed storage.<sup>7</sup>

Put in simpler terms, the finding aid acts as a proxy to the fonds, which cannot be conveniently taken off the shelf and browsed like a row of secondary sources in a library. A good finding aid outlines the complex relationship between the records and their creator, as well as information about the fonds's physical characteristics. Finding aids also specify the recording media, various record-keeping systems involved, and the custodial history of the records.

The detail employed by an archivist varies from fonds to fonds and institution

---

<sup>7</sup> Michael Cook and Margaret Proctor, *A Manual of Archival Description: Second Edition* (Brookfield, Vermont: Gower Publishing Ltd., 1986), 8.

to institution. This is due to the practice of multi-level description. Describing records in the multi-level format begins with a description of the records in their broadest terms, the fonds level (see Appendix B for an example), then proceeds through the fonds' component parts in increasingly specific terms at each level down to the fonds' most elemental level, the single item.

Canada's Rules for Archival Description employs five levels of description. The first is the fonds. As mentioned above, the fonds level is the broadest intellectual level. It is the sum total of all of the records created by a single entity. Next is the series level. The series is a group of records within a fonds that is distinguished because of a particular relationship with the creator. For example, it is not uncommon to find a series titled "Personal Correspondence," or "Financial Records." Within the series, there can also be the sub-series. This would be a readily identifiable group of records within the series. For example, a sub-series within the "Personal Correspondence" series could be the files of correspondence from one particular individual, or a record type, such as, bound letterbooks or e-mail. The file is the smallest aggregate unit within a fonds. It consists of documents grouped together by their creator because they are of a similar nature or subject matter. For example, a file within a series of "Financial Records" could be "Tax Return, 1986." Files are not just traditional paper-based aggregates. Various types of media may be grouped in a single file. A photograph album or a scrapbook could also be a file. The item is the lowest level in multi-level description. A single letter in a correspondence file, or a single image in an album, would be regarded as an item.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Jeff O'Brien, BASIC RAD: An Introduction to the preparation of *fonds*- and *series*-level descriptions using the Rules for Archival Description, section 2.4, <http://scaa.usask.ca/rad/section2.htm>

The natural starting point for examining the development of these multi-level archival descriptive standards in Canada is the articulation of the concept of *respect des fonds* in the mid-nineteenth century. This concept was codified in France in the 1840s, and is widely seen as a key episode in the evolution of modern archival thought and dialogue, including archival descriptive standards.<sup>9</sup> Respect des fonds is the application of the concept of provenance. All of the records of a common provenance are the fonds of that creator whether by a government administration, private corporate body or private person.<sup>10</sup>

The concept of the archival fonds took root in Europe over two centuries ago. The fonds was then seen as the whole of the documents produced by an administration or person in the course of a practical activity.<sup>11</sup> The concept of the archival fonds first appeared in Denmark, in 1791, in a set of internal administrative rules. It appeared again in Naples in 1812, the Netherlands in 1826, and France in 1841.<sup>12</sup>

The first public announcement of the concept took place in France, by Natalis de Wailly, then head of the administrative section of the Archives Departementales at the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>13</sup> In a circular issued on April 24, 1841, archivist, diplomatist, and historian de Wailly wrote:

All documents which come from a body, an establishment, a family, or an individual form a fonds, and must be kept together... The documents, which only make reference to an establishment, a body, or a

---

accessed July 17, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Terry Eastwood, "Introduction," in Terry Eastwood (ed.), *The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice* (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Michel Duchein, "Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of *respect des fonds* in Archival Science," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 64-65.

<sup>11</sup> Eastwood, "The Archival Fonds," 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Duchein, "Theoretical Principles," 66.

family, must not be confused with the fonds of that establishment, body, or family.<sup>14</sup>

Virtually all modern archivists, across all cultures, now recognize the importance of *respect des fonds*. By adhering to it as a basic principle, archivists are able to preserve the integrity of archives as evidence of transactions. Through this adherence, the evidential character of records is protected, whereby the records reflect the transactions and the related functional, structural or personal contexts that created them.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps this notion was best articulated by archival educator Terry Cook:

Archives are not artificial collections acquired, arranged and described in the first instance by theme, subject, place or time; rather they are acquired, and described, in a contextual, organic, natural relationship to their creator and to the acts of creation. In thus respecting the fonds as the organic emanation of a records creator, archivists the world over add value to the records as evidence for research, as well as enhance their own identity as information professionals who understand the complexity of the unique relationship between each records creator and the resulting records, and between and among interrelated series or regroupings of records.<sup>16</sup>

*Respect des fonds*, with few exceptions, is universally accepted as the basis of archival science. The modern criticism that arises seems to be rooted in the *application* of the principle, not in the principle itself. As Michel Duchein wrote, "It is reasonable to

---

<sup>14</sup> Michel Duchein, "The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe," *American Archivist* 55 (Winter 1992): 19.

<sup>15</sup> Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 26.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

think that it will never again be questioned and that it constitutes a definitive fact of archival science.”<sup>17</sup>

The concept of *respect des fonds* dramatically affects the way the archivist approaches the record. The heart of this approach is the contextual link between the records and the records creator. This relationship is not something that can be touched, arranged, or stored in archival boxes. The fonds is a delicate concept expressing a “dynamic interconnectedness between abstract description of the records creator(s) and of the concrete description of the actual records.”<sup>18</sup> These factors have changed archival description from an act of accounting for the physical holdings of an archive and facilitating retrieval, to an act aimed at researching and articulating provenancial and contextual relationships as the basis for a much deeper understanding of the records.

Underlying *respect des fonds* are two fundamental and closely related principles, provenance and original order. Briefly mentioned earlier, these principles are integral to the arrangement and description process. These two principles address the internal and external dimensions of the fonds, not clearly addressed in the 1841 de Wailly annunciation of *respect des fonds*. Terry Cook addresses the notion of the external and internal values of the fonds:

The fonds concept derives, of course, from the nineteenth century French archival dictum *respect des fonds*. That French formulation had both an external and internal dimension. Early practice stressed the **external** dimension of keeping archival records clearly segregated by their office of creation and accumulation (each such group of records thus being

<sup>17</sup> Duchein, “Theoretical Principles,” 66.

<sup>18</sup> Terry Cook, “The Concept of the Archival Fonds: Theory, Description and Provenance in the Post-Custodial Era,” in Eastwood (ed.) *The Archival Fonds* 73-74.

organized into a single archival fonds). The **internal** dimension of maintaining the original order or sequence of records from such offices **within** each fonds was less emphasized.<sup>19</sup>

Out of these concerns the principle of provenance was developed, whereby records are maintained according to their creator, rather than by subject or other imposed classification system.<sup>20</sup> Related to historical standards for verifying individual documents that had already been established, the principle of provenance reflected the early modern procedures of diplomatic, concerned with evaluating individual records for their authenticity and then, evidential, and legal values.<sup>21</sup> The principle of provenance and respect for original order are now regarded in English as the backbone of implementing the French *respect des fonds*.

Although de Wailly articulated *respect des fonds* in 1841, and Francesco Bonaini, founder of the State Archives of Florence, first published the concept in archival theoretical writing in 1867, it was not until the publication of the Dutch Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives, written by Samuel Muller, Johan Feith, and Robert Fruin in 1898, that the principle of *respect des fonds* was widely accepted in the archival profession.<sup>22</sup> The Dutch Manual, as it came to be known, is usually regarded as the first comprehensive statement and treatment of modern archival theory and methodology.<sup>23</sup> Due to the work's effectiveness and methodological suggestions, the book was even termed the "Archivist's Bible." It

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>20</sup> Miller, "Arranging and Describing," 7.

<sup>21</sup> C. Granstrom, "The Janus Syndrome," in C. Granstrom (ed.) The Principle of Provenance (Stockholm: Swedish National Archives, 1994), 23.

<sup>22</sup> Nesmith, "Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the "Ghosts" of Archival Theory," Archivaria 43 (Winter 1996-97): 17.

clearly stated that the intellectual foundation for arrangement and description is respect for the principle of provenance, and maintenance of each archival item in its original order.<sup>24</sup> The Dutch Manual had a far-reaching influence, as it was the first archival widely accepted textbook or published manual. It appeared in numerous translations, including French, German, English, Portuguese and Chinese.<sup>25</sup>

Samuel Muller, former state archivist of Utrecht, Robert Fruin, state archivist of Zeeland, and Johan Feith, state archivist for Groningen, who together formed the three-person commission that would be responsible for the manual's fruition. The manual consists of six chapters: Chapter I. The Origin and Composition of Archival Repositories, Chapter II. The Arrangement of Archival Documents, Chapter III. The Description of Archival Documents, Chapter IV. The Drawing Up of the Inventory, Chapter V. Further Directions for the Description of Archives, and Chapter VI. On the Conventional Use of Certain Terms and Signs.<sup>26</sup>

The Dutch archivists considered the most important rule of all to be the respect of original order and provenance. Respecting it, and if necessary re-establishing it, was fundamental.<sup>27</sup> Within the Dutch Manual, the term "fonds" is not used. Rather, the Dutch archivists used the term "collection" as modern Canadian archivists would use the term fonds. The manual itself is comprised of one hundred rules. Rule #1 conveys

---

<sup>23</sup> Peter Horsman, Eric Ketelaar and Theo Thomassen, "New Respect for the Old Order: The Context of the Dutch Manual," *American Archivist* 66 (Winter/Spring 2003): 249.

<sup>24</sup> Arnaldo D'Addario. "The Development of Archival Science and its Present Trends," in Oddo Bucci and Rosa Marisa Verducci (eds.) *Archival Science on the Threshold of the Year 2000* (Ancona, Italy: University of Macerata Publications, 1990), 183.

<sup>25</sup> Cook, "What is Past is Prologue," 20-21.

<sup>26</sup> Muller, S., J.A. Feith and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, reissue of 2<sup>nd</sup> edition translated by Arthur H. Leavitt (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1968), 11.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

the primacy of provenance in archival work by stating that the basic unit of archival records – the collection, or fonds – is defined by its provenance:

1. An archival collection is the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials, in so far as the documents were intended to remain in the custody of that body or of that official.

This definition of an archival collection which we place here at the beginning as the foundation upon which everything must rest had the good fortune to be adopted unanimously both at the meeting of the Association of Archivists and at that of the State Archivists; the Minister of the Interior approved it with slight modifications by a circular of June 10, 1897.<sup>28</sup>

The authors emphasized the key role of this first rule with the second paragraph of the above quote.<sup>29</sup> Muller, Feith, and Fruin made their objectives clear in articulating the concepts put forth in the manual, and presented a way to view the archival fonds in consideration of its internal structure. The second of the one hundred rules reads:

...an archival collection is an organic whole, a living organism, which grows, takes shape, and undergoes changes in accordance with fixed rules. If the functions of the body change, the nature of the archival collection changes likewise. The rules which govern the composition, the arrangement and the formation of an archival collection, therefore, cannot be fixed by the archivist in advance; he can only study the organism and ascertain the rules under which it was formed. Every archival collection has, therefore, as it were, its own personality, its individuality, which the archivist must become acquainted with before he can proceed to its arrangement. Consequently, in the rules which follow there is careful avoidance of

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 14-18.

giving any scheme for archival arrangement and grouping.<sup>30</sup>

The Dutch Manual influenced the record at all levels of arrangement, description, listing, and research.<sup>31</sup> The principles articulated in the manual have been very influential, as can be seen in many subsequent modern publications. However, the limitations of the Dutch Manual have also become abundantly clear since 1898. The work is first and foremost about arrangement and description, as stated in the title. The work has very little to say about other archival functions, such as appraisal. It is tailored to address the needs of government, public and corporate records, and their orderly transfer and description, but dismisses private and personal archives entirely.<sup>32</sup> The manual's strength lies in its solidifying the definition of the archival fonds, in highlighting the connection between the record and the functions of those who create it, and stressing the professional necessity for archivists to maintain archives within their original context.<sup>33</sup>

The Dutch Manual gives little consideration to the description of works of art. Although the manual's definition of a fonds includes "drawings and printed matter," little guidance can be found concerning non-textual records. As mentioned earlier, the subsequent rules in the manual further define the terms presented in the first rule. Under "Written Documents, Drawings and Printed Matter," the manual addresses visual records:

By "drawings" are meant maps or charts which are frequently found in dossiers, either made by order of administrative bodies or officials, or sent to them for

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>31</sup> d'Addario, "The Development of Archival Science," 183.

<sup>32</sup> Cook, "What is Past is Prologue," 21.

<sup>33</sup> Horsman, Ketelaar and Thomassen, "New Respect for the Old Order," 258.

the elucidation of questions to which they relate. There is not the slightest reason to exclude such maps from the collection. The same is true of "printed documents," which frequently appear in archival collections, especially since the end of the XVIIth century. The circumstances that a letter of which many copies had to be sent out, or the resolution of a board (or abstracts of resolutions) intended for the members of a meeting, were printed instead of being written out in sundry copies obviously cannot be a reason for discarding these printed documents from the collection. The definition speaks only of written documents, drawings and printed matter. Other objects cannot form part of the archival collection. This applies not only to antiques and similar objects, which by the nature of the case belongs to museums or collections of antiquities, but also to seal dies, although the latter as a rule are kept in archival depositories.<sup>34</sup>

Concerning printed material, Muller, Feith and Fruin were obviously grappling with the authenticity of records, and issues of duplication of records, made by a printing press, rather than written by the human hand. All other media is swept aside, relegated to museums and collections of antiquities; "drawings" are admitted within archives but only as they are found officially as part of a government file or dossier. Private and personal archives are seen as the purview of libraries, not of archives.

Twenty-four years after the publication of the Dutch Manual, Sir Hilary Jenkinson, later the deputy keeper of the Public Records Office London, voiced what is now seen as the most influential English-language Book on archival arrangement and description. Jenkinson regarded archives as impartial evidence, and regarded archivists as guardians of this evidence. He asserted that the character of records as impartial evidence would be undermined if any post-creation interference is allowed.

---

<sup>34</sup> Muller, Feith and Fruin, Manual, 14-15.

Jenkinson saw appraisal by archivists as the imposition of “personal judgement,” an act that would compromise the impartiality of the record. He saw the archivist’s role as a keeper or guardian of inherited archives, not a selector of archives. Beyond some “faint-hearted” concessions later in his career, Jenkinson was strongly against any sort of appraisal or selection being conducted by archivists.<sup>35</sup> Archivists did not select the archives, rather, they inherited, guarded, and described records passed to them by institutions. Jenkinson’s assumptions also reflect his faith that the British Civil Service was an army of honourable servants capable of making educated judgements about records preservation, an assumption that seems ludicrous now in our modern world of political and corporate corruption.<sup>36</sup>

During his career, Jenkinson worked almost exclusively with medieval and early nation-state records, evident in his insistence on viewing archival records in terms of their legal character, evidentiary properties, and their inherited stability and completeness. These records were small in extent, old in character, and never subject to new accruals. Ann Pederson wrote of Jenkinson’s assumptions about archives:

As documents of response, archives form a tangible, collective memory, which is maintained for selective recall - to establish precedents, to make plans, to assess progress, to account - and act as the conscience of society. Archives provide unselfconscious evidence of what happened, the sources required to demonstrate fiscal, political, and social accountability, or lack thereof.<sup>37</sup>

Concerning arrangement and description, Jenkinson placed this function under the general heading of the “Moral Defence of Archives.” Original order was to be

---

<sup>35</sup> Cook, “What is Past is Prologue,” 25.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

respected at all costs, whether maintained if existing or re-established if subsequently lost. That is, the goal is the protection of archives from the human subjectivity inherent in any intervention by the archivist. In his landmark work, A Manual of Archive Administration, Jenkinson wrote:

Whether they are in good order, or in bad, or in none, we shall still require to arrange them: not yet, it is to be observed, to index them for the subject matter they contain, but to marshal them in such a way that the Archive significance of every document - its own nature and its relation to its neighbours - is brought out as clearly as possible. In this way we give the fairest opportunity to the archive of saying what it has to say and to the student of understanding and profiting.<sup>38</sup>

This is consistent with his notion of archives existing in their own right as untarnished evidence, and that the archivist's role is solely one of guardian, to protect and defend the integrity of archives as non-altered evidence of the creator's ideas and actions.

Jenkinson saw description as reflecting arrangement, that is, the existing arrangement that involved no intervention by the archivist, other than to recreate original order should it have been lost over time. He saw description as an opportunity for the archivist to gain further control of holdings, and solidify this evidential integrity, rather than provide an access tool to potential researchers. Of course Jenkinson did recognize the use of the finding aid as an access tool, but saw this as a secondary service, and again one in which any intervention by the archivist was minimal:

---

<sup>37</sup> Ann Pederson, "Unlocking Hidden Treasures Through Description: Comments on Archival Voyages of Discovery," Archivaria 37 (Spring 1994): 52.

<sup>38</sup> Hilary Jenkinson, A Manual of Archive Administration 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd., 1937), 97.

As to the manner of presenting this information one general principle may be laid down. Whenever it is possible, the personality of the modern editor is to be eliminated and the document left to speak for itself: dates and names, for instance, should be given in the form in which they appear in the original; with their modern form (if that is desired) inserted after them within brackets.

What then is the information which our descriptive list is to provide? Our object is to give the reader some idea of the existence, date, nature and extent of each document: so that he may at least be able to judge how far it is likely to be useful for his particular line of inquiry.<sup>39</sup>

Very early in Jenkinson's A Manual of Archival Administration, the definition of a document is presented, including his foray into non-textual, visual media. It is noted that "in modern times the word document, which we use in default of a better, is very difficult to define."<sup>40</sup> Jenkinson goes on to say:

Thus we cannot say that a document is something which gives information in writing; for the record office series of Port Books gives us examples where the mere formal title, or other identification mark on the cover, converts an absolutely blank book into a perfectly good archive... Again there is a case where an undoubted Archive consists of an old pair of military epaulettes; and among enclosures to letters, forming in each case an integral part of the document, the writer can recall portraits and other pictures, maps, human hair, whip cord (part of a cat-o-nine-tails), a penny piece inscribed with disloyal sentiments and a packet of strange powder destined to cure cancer. The line between what is and what is not, by a little writing added or attached to it, converted into a document is one so difficult to draw, and the question of separating enclosed objects from the document to which they belong raises so many difficulties and objections, that probably our best course is to be dogmatic; including under "Documents" for the

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 5.

purpose of our definition.<sup>41</sup>

This is the closest Jenkinson comes to considering any sort of non-textual item as an archival document. However, one must note that all his references to these non-textual items place them in a supporting role to a textual record, mainly enclosures with written correspondence in official government files. Like the Dutch authors, Jenkinson consigned private and personal archives and their creators to the care of libraries, including the creators of a large percentage of visual records and works of art.

The next principal initiative in the history of the development of arrangement and description came when American archivists were trying to solve problems with modern records, based on the solutions provided by the Dutch Manual and Jenkinson. American archivists at the new National Archives of the United States had to find a way to organize very large quantities of recent records efficiently, with a model that suited their records, or could be modified to suit the needs of their records, rather than based on records of the medieval or early modern eras.<sup>42</sup>

By 1943, with efforts to cope with the Great Depression and World War II, this accumulation of records had reached six hundred thousand meters annually. These circumstances had two profound results: first, the emergence of the North American records management profession; and second, a major reorientation of the archival profession in North America to cope with more recent records.<sup>43</sup>

Led by Theodore Roosevelt Schellenberg, the staff of the National Archives in Washington devised the records group idea. James M. O'Toole writes:

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>42</sup> O'Toole, Understanding Archives and Manuscripts, 37.

<sup>43</sup> Cook, "Past is Prologue," 26.

By developing this way of arranging records, these early archivists helped to define a structural way of looking at archives, regardless of the particular administrative organization that produced them. This structural approach to modern records became characteristic of all archivists.<sup>44</sup>

Although originally developed for government records, Schellenberg's methods proved very flexible, applicable to the archives of a variety of institutions, and even private individuals. Schellenberg's paper applying the European principles of provenance and original order, or *respect des fonds*, to American archival realities was first distributed within the National Archives in 1939 as a staff circular. However, the concepts articulated in the circular would become very influential well beyond the walls of the National Archives.<sup>45</sup>

Contrary to the views of Sir Hilary Jenkinson, Schellenberg saw "archives" as a much smaller portion of the overall body of records produced by an administration. Schellenberg referred to the entirety of documents produced by an institution as "records" and those selected as historically significant as "archives."<sup>46</sup> Schellenberg saw records as the concern of record managers and creating institutions, where archives were the concern of archivists and archival institutions.<sup>47</sup> Schellenberg and other National Archives staff were forced to reduce the sheer volume of modern records and select a small percentage of the total that they deemed of permanent value as archival records,<sup>48</sup> an intervention Jenkinson would no doubt have seen as a huge failing in the "moral defence" of records.

<sup>44</sup> O'Toole, Understanding Archives and Manuscripts, 37.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Cook, "Past is Prologue," 27.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Stapleton, "Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison" Archivaria 17 (Winter 1983-84): 76.

Schellenberg would become the most influential writer on archival theory and practice in the twentieth century, resulting in a myriad of changes to the archival field in general.<sup>49</sup> In 1954, Schellenberg went to Australia and New Zealand as a Fulbright Lecturer. His first book-length publication, Modern Archives (1956), resulted from these lectures, as well as incorporating parts of his earlier staff papers.

In the same year, Lester J. Cappon was redefining the term “historical manuscript.” Cappon asserted that the “historical manuscript” (as private or personal records in archives were labeled in the United States) was, in fact, just as steeped in evidentiary value as an “official” record created by an institution, and, therefore, should be deemed archival as well.<sup>50</sup> Cappon observed that many archives had joined libraries and historical societies in acquiring private records, records that were fundamentally of no lower value or use to the researcher than public or government records that had been the exclusive focus of archival theoretical writing to this period. Therefore, these private records were also amenable to archival treatment, including more archival “contextual” description as opposed to library subject-content analysis. He saw the continued use of the term “historical manuscript” as antiquated and misleading.<sup>51</sup>

In Schellenberg’s Modern Archives, it is clear that the author had not yet been exposed to Cappon’s article. In distinguishing between archives and manuscripts, Schellenberg saw manuscripts as reflecting “more personal contact” with the subject, and therefore were “more likely to reflect natural human prejudices and feelings... and

---

<sup>49</sup> Richard C. Berner, Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: A Historical Analysis (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1983), 47.

<sup>50</sup> Lester J. Cappon, “Historical Manuscripts as Archives: Some Definitions and Their Application,” American Archivist 19 (April 1956): 104-105.

may present a more concentrated source of colourful data.” In comparing historical manuscripts to the records he deemed archival, Schellenberg wrote “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.” He did allow some deviation, when they were “part of the documentation of an organized activity - as, for example, when love letters are introduced as evidence in divorce proceedings - they also may be considered archives.” Schellenberg’s belief in the “historical manuscript” as a uniquely personal document would persist.<sup>52</sup>

Schellenberg’s second major publication, The Management of Archives (1965), was the culmination of his draft manual and written articles produced since the publication of Modern Archives. Despite the attempt in the second book at integration of the public and private records as “archives,” his descriptive advice for personal papers in manuscript collections still reflected the notion of the “personal” in his thinking.<sup>53</sup>

What resulted was a fragmented descriptive program. However, The Management of Archives was still the first attempt to address the challenges of the arrangement and description of both public/corporate records, and personal/private records.<sup>54</sup> This work also attempted to address and discuss the arrangement and description of cartographic records as well as “pictorial records.”<sup>55</sup> Although many saw weaknesses in his concepts and writings and openly criticized him, Schellenberg was not shy of sharing his views in detail. He did not avoid controversy, and by

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Berner, Archival Theory and Practice, 49.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 50-51.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 51-52.

causing controversy, he fuelled dialogue. Without this dialogue, many of the advancements in twentieth century archival theory and practice, including those concerning works of art in archives, would not have taken place as rapidly as they did.<sup>56</sup>

Schellenberg was now quite open to the notion of works of art as archival records. Although works of art go unmentioned in his Modern Archives, chapter twenty of The Management of Archives is titled “Arrangement and Description of Pictorial Records.” It is the first serious treatment of such records in over a century of archival writing in English, or English translation. Schellenberg discusses the various attributes, types, and physical characteristics of “pictorial records.”<sup>57</sup> Schellenberg also addresses their “substantive attributes.” He sees provenance and “information on the functional origins” of pictorial records as “relatively unimportant.” Schellenberg writes:

Pictorial records, as well as cartographic records, are mainly important from the point of view of their subject matter, not from the point of view of their provenance and functional origins.<sup>58</sup>

Pictorial records or works of art were thus admitted into archives, but as illustrative material or for their informational contents; they were not, however, seen like textual records, or evidence, or as part of a function-based organic fonds, and thus were assigned a second-class status in archives.

In 1974, A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers, published by the Society for American Archivist (SAA), reflected a

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., xiv.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 322-324.

movement to standardize basic terms and concepts throughout the archival and records management professions. In 1975, the SAA's glossary was followed with the publication of Inventories and Registers: A Handbook of Techniques and Examples, compiled by the SAA's Committee on Finding Aids. The work contained examples of the basic components of finding aids, and guidelines for their preparation. The handbook did not venture beyond the most elementary needs of textual materials. At the time of the work's publication, it was thought that the handbook would be adopted as the SAA's standard; however, the work was never formally adopted. The handbook was widely used over the next several years, providing a basic structure and training tool for many American repositories when no other resource was widely available.<sup>59</sup> After fifteen years of use with no revisions, Inventories and Registers was declared out of print by the SAA editorial board.

Following these two initiatives, in 1977, the first manual in English since Jenkinson and Schellenberg dedicated to archival arrangement and description was published as part of the then new Basic Manual Series of the Society of American Archivists (SAA). Written by David B. Gracy II, Archives and Manuscripts: Arrangement and Description (1977) outlines the core elements of an effective description program, the fundamental purpose of which he saw as establishing "physical, and/or intellectual control over archives and manuscripts."<sup>60</sup> Gracy details the components of a successful descriptive program through four chapters: 1. Arrangement, 2. Description, 3. Relating Arrangement and Description, Housing and

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 325.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>60</sup> David B. Gracy II, Archives & Manuscripts: Arrangement & Description (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1977), 19.

Labeling, and 4. Special Record Material.<sup>61</sup> Throughout this work, Gracy emphasizes how a solid descriptive program coordinates all the outlined elements equally:

The shrewd archivist performs no greater service for himself than framing an integrated *system* in which the accomplishment of one task leads to and lays the foundation for another.<sup>62</sup>

One must ask why, if Gracy intends to outline a program that coordinates all elements equally, he would include a section titled “Special Record Material?” Should not all recording media be regarded as simply records or archives, rather than “special”? In this “special” category, Gracy has included all non-textual items. One-and-a-half pages are dedicated to “Still Pictures.” For encouragement to the visual-records archivist, Gracy opens his section on “still pictures” by indicating that these records “unquestionably are the most difficult to describe.”<sup>63</sup>

Gracy indicates that still pictures may be either maintained in their original order or processed and housed separately. He indicates that the latter method is preferable to most archivists because it speeds retrieval, facilitates housing, and permits the monitoring of the physical condition of the items. Much of the one-and-a-half pages on still pictures is dedicated to the preparation of “entry cards,” organizing them under “discrete subject headings,” and filling them alphabetically or chronologically.<sup>64</sup> Like Schellenberg, Gracy saw, and his manual codified for the English-speaking world of archives, works of art as valuable for their informational or subject contents as discrete items; their evidential character as part of a contextualized whole, as an archival fonds, is not mentioned.

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Table of Contents.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 42.

In 1980, the SAA formed the Task Force on Institutional Evaluation. The task force published a report containing ten principles for institutional evaluation, one of which directly addressed institutional approaches to arrangement and description. The task force promoted the development of a more traditional system of description, emphasizing the need for group and series description before item-level description:

The archives should design a system of finding aids that provides essential information about the holdings for users and enables the archivist to retrieve materials. Finding aids should employ the first techniques of group and series description before undertaking item description; a brief description of all records is preferred to a detailed description of some of them.<sup>65</sup>

In 1990, the SAA published Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts by Fredric Miller, a member of the SAA's Working Group on Standards for Archival Description (WGSAD). The work was part of a new and highly influential set of seven books on basic archival functions called the SAA Archival Fundamentals Series, which replaced the basic manual series of the 1970s. Miller's definition of description reflects a more refined and modern approach to the process:

Archival description is the process of capturing, collating, analyzing, controlling, exchanging, and providing access to information about (1) the origin, context, and provenance of different sets of records, (2) their filing structure, (3) their form and content, (4) their relationships with other records, and (5) the ways in which they can be found and used.<sup>66</sup>

Miller's work provides a much more detailed, in-depth guide for arrangement and description in comparison to Gracy's work of 1977. The SAA had clearly changed

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>65</sup> Task Force on Institutional Evaluation, Society of American Archivists, Evaluation of Archival Institutions: Services, Principles, and Guide to Self-Study (Society of American Archivists, 1980), 16.

from providing basic manuals to providing resources on the foundation of archival theory and practice for a more complex world of records, record-keeping systems and technologies, and more varied archives and their uses.<sup>67</sup>

Unlike Gracy's work, Miller does not separate archival materials into categories labeled as "special." Works of art and other non-textual materials are discussed throughout the work. Miller examines how items like glass-plate negatives, phonograph records and computer tapes can require special handling when being transferred.<sup>68</sup> Miller also discusses how non-textual records, like textual records, require a physical analysis by a trained conservator. However, Miller still sees the nature of their use and information content as dictating a retrieval system geared to individual items, "rather than the collective description appropriate for textual records."<sup>69</sup> In other words, context is only important when dealing with real archival records.

As examined above, since the early 1960s, archivists in the United States have made a consolidated effort to codify their professional practices and create explicit rules or guidelines to govern them. Naturally, archivists examined existing standards in other professions from which to develop standards for the archival field. The first edition of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR) was published by the American Library Association in 1967. The AACR contain three sections: Part I. Entry and Heading, Part II. Description, and Part III. Non-book materials.<sup>70</sup> By 1974, it was clear that, although AACR was an excellent platform to work from, revisions

---

<sup>66</sup> Miller, Arranging and Describing, 7.

<sup>67</sup> Terry Eastwood, "From Practice to Theory: Fundamentals US Style," Archivaria 39 (Spring 1995): 138.

<sup>68</sup> Miller, Arranging and Describing, 34.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

were needed for the rules to be adopted as a professional standard.

The Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of AACR was soon established. The committee consisted of representatives from the American Library Association, British Library, Canadian Committee on Cataloguing, The Library Association, the Library of Congress, and two editors. After a great deal of consultation and collaboration, the second edition of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2) was published in 1978, with further revisions in 1988, 1998 and 2002.<sup>71</sup>

AACR2 is based on four main principles. First, that all descriptions are to be formulated in accordance with the specifications of the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD), the professional manual of the librarian. Second, AACR2 requires that all media be treated equally. Third, all descriptions must be based on the bibliographic item. And fourth, access points must be based on the nature of the work being catalogued, rather than the nature of the bibliographic entity being described.<sup>72</sup>

AACR2 devotes an entire chapter to "Graphic Materials." The chapter opens with the following statement under "General Rules." It is intended to outline the types of materials being addressed:

The rules in this chapter cover the description of graphic materials of all kinds, whether opaque (e.g., two-dimensional art originals and reproductions, charts, photographs, technical drawings) or intended to be projected or viewed (e.g., filmstrips, radiographs, slides), and collections of such graphic

---

<sup>70</sup> Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, "A Brief History of AACR" 4-5. <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/history.htm> accessed June 8, 2005.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>72</sup> Michael Gorman, and Pat Oddy. "The Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules Second Edition: Their History and Principles" 3. [http://epe.lacbac.gc.ca/100/200/300/jsc\\_aacr/aacr\\_sec/r-aacr2e.pdf](http://epe.lacbac.gc.ca/100/200/300/jsc_aacr/aacr_sec/r-aacr2e.pdf) Paper presented at the International Conference on the Principles and Future Development of AACR, Toronto, Ontario, October 23-25, 1997, accessed June 8, 2005.

materials. For visual materials recorded on film and intended to be projected so as to create the illusion of movement, see chapter 7. For microforms, see chapter 11, For maps, etc., see chapter 3, for microscope slides, see chapter 10.<sup>73</sup>

The blatant contradictions in the above statement need not be pointed out in detail. The chapter goes on to direct the archivist/cataloguer to the item as the chief source of information. The archivist is instructed to use any labels or permanently affixed items as integral sources of information. If information is not available from the “chief source,” one should look to the container, accompanying textual materials, and “other sources” for information. The last sentence of the section on chief sources of information states, “In describing a collection of graphic materials as a unit, treat the whole collection as the chief source.”<sup>74</sup> Despite this conclusion, the chapter goes on to discuss, in great detail, the fields for an in-depth item-level description, and a general overview of a series description.

Although delegates representing the archival profession were involved in the creation and multiple revisions of AACR2, it is clear that many compromises were made by both archivists and librarians to create one model of cataloguing and description for both professions. Unlike Canada, in the United States (as in the Europe of Jenkinson and the Dutch Manual), there is no “total archives” approach. In Canada, the “total archives” approach means that most archives collect both the records of their sponsoring institution and the records of private individuals and other organizations.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Michael Gorman and Paul W. Winkler (eds.) Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Chicago: American Library Association, 1978), 184.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Laura Millar, “The Spirit of Total Archives: Seeking a Sustainable Archives System,” Archivaria 47 (Spring 1999), and “Discharging Our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada,” Archivaria 46 (Fall 1998)

In the United States almost all such private records are collected not by archival institutions, but by state historical societies, and by national, state, local, and, in particular, university libraries. Thus the link between archivists and librarians has been closer than in Canada, therefore, having an archival component in the library-based AACR2 is not surprising.

Between 1976 and 1986, Steven L. Henson served as Senior Manuscript Cataloguer in the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress. As a staff member of the Library of Congress, an archivist within a library environment, Henson felt obliged to “make peace” with the new rules. He felt that the best way to proceed was to work within the “overall spirit and structure” of AACR2, while attempting to develop something that reflected basic archival principles, and met fundamental archival descriptive needs.<sup>76</sup> Given the difficulty archival institutions were presented with when attempting the adoption of AACR2, and the historical animosity existing between the archival and library communities, it might have been best for Anglo-American archivists to drop AACR2 altogether, and set out on their own path to developing descriptive standards. However, the Library of Congress was one of the principal authors and highly influential promoters of AACR2, putting Henson in an awkward position. In this context, then, Henson developed Archives, Personal Papers and Manuscripts: A Cataloguing Manual for Archival Repositories, Historical Societies, and Manuscript Libraries (APPM), published in 1983 by the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

APPM managed to synthesize basic archival principles into the framework of library bibliographic description, “gently fine tuning” it to specifically address the

needs of archival description.<sup>77</sup> This synthesis was based on three principles. First, APPM recognized provenance as the backbone of archival description. Second, it acknowledged that most archival material exists in “collectivities or groups” and that the appropriate focus on such materials be at the collectivity or group level. Third, APPM recognized that archival materials are often preserved for reasons different from those for which they were created. The culmination of these three principles is a method that legitimizes traditional archival methods, while moving away from the literal transcription of information on the described item itself, which is characteristic of library-oriented bibliographic practices.<sup>78</sup> Henson clearly understands that unlike bibliographic materials, such as books or journals, that are fixed objects, archival materials are, as he wrote, “mutable over a space/time continuum.” He observes that unlike bibliographic materials, confined between covers, archival materials change after entering institutional custody. They are first appraised or selected, later further culled, conserved, preserved and sometimes added to by future accessions from the same or related creators. APPM successfully developed a bibliographic model that would accommodate these changes and archival characteristics.<sup>79</sup>

The Introduction to APPM clearly outlines the scope of the rules. Part three of this section states:

These rules cover description of the provenance, scope, content, and form of archival material, regardless of physical medium. Terms such as *archival material*, *collection*, and *archival series* are used throughout to refer to either textual or non-

---

<sup>76</sup> Gorman and Walker, “Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules,” 66.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Henson, “The First Shall Be First: APPM and Its Impact on American Archival Description” *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993): 66-67.

<sup>79</sup> Steven L. Henson, “Standards for the Exchange of Descriptive Information on Archival and Manuscript Material in the United States,” *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992): 274.

textual materials. However, for item level description, the rules are textually oriented. This manual may be used for item description of non-textual material, but such material may be better accommodated using other manuals.<sup>80</sup>

As seen above, APPM gives little attention to non-textual materials. The only other mention of graphic materials is in rule 1.7B2, the scope and content abstract. It simply states that should there be any “graphic or other non-textual materials,” they should be listed in this field.<sup>81</sup>

The development of Rules for Archival Description (RAD) in Canada, and other related international efforts, all seem to have operated under the same mandate: the development of a solid manual for the arrangement and description of archival materials that adheres to the principles of archival theory while respecting or at least not conflicting with the standards of AACR2 or APPM. Concerning this process, Canadian archivist and descriptive standards expert Kent M. Haworth wrote:

The development of descriptive standards in Canada has also meant a rediscovery for many of those involved directly or indirectly in process. It has meant revisiting and examining the theoretical foundations on which archival description rests and testing their applicability to archival description.<sup>82</sup>

Haworth rightly points out that the development of descriptive standards in Canada would result in reviewing what some in the profession might consider the basics of archival theory. The late arrival of Canadian archivists to standards creation, however, allowed them to draw from a vast body of international knowledge, choosing

---

<sup>80</sup> Steven L. Henson, Archives, Personal Papers and Manuscripts: A cataloguing Manual for Archival Repositories, Historical Societies, and Manuscript Libraries, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Chicago: Society of American Archivists), 3.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>82</sup> Kent M. Haworth, “The Voyage of RAD: From the Old World to the New,” Archivaria 36 (Autumn 1993): 5.

what they saw as relevant to modern Canadian archives, and disregarding what they deemed unsuitable. This led to the formation of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards (WGASD) by the Bureau of Canadian Archivists.<sup>83</sup> The later development of RAD was based on the suggestions made by the WGASD. In its report, Toward Descriptive Standards, published by the Bureau of Canadian Archivists in 1985, thirty-five recommendations were made. Recommendations 31 and 32 outline a consultative process for the development of descriptive standards in Canada.<sup>84</sup> The Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards (PCDS) was established to head this consultative approach. The committee held its first meeting in the fall of 1986.

RAD is a standard developed through a blending of both French-Canadian and English-Canadian archival thought and practices. The development of RAD is distinguished by the participation and consultative process implemented by the PCDS. Unlike international efforts, where the creation of descriptive standards has usually been initiated and realized by one or two people, or a major institutional archives or library, in Canada working groups of professional archivists from numerous institutions were responsible for presenting reports to the PCDS that eventually became the chapters in RAD. This allowed the opportunity for input from the entire Canadian archival community, and for commentary on each set of rules as they were drafted and revised several times before they were finalized. The published version of RAD has benefited greatly from the overall process.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>84</sup> Kent M. Haworth, "The Development of Descriptive Standards in Canada: A Progress Report." Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992): 75.

<sup>85</sup> Haworth, "Voyage of RAD," 6.

By 1990, the majority of these recommendations had been acted upon, or were in the process of being acted on, by the PCDS and the first version of RAD was being widely implemented.<sup>86</sup> The authors of Toward Descriptive Standards made it clear in the introduction of their report that the development of descriptive standards will be a long process that would be “impossible, not to mention foolhardy” to attempt to develop in one year.<sup>87</sup>

From the outset of RAD’s development, the tension between the archival and bibliographic models was evident. Unlike the United States, where the archival field has been closely intertwined with the library field, the relationship between archivists and librarians in Canada has been a rocky one.<sup>88</sup> The bibliographic model focuses on the description of the item, but the archival model focuses on the fonds, and the subsidiary levels of the series, files and items within the fonds. The bibliographic model describes/catalogues the finished product; the archival focuses on the process and context of creation. The PCDS had a clear vision concerning the fonds, as description flowing from the highest level (the fonds) to the lowest level (the item), as insisted on in Towards Descriptive Standards.<sup>89</sup> The bibliographic model also emphasizes the physical class of material, where the archival model has a tendency to highlight the intellectual, including such RAD descriptive features setting standards for the administrative history/biographical sketch, custodial history, and scope and content features, of each fonds, sous-fonds, and series, as all inter-related, before getting to the physical thing itself, the item.

---

<sup>86</sup> Haworth, “The Development of Descriptive Standards in Canada,” 75.

<sup>87</sup> Towards Descriptive Standards, Report and Recommendations of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards. (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1985), 5.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

Another area of tension between the two traditions emerged with the bibliographic notion of authorship versus the archival notion of creatorship. This tension is emphasized by the multi-level approach of RAD. The creator of a fonds may be different from the number of individuals whose correspondence is included in the various series and items of the fonds.<sup>90</sup> For example, the fonds of an individual could contain photographs taken by other people, letters written to the creating individual by other people, or a work of art purchased by the fonds creator, having never met the artist.

Since the publication of RAD in 1990, there have been many developments and updates in the manual's structure and format. The manual is now available in its most up-to-date format on-line. It has expanded to twelve separate sections, starting with the general descriptive approaches, then separate chapters for multi-media fonds, textual records, graphic materials, cartographic records, architectural and technical drawings, moving images, sound recordings, records in electronic form, records on microform, objects, and philatelic records.<sup>91</sup> Also available on-line is a seventy-one-page document outlining the various rule revisions that have taken place between 1998 and 2003.<sup>92</sup>

RAD reflects, naturally, the Canadian archival tradition known as "total archives." As noted earlier, Canadian archival institutions, unlike most European or American archives, acquire public or government archives, as well as the records of

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>91</sup> Canadian Council of Archives, <http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/archdesrules.html>  
Rules for Archival Description,  
accessed March 2, 2005.

<sup>92</sup> Canadian Council of Archives  
[http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/RAD\\_consol\\_revisions1998-2003\\_Aug2003.pdf](http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/RAD_consol_revisions1998-2003_Aug2003.pdf)

both private corporations and individuals. The total archives tradition also seeks to collect records in all documentary media formats. Thus, RAD aimed to create comprehensive rules for the description of the fonds and all of its parts, regardless of the record format or creator. Kent Haworth writes:

Just as the Canadian archival tradition can be characterized as Total Archives, so RAD might be characterized as “Total Description” -- enabling archivists to use RAD independently, without reference to other cataloguing manuals, in order to describe “all forms of material... uncommon material yet unknown.”<sup>93</sup>

Concerning works of art, RAD addresses the wide topic of “Graphic Materials” in a single 30-page chapter. Graphic materials are defined as “documents in the form of pictures, photographs, drawings, watercolours, prints and other forms of two-dimensional pictorial representations. The rules cover the description of most two-dimensional graphic materials, whether intended to be viewed by reflected or transmitted light.”<sup>94</sup>

There are some confusing contradictions in the “Graphic Materials” chapter. To begin with, the above definition is confusing. Photographs, watercolours and prints are pictures. Pictures, photographs, drawings, watercolours, and prints are pictorial representations. Are photographs not prints? Perhaps the chapter should have been named “two-dimensional non-textual items that sit still.” Moreover, examples of film are included in the chapter, when an entire chapter is already devoted to moving

---

Rules for Archival Description, Consolidated Rule Revisions 1998-2003, accessed March 2, 2005.

<sup>93</sup> Haworth, “The Development of Descriptive Standards in Canada,” 56.

<sup>94</sup> Canadian Council of Archives <http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/archdesrules.html>

Rules for Archival Description “Chapter 4: Graphic Materials” p. 3, accessed March 2, 2005.

images, for those films not meant to be viewed by transmitted light.<sup>95</sup> Why do they receive their own chapter, for are they not “graphic” or visual materials? The “Graphic Materials” chapter is designed to address the description of fonds consisting entirely of such graphic materials. The reader is directed to chapter two for the description of multi-media fonds.<sup>96</sup> As will be revealed in the following chapters, Canada’s Rules for Archival Description simply do not take into consideration the unique characteristics of works of art, be they part of a multi-media fonds, or an entire fonds or collection. Nevertheless, RAD now remains the *official* “state of the art” for the description of archival records.

Archival description as an art and science has been in development since the mid-nineteenth century, when the articulation of the concept of *respect des fonds* began the codification of professional standards for archivists. Through the work of the Dutch archivists, Muller, Feith and Fruin, these concepts were widely disseminated. Practices in the field by Sir Hilary Jenkinson and T.R. Schellenberg led to a further examination of the role of the archivist, as well as the continued development of modern solutions for modern archival problems.

The body of knowledge created by these thinkers facilitated the development of manuals for archival description based in archival theory, which addressed modern archival realities, especially by the Society of American Archivists. In Canada, the Rules for Archival Description were published in 1990, the culmination of the efforts of a half-decade of associations, bureaus, working groups, and peer-reviewed chapter publications.

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 3.

The most recent edition of RAD, revised in 2003, opens its General Introduction with a paragraph that sets the mandate for the entire manual:

These rules aim to provide a consistent and common foundation for the description of archival materials within a fonds, based on traditional archival principles. The application of the rules will result in descriptions for archival material at various levels, e.g., fonds, series, file and item levels, and will aid in the construction or compilation of finding aids of all kinds. These rules cover the description of, and the provision of access points for, all forms of material, e.g., text, graphic material, moving images, commonly found in Canadian archives at the present time. The integrated structure of the text makes the general rules usable as a basis for the description of uncommon material and material yet unknown.<sup>97</sup>

However, as will be explored in the next chapter, this paragraph supplies a rather idealistic view of the capabilities of RAD. In fact, the manual does not address the needs of all archival materials, be they the materials outlined in the manual's own table of contents, or those "uncommon" and "unknown" materials referred to in the above description.

RAD has both helped and hindered descriptive standards for visual materials. RAD provides guidelines for dealing with the multi-media fonds, an issue relatively unaddressed in archival discourse until RAD's publication. However, the framework of RAD unknowingly provided a guideline for archival description that allowed certain media to be favoured and emphasized, while certain media within the same fonds or series to be marginalized.

---

<sup>97</sup> Canadian Council of Archives, <http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/archdesrules.html> Rules for Archival Description, "General Introduction," accessed March 2, 2005.

RAD is the new archival orthodoxy, to be sure, but not one above challenge, as we will see in the following chapters. Although the fonds concept has remained the foundation of archival theory, and RAD has been developed centered on the fonds concept, such a fonds-based concept is not ideal for all archival materials, or all archival environments.

## Chapter 2: Visual Records as Primary Sources

Contrary to conventional thinking among researchers, and contrary to attitudes reflected in current archival practice, works of art go far beyond merely illustrating written history; rather, they have evidentiary value of their own. This evidentiary value lies not only in what is depicted and how, in regard to technologies, fashions, and styles, but also in what is not depicted, what is abstracted, and what is constructed. Increased visual literacy among archival professionals and increased attention to contextual origins are needed for works of art to take their rightful place alongside the textual record as a primary source for scholarly research.

The most constructive advice and insights concerning the arrangement, description, and use of works of art have, naturally, come from those working with visual records in the archival profession. Surprisingly, these professionals have pointed the finger inward, focussing on current archival practice and current descriptive standards as the culprit for the medium's lack of recognition. Postmodern archival theory has challenged the archival profession to rethink and reassess its professional foundation, and the profession's approach to the record. Within this re-evaluation of the profession, many discoveries concerning the nature of records and role of the archivist have been made, among them, some very constructive insights concerning description. Most of this analysis comes not from looking inward, but from

external and cross-disciplinary influences.

Visual records have been used to communicate information and knowledge for thousands of years, from the pre-historic painting to the digital image. Works of art act as triggers to memory, memories of shared cultural experience.<sup>1</sup> Every work of art can be seen as a product of a particular time and space. They are historical, as each work of art is the product of a mind that has gone through its own unique experiences, with each work of art having a unique relationship to its author's other works.<sup>2</sup>

Works of art have often been compared to windows or mirrors, with images "reflecting" society and the visible world. The questions, however, from those unfamiliar with the evidentiary nature of art are problematic to traditional archival thinking. What evidentiary value do works of art have? And how can they be used as reliable historical evidence? The most obvious answer to these questions is to point to examples of the pre-historic works that have given the modern researcher great insight into societies where textual records are unavailable. European pre-history would be difficult to write about without the paintings of Altamira or Lascaux. These paintings offer virtually the only evidence of social practices such as hunting or worshipping. Scholars in later periods also regarded images as evidentiary. Distinguished medievalist David Douglas declared the Bayeaux Tapestry a primary source record concerning the history of England, placing it alongside accounts in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and by William of Poitiers.<sup>3</sup>

However, most historians and some archivists become very uncomfortable when

---

<sup>1</sup> Peter Samis, "Artworks as Interface," *Archives and Museum Informatics* 13 (1999): 193.

<sup>2</sup> James Johnson Sweeney, *Vision and Image: A Way of Seeing* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), 135-136.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell

asked to view works of art as evidentiary. Historians and archivists have to take into account the variety of intentions of the artist. Representational art is often less realistic than it seems, and tends to distort social reality rather than represent it. Therefore, archivists and historians who do not understand these nuances can be seriously misled.<sup>4</sup>

The evidentiary value of these works lies in the very degree of distortion or levels of personal intentions that they depict; the process of distortion itself becomes the phenomenon that historians want to study. Often these distortions provide invaluable evidence concerning mentalities, ideologies and social norms that cannot be found in textual records.<sup>5</sup> For example, the portrait is a common visual record. However, what portraits tend to reflect is not social reality as much as social illusions or social performances.<sup>6</sup>

Many have a strong impulse to view portraits as accurate, almost mirror-like images of an individual at a particular moment. However, conventions of the genre have a specific purpose, that is, to present the sitter or sitters in a favourable way.<sup>7</sup> What these pieces contain is intrinsic meaning, the underlying principles that reveal the basic attitudes and social norms of a nation, class, time period, religious or philosophical persuasion. In this light, representational works of art provide indispensable evidence for historians.<sup>8</sup>

Even so-called “conceptual” or “abstract” works have evidentiary value. The blank, or white canvas, paper or other surface can have multiple meanings, depending

---

University Press, 2001), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 28.

on the intentions of the artist. They are also evidential in terms of development of thought concerning art in general, movements and trends within the art world, the interaction between art and audience, as well as patterns in visual communication.<sup>9</sup>

Concerning the study of material culture, the evidentiary value of works of art seems to be most reliable in the confirmation of small details. A painting can confirm the arrangement of objects, colours of clothing, the social uses of objects – not so much the appearance of the object itself, but rather, the way it is held or the prominence of its placement. Images allow us to place artifacts in their original social context.<sup>10</sup>

Renowned Canadian archival theorist Hugh Taylor suggested that works of art cannot be true or false as records, but rather should be seen only as more or less reliable for the formation or process of actual pictorial description, and very reliable resources in terms of intrinsic value. Intrinsic value being when the record itself, as an object, is highlighted over the record's actual content. The record is not so much valued for its content, rather, for what it represents. Taylor was not suggesting that only the "reliable" be sought out by the archives, with the "aesthetic" left to the art gallery. Rather, Taylor was advocating a broad approach to acquisition in visual arts archives based on his view of the inseparability of form and content.

Clearly we must try to distinguish between an artist's personal record expressed through the painting in non-representational terms, or a work of art which has no point of reference with the world of appearances and the kind of documentary art which seeks primarily to record, using this expression in its widest

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>9</sup> Samis, "Artworks as Interface," 193.

<sup>10</sup> Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 102.

sense to encompass paintings which may only remotely look like their subjects but express their qualities, in particular, the creation of profound generalized statements about their subject.<sup>11</sup>

It would be a very unrealistic mandate for “fine” or “aesthetic” art to be acquired exclusively by the art gallery, and for archives to seek out only the “documentary” or “evidentiary” works. Such delineations are very difficult to make, as many works of art will possess qualities that would interest both institutions.<sup>12</sup> All visual works can be seen as documentary and evidentiary. The terms “fine” and “aesthetic” are opinions held by the viewer, and of course subject to radical change over decades and centuries.

Like text, visual records enable the viewer to develop concepts and abstractions, comparisons and metaphors. At the same time, they engage the emotional and aesthetic sensibilities of the viewer. These sensibilities transcend many of our common modes of communication. Visual records do much more than provide enhancements, illustrations, tools for enriching, accessing and transmitting the established literacy.

Think for a moment of the still images that have defined many important moments in U.S. history: the photo essays of the Great Depression, a sailor kissing a girl in Times Square at the end of World War II; a young Vietnamese girl fleeing napalm; a college student at Kent state kneeling over a body. As icons they no longer require any explanation for most contemporary Americans, although a printed text or oral explanation might well complement and extend their meanings. However, even if we did not know the context of their creation, they would each carry strong meanings and convey powerful emotions.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Taylor, “Documentary Art and the Role of the Archivist,” 10.

<sup>12</sup> Greg Spurgeon, “Pictures and History: The Art Museum and the Visual Art Archives,” *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84): 71.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Daley, “Expanding the Concept of Literacy,” 3.

<http://www.avid.com/solutions/education/ExpandingtheConceptofLiteracy.pdf>  
accessed September 16, 2006

Images with the power that the above iconic images possess, are at the same time an extremely intimate, yet, universal mode of communication. No matter how many times a viewer is confronted with the image of the Vietnamese girl fleeing napalm, it will have an emotional effect. Each person confronted with the image will have their own unique emotional experience.

The picture of Kim Phuc remains among the indelible images of the Vietnam war. Taken on June 8, 1972, it appeared on front pages of newspapers all over the world that year, and it has been reproduced innumerable times since. George Esper, the Associates Press's last bureau chief in Saigon, who stayed until the Communists ordered all remaining foreign journalists out, spoke with me about the power of the picture and its impact on the Vietnam war: "It captures not just one evil of one war, but an evil of every war. This picture showed the effects of war, and how wrong and destructive it was. People looked at it and said 'this war has got to end'".<sup>14</sup>

Two viewers from different corners of the world, speaking separate languages, with no way to communicate verbally can be confronted with the image of Kim Phuc at the same time. Yet, should they lock eyes, should one viewer simply shake their head in disbelief and the other in agreement, they are communicating. They are having a shared experience through a universal language.

Repeated exposure to the image may cause repeated analysis by the viewer of the image's contents, context, and representation over time. It may also result in complete desensitization towards the image. This is the difference between the response of a visually literate person and the response of a visually illiterate person.

In written text, perception, understanding and expression of the building blocks,

---

<sup>14</sup> Denise Chong, The Kim Phuc Story: the Girl in the Picture (Toronto, Ontario: Penguin Books Canada

and putting those blocks together is referred to as “literacy,” a set of skills traditionally associated with text. What, then, is literacy’s equivalent when it comes to visual materials? It is the ability to think and learn in terms of images, that is, to think visually, to identify, comprehend, and exploit the building blocks of images.<sup>15</sup>

Visual literacy directly determines our level of visual comprehension and our ability to read images in a meaningful way.<sup>16</sup> Developing one’s visual literacy involves honing a set of skills for the interpretation of images, examining the social impact of those images, as well as discussing their purpose and audience. These skills include the ability to visualize internally, communicate visually, and read and interpret visual images. This literacy also requires an awareness of the manipulative uses and ideological implications of images.

A visually literate person is able to discriminate and make sense of visual objects and images; create visuals; comprehend and appreciate visuals created by others; and visualize objects in their mind’s eye. To be an effective communicator in today’s world, a person needs to be able to interpret, create, and select images to convey a range of meanings.<sup>17</sup>

Increased visual literacy is needed among archivists for visual records to be properly represented in archival description, and, as a result, properly represented as bona fide records to the researcher. There are degrees of visual literacy. For example, a young person can construct meaning from both simple and complex visual records. An older person, having greater experience and thinking skills in general, will glean more possibilities from the same images, for example, symbols within the image or the

---

Ltd., 1999) xiii.

<sup>15</sup> Elisabeth Kaplan and Jeffery Mifflin, “Mind and Sight: Visual Literacy and the Archivist,” *Archival Issues* 21, no. 2 (1996): 10-12.

<sup>16</sup> Anne Bamford, “The Visual Literacy White Paper: What is Visual Literacy?,” 2.

underlying implications of the image. Beyond the abilities of the average adult are additional layers of perception by those educated in the field. An art historian will have acquired a factual base and competence for schemes of visual analysis, and will be able to place the work in time and genre.<sup>18</sup>

The constant presence of imagery in our culture builds a certain visual literacy in most people, but it is incorrect to say that visual literacy is developed by the constant bombardment of imagery one receives on a daily basis. The development of one's visual literacy requires both time and exposure, as well as education. By studying the way people respond to art, we see that beginning viewers apply what they have learned from constant exposure to the media. This allows the beginner to easily examine images that follow well-known conventions, or narratives that are predictable. However, when confronted with unpredictable narratives and patterns, they are almost impossible for the beginner to decipher.<sup>19</sup>

Reading levels for text are understood as gradual and slowly evolving, allowing for developmental changes in skills, understanding and involvement. Increasing visual literacy should be treated as a similarly gradual and slowly evolving process. Visual literacy is a set of skills and understandings that progress evenly, each step in improvement building on earlier ones, each step dependent on certain kinds of exposure and instruction.<sup>20</sup> In order to advance visual literacy, viewers need long-

---

[http://www.adobe.com/uk/education/pdf/adobe\\_visual\\_literacy\\_paper.pdf](http://www.adobe.com/uk/education/pdf/adobe_visual_literacy_paper.pdf) accessed September 16, 2006

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Philip Yenawine, "Thoughts on Visual Literacy," 1.

[http://www.vue.org/download/Thoughts\\_Visual\\_Literacy.pdf](http://www.vue.org/download/Thoughts_Visual_Literacy.pdf) accessed September 16, 2006

Originally published in Handbook of Research on Teaching Literacy through the Communicative and Visual Arts. (1997)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 2.

term, graduated support, with particular attention in the early stages of development.<sup>21</sup> Exposure to visual theory and criticism, as well as art history through the course of one's education is best, but this can certainly be done independently. In any scenario, this learning must eventually become ongoing and self-guided as visual culture is constantly evolving.

Very few historians work with visual records as compared to those who work with, and almost exclusively base their findings on, textual records. Few historical journals have illustrations, and when they do, relatively few contributors take advantage of the opportunity to use visual records as primary sources. When these journals do use illustrations, the historian tends to treat them as just that – illustrations. They are reproduced in books and articles without analysis, cross-reference or comment, beyond a brief caption of title and date, and often without proper archival citations. In cases where images are discussed in the text, their evidentiary value is often used to support conclusions the author has already reached by other means, usually textual.<sup>22</sup>

As briefly mentioned earlier, the most constructive criticism concerning current descriptive standards for “documentary art” or archival visual materials has come from those within the profession, those archivists faced with the challenge of adequately describing documentary art holdings with the tools available. The most poignant of these arguments is expressed by Joan M. Schwartz. Although her work is concerned mainly with photography, her arguments and insights can be applied to all visual materials. Schwartz courageously points the finger inward, examining current

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 10.

practices, isolating the archival profession as the chief culprit in the marginalization of visual materials:

Let me further challenge this paradigm of the visually illiterate historian by suggesting that, if historians and other users of archives have persistently failed to appreciate the value of visual materials in the making and writing of history, then archivists – through their ideas and standards, practices and actions, whether consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, overtly or systemically – are, in large measure, responsible.<sup>23</sup>

Her article, “Coming to Terms With Photographs: Descriptive Standards, Linguistic ‘Othering,’ and the Margins of Archiviy,” confronts practices employed, and assumptions held by archivists concerning visual materials. She sees the archival profession as missing out on new postmodern ideas about critical theory concerning visual literacy, representation and reality, context and meaning -- all ideas that would permit existing archival theory to expand and adapt to adequately represent visual materials. As a result, the archival profession has pushed visual materials into the “margins” of archives:<sup>24</sup>

As archivists, our concerns for visual images must not be limited to those within our holdings, for archivists not only acquire and preserve visual images; we also produce, manipulate, and disseminate them in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons. We copy them in ways that do not respect their integrity as records. We create catalogue cards and other reference tools that produce them in standard sizes, change colours, mask physical attributes, obscure their documentary context(s) and evidential linkages.<sup>25</sup>

If one examines the Franklin Carmichael fonds (Appendix B) a number of visual

<sup>23</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “Coming to Terms with Photographs: Descriptive Standards, Linguistic “Othering,” and the Margins of Archiviy,” *Archivaria* 54 (Fall 2002): 143.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 143-144.

<sup>25</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “Negotiating the Visual Turn: New Perspectives on Images and Archives.” 5-6.

works, actually hundreds, are outlined in the physical extent portion of the fonds description, and mentioned later in the scope and content note. This fonds is further divided into nineteen series. In the series titles, the various media of the series are indicated in brackets. If one examines the first series, Commercial art and design, the title indicates that the series includes “additional materials” and “textual records.” If one looks further into the series description (Appendix C), the extent note indicates that the series is comprised of five centimetres of textual records. There is no indication of any visual works included in the series. However, if one reads the scope and content section of the series description, it indicates that photographs, commercial designs and illustrations are part of this series. Why have these visual records not been indicated in the extent note? Why have they been called “additional materials” in the series title? This term is even more general than lumping all visual materials under the heading of “graphic.”

The Franklin Carmichael fonds description also includes a link to a finding aid, a finding aid for the textual portion of the fonds. This begs one to ask – where did those hundreds of photographs, drawing, prints and watercolours go? They have not been left out of the description entirely. Just below the fonds title in the fonds level description (Appendix B) is the note “Fonds Consists of: 708 lower level descriptions.” There is also a link to an outline of the fonds’ arrangement structure. It is in this outline that the visual works can be found. The arrangement structure indicates a fonds level description at the highest level, then nineteen series within the fonds. After nineteen series are listed, there are hundreds of item level descriptions simply indicated by this arrangement structure to be linked to the fonds, but not in any series. This is clearly an example of visual materials

being dropped into a framework that favours, and uses language designed to describe textual records.

Historians, in conducting research, have been largely drawn to words, words in documents found from words in text-based archival finding aids, presented in a very linear, orderly fashion. It is little wonder that this process would generate an archival environment where the marginalizing of visual materials is mutually reinforced by both users and archival professionals. Schwartz adds:

Thus whereas photographs, prints and watercolours are generally acknowledged to be historical, they are not generally understood as archival; while their value is readily acknowledged to be informational, it is seldom viewed as evidential. Unless pushed by colleagues or circumstances, most archivists, like most historians, do not view visual materials as documents with functional origins and material effects, and have been slow to invest time and effort to understand them as such.<sup>26</sup>

An excellent, if exceptional, example of the use of visual materials by an historian can be found in H. Vivian Nelles' award-winning work, The Art of Nation-Building: Pageant and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary. According to Nelles, the book is built largely on visual evidence.<sup>27</sup>

When I eventually assembled all my research materials I found that I had as many photographic images to deal with as letters, memoranda, and other written documents. Much of what I learned about the Tercentenary came from the careful examination and manipulation of the many kinds of visual representations in it. Years ago, one of my professors declared that the argument of his book was contained in the adjectives. Here, the reader will soon discover, a good portion of my argument is borne by the

<sup>26</sup> Schwartz, "Coming to Terms with Photographs," 145-146.

<sup>27</sup> Burant, "Visual Archives," 103.

imagery.<sup>28</sup>

Archivist Tim Cook, in his review of Nelles' work, notes the "powerful" visual pieces used in the book, and comments on the visual aspect of Nelles' work as "necessary to understand and capture the nature of the spectacle involved."<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, Nelles refers, in his acknowledgements, to his colleagues "tolerating" his "infatuation with visual history."<sup>30</sup> In this statement, Nelles seems almost apologetic for indulging in some sort of immature act that reflects poorly on his profession, or crossing a line forbidden by reputable historians. Jim Burant, Chief of the Art and Photography Archives Division of Library and Archives Canada, writes:

The impact of Nelles' work becomes muted by the suspicion that visual history, that becoming visually literate, was for him only an "infatuation." Naturally this remark coloured my reaction to the book a great deal. That a leading academic such as Nelles, and his well respected colleagues Ramsay Cook and Christopher Armstrong, felt that they still only tolerated visual records as an aspect of history, was disquieting, to say the least.<sup>31</sup>

The more typical approach of the historian to visual materials can be found in the production of Illustrated History of Canada, edited by Craig Brown. Image research was not made an integral part of the research, analysis and narrative of this work; rather, the image research was performed *after* the completion of the text. The imagery chosen was used to "complement" the written word rather than provide any evidentiary value in the research process. Upon completion, the selected authors were asked to provide a list of

<sup>28</sup> H. Vivian Nelles, The Art of Nation Building: Pageant and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary (Toronto: 1999), 16.

<sup>29</sup> Tim Cook, "Review of *The Art of Nation Building: Pageant and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary*" Archivaria 50 (Fall 2000): 157.

<sup>30</sup> Nelles, "The Art of Nation Building," Acknowledgements.

<sup>31</sup> Jim Burant, "Visual Archives and the Writing of Canadian History: A Personal Review," Archivaria 54 (Fall 2002): 104-105.

suggested images to accompany their text. This resulted in the request of generic imagery, for example, “a lumbering scene,” or “workers in a factory.”<sup>32</sup> Perhaps a more appropriate title for the work would have been “A History of Canada with Illustrations.”

In speaking of his experience in art and photography archives, Jim Burant comments on what he sees as a “perceived lack of understanding” displayed by researchers from various disciplines concerning visual records and their evidentiary value. This prevailing attitude is best displayed in the all too common behaviour of researchers spending an entire term, summer, reading week, or Christmas break working with textual records, then devoting two hours on the last afternoon to finding illustrations to complement their work. In many cases, the author does not even participate in this aspect of the work’s fruition. The manuscript of a to-be-published work is often handed over to the publisher, with the company’s picture researchers selecting the appropriate generic images to accompany the text.<sup>33</sup> In Burant’s view, Craig Brown’s approach to researching, then illustrating, is the norm.

Archivists have begun to provide researchers with more contextual information regarding visual records, when interest in the context of the particular record is expressed. Internal office files on particular artists and photographers are commonplace in archives; however, the incorporation of this information into descriptive practice has not yet been adequately standardised.<sup>34</sup> In order for documentary art to be used in creating interpretations of Canadian history and public memory, the archival profession has to incorporate further contextual information regarding the origins of visual records into archival description.

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 94.

When one employs a set of descriptive standards, one is using a selection of standard terms, or a set vocabulary. These standard terms require careful consideration. In use of language, systems of classification, and in ordering, records are both privileged and marginalized. Our words best reflects who we are. Words express and reflect views and values.<sup>35</sup> Yet archivists continue to describe visual materials by using a language developed to communicate the attributes of textual records. It is akin to asking one to steer a car with a sail, or peel an apple with bare hands. Both are possible, but both are not particularly efficient or good ideas, given the alternatives that are available. As will be discussed later, like the steering wheel or the paring knife, archivists have the tools within reach. It is just a matter of holding the tools properly.

RAD has, for the most part, been embraced by the Canadian archival community. Indeed, not to follow RAD is considered backward at best, heresy at worst. It is the badge of professional identity for archivists in Canada. Yet, RAD has been adopted at enormous cost, urged on as an international model, yet abandoned by some as not fitting the best interests of their institutions. RAD's lumping together of the majority of visual materials under "graphic" in its Chapter 4, implies that all of these materials are very similar in nature, offer the same sort of evidentiary value, and, as such, can all be described under the same standards as "pictures."<sup>36</sup> This is rooted in RAD's development, employing and depending on the bibliographic model and American archival precedents. Chapter 4 of RAD is grounded in the general structure of AACR2, as discussed earlier. AACR2 in turn was heavily influenced by the cataloguing and retrieval methods used by the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Essentially, RAD has watered down and

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>35</sup> Schwartz, "Coming to Terms with Photographs," 147.

combined the two approaches, assimilating them into one approach for two very different media of record.<sup>37</sup> There is a fundamental difference between a photograph taken of an event and an artist's interpretation of the same event.

RAD's groupings of works of art and photographs under the same GMD (general medium) represents a taxonomic ordering of documentary materials based upon their visuality, that is, upon their observable characteristics as "pictures" rather than their functional origins and archival capacities as documents. It implies that works of art and photographs can be described and understood in similar ways. But form does not necessarily follow function with visual materials, and nowhere is this more true than in the particular and distinctly different technological – as well as social – means of production, circulation, and consumption of overtly mediated works of art, on the one hand, and purportedly objective photographs on the other.<sup>38</sup>

Once again, the factual values of visual materials are being emphasized, rather than their functional origins. However, put into practice under the guidelines of RAD, this approach to visual materials is being codified as an acceptable one within the archival profession in Canada. RAD does offer a far better standard than pre-RAD options for the description of works of art. Formerly, two or three-line descriptions, with no standard guidelines, would be used to describe collections or fonds of thousands of photographs, or individual items.<sup>39</sup>

The justification for adopting the bibliographic model for describing works of art and photographs in the development of RAD is that these items have traditionally been described at the item level. However, RAD fails to recognize that in adopting this

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>39</sup> Burant, "Visual Archives," 111.

approach, the item is being largely decontextualized by limiting the standard terms used to describe the record to subject content and surface appearance.<sup>40</sup> Employing this approach, archivists are less focussed on the origin, activity, function, and context of visual materials. Essentially, archival descriptive practice for works of art has become more concerned with the indexicality of these works at the item level, than their instrumentality as records.<sup>41</sup>

RAD does possess some of the necessary fields or access points to illuminate the instrumentality and functionality of documentary art records. However, archivists must understand the benefits of the inclusion of such information. In addition, this information must be researched, analysed, and understood by the archivist before the description process begins for the full advantage of such descriptive tools to be realized.<sup>42</sup>

If we are to move photography, indeed all visual materials, from the margins to the mainstream of archivy, we need greater visual literacy on the one hand, and wiser use of technology on the other. How we deal with photographs in archives depends a great deal upon our understanding of their role in society, how and what they communicate, how they are used in business, whether personal business, corporate business and government business. Familiarity with the theories and methodologies, nature and impact of visual communication and visual materials is essential if we wish to appreciate the nature of photographs, as both evidence and information, and their relationship to thinking, knowing and remembering. A greater awareness of the instrumentality of images, the nature of communication, and the intertextuality of meaning can lead to the more informed use of technology for intellectual as well as physical control.<sup>43</sup>

At the very least, the archival profession needs to reassess the use of the term

---

<sup>40</sup> Schwartz, "Coming to Terms with Photographs," 153.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

“graphic materials.” If this blanket term, used for a wide variety of differing media, is not re-examined, visual records will remain marginalized or confused by the current use of RAD.<sup>44</sup>

The archival profession, despite the insights of current literature into the nature of visual communication, and the shortcomings of descriptive standards, chooses to continue to embrace a descriptive model based on textual needs, a model that is simply “clear, consistent and wrong” for visual materials. Reversing this process, bringing visual materials into the mainstream, and highlighting the connection between the verbal and visual, are challenges the archival profession must now face or “risk becoming irrelevant and impotent in a wired world where the medium of human communication is increasingly visual.”<sup>45</sup> Greg Spurgeon comments:

The problem of developing a language to document visual art resources has long plagued all institutions which collect pictorial art in its many forms. The medium resists words and verbal description, and if a picture is worth a thousand words, it will no doubt take a thousand words to describe it. Archivists and curators who recognise the cultural power and significance of the visual image must learn together to verbally describe pictorial content.<sup>46</sup>

Visual literacy is essentially the ability to think and learn in terms of images, the ability to think visually.<sup>47</sup> The general absence of required courses in an archival studies education, courses that develop visual literacy, and exemplify the use of visual literacy as a tool in archives, in research as a whole, only reinforces this problem.<sup>48</sup> Because of this, any archivist wishing to adequately understand or describe visual materials must turn to

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>46</sup> Spurgeon, “Pictures and History,” 73.

resources outside of the archival profession. Schwartz notes:

Because archival literature itself – some of it outdated, some plain wrong-headed – provides little direction for understanding visual materials in archival terms, it is necessary to read outside the field, to extrapolate from the methodological approaches of other disciplines and allied professions, to adapt approaches from one medium to another, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the nature of visual materials as archival, and in turn improve archival approaches to appraisal, acquisition, description and access. I am not suggesting that such approaches be user-driven; rather, I am advocating greater sensitivity to evolving notions of context and evidence that are attracting increasing attention and attaining greater sophistication in scholarly arenas that intersect, however obliquely, with the world of archives.<sup>49</sup>

Over the last two decades, postmodernism has caused widespread examination of dominant thought in all fields of the arts, humanities, and social sciences: it is only natural that postmodernism would have the same impact in the world of archives. The archival profession has experienced what Tom Nesmith refers to as a “rediscovery of provenance,” a rediscovery due in part to the challenges set forth by postmodernist theory and thought.<sup>50</sup> Postmodernist thought has challenged archivists to rethink their professional discipline and practice, reassess the roles they play in the preservation and formation of modern memory, and examine anew their relationship with the record as a whole.<sup>51</sup> Modern archival problems are requiring archivists to rethink and re-examine

---

<sup>47</sup> Burant, “Visual Archives,” 106.

<sup>48</sup> Schwartz, “Negotiating the Visual Turn,” 2-3.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>50</sup> Tom Nesmith “Archival Studies in English Speaking Canada and the North American Rediscovery of Provenance,” in Tom Nesmith (ed.) *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1993), 2.

<sup>51</sup> Terry Cook, “Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts.” p.1. <http://www.mybestdocs.com/cook-t-postmod-pl-00.htm>  
Originally published in *Archival Science*, vol.1, no. 1 (2000) : 3-24.  
accessed March 3, 2006

many principles that form the core of archival theory.<sup>52</sup>

For centuries Western people have debated the degree to which the understanding of reality is affected by the means of engaging in it. This means of engaging can be anything from the senses, to one's intellectual make-up, to recorded communication.<sup>53</sup> Postmodernist thought asserts that the understanding of reality is the product of these various mediating factors. The world is perceived and received by the individual through these mediators. Some archival discussion has focussed on avoiding the limitations imposed by these mediating factors; however, many have come to the conclusion that there simply is no avoiding these factors, and that indeed they should be embraced and celebrated:

This implies that whatever improvement in understanding we may be able to achieve can only come from identifying and exploring as many of these mediating factors as possible, even those seemingly most remote from such previous study, such as archiving. Unlike prior efforts to recognize (but also neutralize) various mediating factors (including archiving,) the postmodern view implies that archiving should no longer slip so easily from sight. This view also suggests that rather than simply attempting to overcome the mediation of archiving, its actual effects ought to be examined.<sup>54</sup>

Postmodernist theory asserts that archivists do not simply receive and store knowledge, in some kind of neutral and curatorial fashion as Jenkinson had hoped, but actually co-create knowledge, and as mediators (or co-authors), co-create the archives. What archivists choose to stress or ignore is unavoidably subjective. The value judgements one

---

<sup>52</sup> Tom Nesmith, "Archival Studies in English Speaking Canada," 2.

<sup>53</sup> Tom Nesmith. "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives," Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists. Ottawa, May 1997. p. 2.

makes in the capacity of archivist, affect how researchers find, perceive and use records.<sup>55</sup> An archivist's background, social affiliations, professional norms, self-understanding, and public standing are influenced by the archiving process, to say nothing of systemic, structural and resource contexts in which the archivist works. In postmodernist thought, the archivist's own societal construction affects the appraisal, acquisition, arrangement, description, accessibility and communication of archival records.<sup>56</sup> Simply put, the important factors that have gone into the shaping of the archivist as a human being will be mediating factors reflected in that archivist's work. This view directly challenges centuries of archival theory, where records and archives were viewed as unadulterated reflections of the world around them:

The refusal of the archival profession to acknowledge the power relations imbedded in the archival enterprise carries a contaminant abdication of responsibility for the consequences of the exercise of that power, and, in turn, serious consequences for understanding and carrying out the role of archives in an ever-changing present, or for using archives with subtlety and reflection in a more distant future. In this regard, the blind are leading the blind, in both directions: scholars using archives without realizing the heavy layers of intervention and meaning coded into the records by their creators and by archivists long before any box is opened in the research room, and archivists treating their archives without much sensitivity to the large footprints they are themselves leaving on the archival record. Both scholars and archivists have thus had a vested interest in perceiving (and promoting) the archive as a value-free site of document collection and historical inquiry, rather than a site for the contestation of power, memory and identity.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Wendy M. Duff and Verne Harris, "Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings," *Archival Science* 2 (2002) : 275.

<sup>56</sup> Nesmith. "Seeing Archives," 8.

<sup>57</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook. "Archives Records and Power: The Making of Modern Memory." *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 5.

From the postmodernist point of view, records, individually and collectively, are all a form of narration, narrations that go well beyond being mere evidence of transactions and facts. Records are seen as being shaped to reinforce a narrative consistency and conceptual harmony for the “author.” Reinforcing this harmony results in the enhancement of position, ego, and power, while conforming to organizational norms, rhetorical discourse patterns, as well as societal expectations. Postmodernists also assert that there is not simply one narrative to a collection or series of records; rather, there are many narratives serving many purposes for varying audiences across time and space. Therefore, records must be seen as dynamic, not static.<sup>58</sup>

It is vital that archivists recognize the “authoring” role that postmodern examination has uncovered. Provenance demands that as a profession, archivists explore the custodial history and context of creation and functional origins of records. A great many factors account for the existence of even one single record. What an archivist decides to include, exclude, or emphasize in the arrangement and description of a fonds or collection will shape the meaning of the records and the reality those records create for others.<sup>59</sup> The notion of the archivist as author is echoed in Gary Taylor’s work Cultural Selection. In chapter six, titled “Invisible Man,” Taylor asserts that every time a cultural representation or record is handled, it is irreversibly changed.<sup>60</sup>

In the postmodern world, context has taken precedence over content in archival processing. Postmodernist thought has moved the intellectual foundation of archives from

---

<sup>58</sup> Terry Cook, “Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives.” p.6 <http://www.mybestdocs.com/cook-t-postmod-p2-00.html>  
Originally published in Archivaria 51 (Spring 2001)  
accessed March 14, 2006.

<sup>59</sup> Nesmith. “Seeing Archives,” 15.

<sup>60</sup> Gary Taylor, Cultural Selection (New York: Basic Books, 1996), chapter 6.

the knowledge of the contents of records, to knowledge of the creators, the context of creation, and the functional origins of the record. This shift in the archival intellectual foundation is forcing a paradigm shift within the profession. Records are no longer viewed as static physical objects; rather, they are being viewed as dynamic and virtual. No longer are records seen as the passive products of human or administrative activity; rather, they are being viewed as active agents in the formation of human and organisational memory. Canadian archival educator Terry Cook writes:

For archivists, the paradigm shift requires moving away from identifying themselves as passive guardians of an inherited legacy to celebrating their role in actively shaping collective (or social) memory. Stated another way, archival theoretical discourse is shifting from product to process, from structure to function, from archives to archiving, from the record to the recording context, from the “natural” residue or passive by-product of administrative activity to the consciously constructed and actively mediated “archivalisation” of social memory.<sup>61</sup>

This professional shift has not resulted in an “out with the old, in with the new” redefinition of the profession; rather, postmodernism has caused a thorough re-examination, re-evaluation, and reinterpretation of the profession’s core principles. The terms provenance, *respect des fonds*, context, evolution, interrelationships, order and record have taken on new meanings in light of postmodern insights, despite having dominated the archival profession in their traditional definitions for two centuries.<sup>62</sup>

Postmodernist theory has most directly impacted the world of archives in its examination of the nature of historical as well as other texts. Postmodern thinker Jacques Derrida’s Archive Fever (1996) examined the archive and its significance in society,

---

<sup>61</sup> Cook, “Archival Science and Postmodernism,” 1.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

resulting in a multitude of studies inspired by his observations. Works concerning archives and postmodernism focus primarily on the creation and nature of records, as well as their designation, survival and preservation as archives.<sup>63</sup> Postmodern analysis has revealed the illogic of allegedly “rational” texts. Terry Cook writes:

The context behind the text, the power relationships shaping the documentary heritage, and indeed the document's structure, resident information system, and narrative conventions are more important than the object thing itself or its content. Facts in text cannot be separated from their ongoing and past interpretation, nor author from subject or audience, nor author from authoring, nor authoring from context. Nothing is neutral. Nothing is objective. Everything is shaped, presented, represented, re-represented, symbolized, signified, signed, constructed by the speaker, photographer, writer, for a set purpose. No text is a mere innocent by-product of action as Jenkinson claimed, but rather a consciously constructed product, although that consciousness may be so transformed into semi- or even unconscious patterns of social behavior, organization process, and information presentation that the link to external realities and power relationships is quite hidden.<sup>64</sup>

Archivists must accept this shift in archival theory, and the implications it has for their role as archivists. Archivists should accept and reintegrate the subjective (the mind, the process, the function) with the objective (the matter, the recorded product, the information system) in their theory and daily practice.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the obvious differences between traditional archival theory and postmodern insights into said theory, the two need not be regarded as forming two extremes along the spectrum of approaches to archives. Postmodernism's concern with

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 7.

the “author” and the constructing of mediated context reflects the long-held archival concern for context. However, postmodernism does, and should, make the archivist uneasy, as it questions the very foundations of archival science. It questions the neutrality of archivists, their implied role as impartial custodians. It questions the origins of records as innocent byproducts of human or administrative behavior. It questions the notion of provenance, that provenance is rooted in a single place or person rather than a complex process of creation. It highlights the processes imposed on the record (appraisal, arrangement, description, public programming) by the archivist or mediator, and reveals that records are not value-free creations of a prior reality.<sup>66</sup>

Based on postmodern insights, archival science should shift focus from the properties and characteristics of records to analysis of the functions, processes and transactions that caused the records to be created. With a new focus on the record-creating process, rather than recorded products, the core theoretical formulations about archives will change accordingly. Concerning arrangement and description, this practice will concentrate less on the physicality of records as they are received, and focus more on enriched contextual understandings and multiple interrelationships of the records.<sup>67</sup>

Postmodernism is not the only trend influencing archivists to reformulate the traditional foundation of archival science. There has been a marked change in the very reason why archives exist as institutions, and how they have evolved as institutions. Archives were traditionally established by the state to serve the state.<sup>68</sup> Literature on the history of archives has revealed them as deliberately constructed institutions, not institutions that naturally evolved out of society’s activity. Studies now reveal that

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

archives were collected, later culled, reconstructed, even destroyed. This history has shown that archives were not always established to collect the best evidence of society's transactions, but rather to serve the historical purposes of those figures and events whose records have been judged worthy of preserving within the context of their time and space.<sup>69</sup> Archives are now seen as a site where social memory has been constructed, usually in support of the powerful. The archival record is now seen as "a mere trace of missing universes," reflecting the intentions of its author and audience as much as its actual information content.<sup>70</sup> Historians interested in postmodern theory and archives are now studying the process that, over time, has decided what has been deemed worth remembering and preserving, and what has been deemed non-evidentiary and destroyed. This collective "remembering" and "forgetting" occurs in all collecting institutions, be they galleries, museums, libraries, historical sites, historic monuments, public commemorations, or archives.<sup>71</sup> Through these acts, these institutions, to a far greater degree than many have been willing to admit, do not just act as keepers or custodians of our recorded past, but, rather as shapers, editors, and authors of cultural memory.<sup>72</sup>

Schwartz and Cook explain:

Nevertheless, various postmodern reflections in the past two decades have made it manifestly clear that archives – as institutions – wield power over the administrative, legal, and fiscal accountability of governments, corporations, and individuals, and engage in powerful public policy debates around the right to know, freedom of information, protection of privacy, copyright and intellectual property, and

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>69</sup> Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth," 6.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>71</sup> Terry Cook, "The Impact of David Bearman on Modern Archival Thinking: An Essay of Personal Reflection and Critique," *Archives and Museum Informatics* 11 (1997): 18.

<sup>72</sup> David Bearman, "Archival Methods," in *Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1989), 1.

protocols for electronic commerce. Archives – as records – wield power over the shape and direction of historical scholarship, collective memory, and national identity and how we know ourselves as individuals, groups and societies. And ultimately, in the pursuit of their professional responsibilities, archivists – as keepers of archives – wield power over those very records central to memory and identity formation through active management of records before they come to archives, their appraisal and selection as archives, and afterwards their constantly evolving description, preservation and use.<sup>73</sup>

This insight into the history of archives as institutions has resulted in a new openness, a new visibility, a new willingness to question and be questioned, all attributes required by postmodernism for archives as an institution to be held accountable. Archives are now seen as established of the people, for the people.<sup>74</sup> While uses of archives for government accountability and long-term administration remain valued, archives are now recognized as offering citizens a sense of identity, locality, history, culture, and personal and collective memory. This new role demands more of archives as institutions, as well as of archival professionals.

The challenge for archival science in the new century is to preserve recorded evidence of governance, not just the governments governing. And the task also now includes taking archives to the people, or encouraging them to come use archives. Archives are not a private playground where professional staff can indulge their interest in history or their personal interaction with historians and other scholars or, equally, their inclinations to be part of the public policy and information infrastructures of their jurisdictions; archives are a sacred public trust of preserving society's memories that must be widely shared. Archivists serve society, not the state, even though they may work for an agency founded within

---

<sup>73</sup> Schwartz and Cook. "Archives Records and Power," 2.

<sup>74</sup> Eric Ketelaar, "Archives of the People, by the People, for the People," South African Archives Journal 34(1992): 5.

the state's bureaucracy.<sup>75</sup>

While those examining postmodernism and its effect on archival theory and practice have seldom addressed arrangement and description directly or at least not at any length, it poses major challenges to some of the well-established orthodoxy in this area.<sup>76</sup> If postmodern insight were effectively applied to arrangement and description, descriptive standards based on the fonds would expand dramatically. What would result is a descriptive system with a much broader approach to the notion of creator, allowing for richer, multi-provenancial, multi-relational, multi-contextual linkages. Postmodern description would move away from the traditional notion of flat, mono-hierarchical, single creatorship to a system that would illuminate the evidentiary value of records in all media, and illuminate their fuller historical context. Postmodern description would reflect sustained contextual research by archivists into the history of records and their creators, producing ever-changing descriptions, as records-creating and custodial histories are ongoing.<sup>77</sup> Archivists, then, should attempt to come to terms with the reality of their authoring role in the description of records, rather than trying to deny it. By insisting that the profession merely "marshals facts" rather than constructing an on-going narrative, archivists are subversively promoting professional disingenuousness.<sup>78</sup>

Postmodern insight has moved the theoretical and practical focus of the archival profession away from the record to the creative act, authoring intent, process and functionality behind the record. This should result in archival theory re-focussing on capturing the functional and structural contexts of records, as well as their evolution over

---

<sup>75</sup> Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism," 8.

<sup>76</sup> Duff and Harris, "Stories and Names," 265.

<sup>77</sup> Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth," 10.

time. Contextual relationships give meaning to associations between record and creator(s) that are observed or found to exist. These relationships establish and secure the meaning and evidentiary nature of records, and secure these factors over time and in the midst of change.<sup>79</sup> The archivists will still remain active mediators in the shaping of collective memory, and will need to recognize and embrace this role, rather than resist it, as part of their work. They will also need to keep clearly recorded evidence of their decision-making in their work. By doing this, archivists will better balance which records are included or excluded from collective memory.<sup>80</sup>

In summation, works of art held in archives have been marginalized by current archival descriptive practices. Through the use of standards developed for textual records, visual records have been pushed aside, neglected in comparison to the attention given to textual records. Greater attention needs to be given to the functional and contextual origins of works of art for these records to be brought into the mainstream, and regarded as bona fide primary sources for scholarly research. Postmodern insights liberate archivists to undertake this more interpretive role in describing the deeper, richer contexts of works of art in archives. Further examination into alternative archival methods, as well as resources outside of the archival profession sheds light on how this could be achieved.

---

<sup>78</sup> Duff and Harris, "Stories and Names," 277.

<sup>79</sup> Chris Hurley, "The Making and Keeping of Records: (1) What are Finding-Aids For?," *Archives and Manuscripts* vol. 26, no.1 (May 1998): 60.

<sup>80</sup> Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism," 11.

### Chapter 3: Current Approaches and Possible Alternatives

This chapter will examine current practices in the description of works of art under the guidelines of RAD, using current examples from Library and Archives Canada. Once the lack of contextual information in these descriptions has been illustrated, alternative archival methods will be explored, as well as standards for description developed outside of the archival profession. Suggestions for possible improvements to current archival practices concerning the description of visual records will be drawn from these sources.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the focus on context, highlighted in postmodern scholarship, connects the concerns of users of archives to the new goals of postmodern archivists. This chapter also illustrates that researching, encoding, and sharing such contextual information is crucial in the description and subsequent use and interpretation of the record. Concerning the description of graphic materials, and the goals of an archivist in describing graphic materials, Joan Schwartz writes:

Archivists must go beyond the “of-ness” of a photograph or a watercolour or a map to search out the deeper meanings, rhetorical flourishes, and ideological nuances embedded in and generated by

them. Our job is to seek their intended function or role – be it personal, social, political or economic – as a means of communicating a message across time and/or space, and then consider how to preserve and describe them in a way that respects, reveals, and retains their impact on human relations, power and knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

At the completion of a two-day conference entitled “The Roles of Documentary Art in Understanding a Cultural Heritage,” famous Canadian artist Alex Colville suggested the following:

Museums and art galleries have a responsibility to provide more text, more supplementary information about the things we present to our audiences. Whereas it has been popular to believe that being didactic is an elitist activity, perhaps what is more elitist is not to provide greater assistance to our audience to know and understand more.<sup>2</sup>

One could argue that all collecting institutions, including archives, are dealing with this very common dilemma: being didactic is considered “elitist;” but not providing enough contextual information on works of art, and thus catering only to the educated few already in the know, is equally elitist. When works of art are not adequately described, archivists are catering to the educated few, those who know art, artists, art history, and artistic styles, techniques and media. The profession thereby is meeting the needs of only a very small segment of the population, a population that is visually literate, able to decipher and make use of the brief descriptions provided, and most likely enters an archive with much contextual information already in hand. These are the

---

<sup>1</sup> Schwartz, Joan M. “Negotiating the Visual Turn: New Perspectives on Images and Archives.” 5. <http://www.archivist.org/periodicals/aa-v67/schwartz.pdf> Originally published in *American Archivist* 67, accessed February 17, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Alex Colville as cited in Greg Spurgeon, “Pictures and History: The Art Museum and the Visual Art Archives,” *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84): 74.

researchers who are presently able to make thorough use of documentary art collections in archives as primary sources for research.

The Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana at Library and Archives Canada is an excellent example of a visual collection rich in evidentiary value. Comprised of almost four thousand items, the collection offers a visual record of the history of Canada in almost all aspects. Included are depictions of Aboriginal people, portraits of celebrated Canadians, flora and fauna, as well as scenes of settlement, industry, trade, commerce, transport, and agriculture. Also included are views of towns and cities across Canada, depictions of events and natural disasters, and numerous military subjects. The collection is also important for documenting the development of Canadian art. Because the items in the collection span over four hundred years of art production, the development of certain media, in particular printmaking, are well illustrated.

When the full collection-level description for the Peter Winkworth collection (see Appendix D) is examined, there are confusing discrepancies concerning provenance, and creatorship. The “Biography / Administrative History” entry gives insight into the life of the collector, Peter Winkworth. This section of a collection-level description is normally reserved for the creating person or agency. This would imply that Peter Winkworth’s biography is the most important contextual information available for this collection, and that he alone is responsible for the creation of the records within the fonds/collection. They are in fact the products of many Canadian artists. All of the works included in the collection had a history of their own previous to being acquired by Mr. Winkworth. In fact, in the larger picture, for many of these works, Mr. Winkworth’s involvement in their history might be relatively minor.

The “Scope and Content” entry gives a very good description of the subject matter depicted in the works, and names a few of the artists in the collection, but not *all* the artists in the collection. The collection-level description does not indicate that this list of artists is incomplete. The online exhibition “Canada – A Collector’s Passion: The Peter Winkworth Collection” identifies twenty-five artists, some of them not named in the collection-level description, and provides brief biographies of each.<sup>3</sup> Again, this page of artist biographies does not include every artist in the collection, and does not indicate that the list of artists is incomplete. The LAC is obviously in possession of this contextual information concerning at least some of the collection’s artists, and, however limited this information may be, it should be made available in the collection-level description. Above all, this treatment of provenance and creatorship undermines the role of the artists in the collection, and their work. If the very creating entity, the artist, is undermined in description, it does not reflect well on the authenticity and evidentiary value of the records they produce. If an archivist does not take the time to describe the records properly, then they cannot be of optimum use for research.

The “Custodial History” entry for the collection is typical, and would be adequate for a description with one single agency of origin, but this collection has multiple creators. One suspects more information must be available as to how this collection came to be a collection. One archival theorist has addressed this issue

We also have in RAD an element that identifies the “custodial history” of the records. This field is, in effect, our artistic provenance. We have identified these fields in our descriptive tools, but they are woefully underused. I believe that they are crucial to

---

<sup>3</sup> Library and Archives Canada, “Introduction – Artist’s Biographies”  
[http://www.collectionscanada.ca/art/050602/05060207\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/art/050602/05060207_e.html) accessed March 11, 2006  
Part of the online exhibit “Canada – A Collector’s Passion: The Peter Winkworth Collection”

the understanding of the records, and to the defence of the archival provenance that we should be protecting. Therefore, we should elevate them from mere optional descriptive entries to core tenets of archival practice. This new descriptive information should be prominent and searchable in our networks if we wish to surround our records with an enriched context and provide a better understanding for our user.<sup>4</sup>

The Winkworth collection description lets the researcher know that a finding aid is available in electronic form. If one were not pleased with the level of information given in the collection-level description, this finding aid would be the next logical place to look. However, the finding aid available is a list of the collection's individual items, divided by medium, in no discernable order and with even less contextual information.

Custodial history has become an important issue in the later twentieth century. With art theft and fraud rampant, an unbroken chain of custody has become an important indication of authenticity, as indeed it was for Jenkinson.<sup>5</sup> Archival, art gallery, and museum professionals have likewise always sought to maintain a clear chain of custody for their records. Despite best efforts, unusual gaps in the history of a collection or item can be found, usually occurring in times of great social upheaval. In the case of the Second World War plunder, many works have yet to be returned to their rightful owners, and sit in galleries amid great controversy. The National Gallery of Canada maintains a list of works available on its web site, with digital images and brief descriptions of over one hundred items with gaps in their custodial history from 1933 to 1945. The National Gallery maintains that this does not mean that the ownership of the works is suspect; rather, the gallery is trying to gather as much information on the pieces as possible. New

---

<sup>4</sup> Laura Millar, "The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance: Archival Context in Space and Time," *Archivaria* 53 (Spring 2002): 12.

information is added to the site as it becomes available.<sup>6</sup> The most extensive project of this nature has been taken on by the Getty Center in Los Angeles, California. The Getty Provenance Index is part of the Getty's Project for the Study of Collecting and Provenance (PSCP). In cooperation with other collecting institutions in Europe and the United States, the Provenance Index contains over one million records from 1500 to 1990. The index is divided into three separate sections: Archival Documents, Sale Catalogues, and Public Collections.<sup>7</sup> A project of this size only emphasizes the importance of maintaining clear custodial histories. A clear, concise custodial history solidifies the authenticity of the record, and the professionalism of the institution.

Another unique element of custodial information is the scholarly interest in collecting, and the psychology and methodology behind the very act. Part of the provenance project mentioned above is the study of collecting. The Getty Center PSCP regularly holds forums and lectures. The most recent, on April 20, 2006, was titled "Collecting Traces of Creativity: The Afterlives of Oil Sketches, Drawings, and Sculptors' Models." This particular forum was held in conjunction with the University of Southern California – Getty Program in the History of Collecting and Display. The issues addressed in this particular forum were summarized as follows:

Drawings have long been of interest to those concerned with the history of collecting. Recently, attention has also been given to how both oil-sketches and sculptors' models have been valued and collected. Yet, while the collecting of these three categories has been discussed separately, little has been said about

---

<sup>5</sup> Spurgeon, "Pictures and History," 69.

<sup>6</sup> National Gallery of Canada, "Provenance Research: European and American Works of Art" [http://cybermuseum.gallery.ca/cybermuseum/enthusiast/provenance/index\\_e.jsp](http://cybermuseum.gallery.ca/cybermuseum/enthusiast/provenance/index_e.jsp) accessed April 21, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Getty Center. "Provenance Research (Research at the Getty)" [http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting\\_research/provenance\\_index/](http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/provenance_index/) accessed April 21, 2006

what their collecting histories have in common.<sup>8</sup>

Researchers concerned with the psychology and methodology of collecting, or simply interested in how collections are accumulated, would be very interested in the custodial history of a collection as vast as the Winkworth Collection. For this type of research, the information presently given at the RAD collection level is not adequate. This is not to suggest that a fuller description at the collection level would provide all the information necessary to a researcher interested in this topic; however, it would certainly indicate to the researcher if the collection were worth pursuing for research of this nature.

Under "Additional Information," the note on arrangement provides very little navigational aid to the researcher. The entry indicates that the collection is arranged alphabetically by artist for original paintings, watercolours and drawings, and prints are arranged by series, theme, geographical location, or chronology, and that maps are being arranged separately. To the archivist this is perhaps useful information. To the researcher, this comes across as "This collection has been described in every way possible, and the maps have left the building." Perhaps the reasoning behind these arrangement decisions should be given, highlighting the unique attributes of each medium, giving the researcher further insight into the nature of the collection, and the archival processes for dealing with it. The information regarding the collection made available in this section of the description, not including the language note, is quite redundant given what is in the "Scope and Content" entry. However, it does identify one more artist, Peter Rindisbacher.

The "Additional Names" section of the collection-level RAD description is reserved for listing individuals relevant to the collection. For example, if there were a

---

<sup>8</sup> Getty Center, "Events Related to the History of Collecting."  
[http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting\\_research/provenance\\_index/events\\_complete.html#PSCPforumI](http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/provenance_index/events_complete.html#PSCPforumI)

substantial amount of correspondence between the creator of a fonds and another person, one could identify the other individual in this section. However, the incomplete list of artists are not simply people *related* to the collection, they are, in this instance, co-creators. When one “clicks” on the highlighted names in the Winkworth collection-level entry, one is not directed to a biographical sketch, but to more item-level works by that artist held by the LAC. This lack of interest in context is not unique to the Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana. Other large collections, for example, the famous W.H. Coverdale Collection, are described with the same lack of context, with the focus on the item level.

The Winkworth Collection description goes straight from the collection level to the item level, with no division into separate series. If one examines an item-level entry as presented on ArchiviaNet, Library and Archives Canada database for researchers, very basic information on the work is available (see Appendix E). Here is the name of the artist (Sarah Bond Farish), title of the work (Yarmouth Taken from Milton (Nova Scotia)), date of creation (1829), inscription details, reference and inventory numbers, reproduction information, medium, measurements, and a single database subject heading, “landscape.” It is all the information needed, were someone searching for an illustration of nineteenth-century Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

Were someone intrigued, however, by a work by Sarah Bond Farish, and looked to the holdings of the LAC for more information, they would be out of luck. One might, if they were looking for more in-depth information, request the electronic finding aid available, as indicated in the collection-level description. The item-level listings available in the finding aid indicated are an excellent example of records made by archivists, for

use by archivists (see Appendix F). To the average researcher, this must appear to be a message in code. No guidance is given in the item-level list on how to read the numerous abbreviations, what various terms mean, or the relevance of each separate field. The only obvious new information is Farish's birth and death years, and that she studied under J.B. Comingo. Why this information is not available in the ArchiviaNet item-level description remains a mystery. Obviously, the unique artistic attributes and historical characteristics, be they of the artist, the subject matter, or the custodial history, have been lost, or at least not made part of the description available to the public. In other words, the record has been decontextualized.

Many Canadian archivists point to the British Columbia Archives as the model for handling visual materials. However, on closer examination, the British Columbia Archives is a good model for the digitization, not description, of visual records. The site boasts 132,000 scanned images. They are a model for item-level research, but offer little in terms of contextual information. For instance, were one interested in the life and works of Hannah Maynard, the British Columbia Archives has a Maynard Family fonds within its holdings. The fonds-level description indicates that there are 7.3 meters of textual records and 62 photographs, and indicates that a file list is available.<sup>9</sup> Should one venture into the "visual records" section of the site, one sees that a database of the images is available. The researcher may browse by title, photographer/artist, or geographic region.<sup>10</sup> If researchers browse by artist, and select "Hannah Maynard," they are given 27 digitized photographs with item-level entries. The item-level entry includes fields for

---

<sup>9</sup> British Columbia Archives, Maynard Family fonds, fonds level description, call number: MS-1077;198908-010.

<sup>10</sup> British Columbia Archives, "Overview – Visual Materials." <http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-3FF4E98/visual/visual.htm>

subject, geographic region, title, photographer/artist, date and accession number, with no link to, or indication that, any of the works are part of a fonds.

Essentially, current practices for describing visual records that focus on the item level simply do not give enough contextual information for works to be used as reliable primary sources in research. Providing information on the many co-creators, and the nature and history of the accumulation of the collection, would bring the records into much fuller context. Fuller context would result in a record more useful to the researcher, a researcher who would then become increasingly comfortable using works of art as a primary source for historical evidence rather than mere illustration.

Whenever an archivist is grappling with the challenges of multiple-creatorship and a large volume of records, the Australian Series System emerges as a possible model for keeping the fonds or collection in context. Australian descriptive standards offered a context-rich, multi-relational descriptive structure decades ago, through the series approach to description. Therefore, the defence of the Canadian fonds-based approach and the Australian series approach should be well understood, in order to open up description to other forms of representing.<sup>11</sup> The series approach accommodates multiple creators before, after, and parallel in time, space, and activity to the fixed primary creator, as well as describing the multiple functions of all these creators. The contextual descriptions of creators and acts of creating are then linked in one to many, and many to one, relationships to actual records, whether series, files or items. What has resulted, with the Australian system, is a descriptive process that very much reflects postmodernism's emphasis on multiple ways of seeing, the view of the record as dynamic, virtual and ever-

---

<sup>11</sup> Wendy M. Duff and Verne Harris, "Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 279.

evolving, and not fixed and locked in as with RAD.

The zeal for uniformity and consistency has imposed a textual bias on other media and has underplayed the powers and attributes of visual materials, sound recordings, and other “non-textual” records. We need to create descriptive systems that are more permeable. In doing so archivists will have to relinquish some of their power to control access to, and interpretation of, their records with which the current descriptive approaches invest them.<sup>12</sup>

The series system evolved out of the record-keeping culture of the National Archives of Australia (then the Australian Archives) in the mid-century.<sup>13</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, Australian archivists were presented with many challenges as they tried to arrange and describe their holdings for their then new institution. These challenges were brought forth by the changing administrative environments of records, particularly those records originating within the Australian government. At this time, it was common for Australian archives to use the American record group as the basis for description. However, this method did not prove practical for describing all the records within their holdings as many of the records presented were created by a succession of agencies, where one function of government had been transferred through a succession of different government departments, each with different “parent” or “partner” agencies influencing the records. As a result, Australian archives could be presented with a body of records with no clear single agency of origin.<sup>14</sup>

Archival methods centered around the fonds concept serve the custodial interests of archival institutions, as well as the convenience of the archivist. *Respect des fonds*

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>14</sup> Australian Society of Archivists Committee on Descriptive Standards  
<http://www.archivists.org.au/cds/Series%20system%codification%20-%20August%202003.pdf>

allows for the physical and intellectual control of records in tidy, well-defined groups. However, these interests do not always serve the interests of the researcher, nor reflect the complexity of the context of creation of records. These tidy, well-defined groups may never have existed in reality outside of the archives, and thus actually undermine provenance.<sup>15</sup> This has led many archivists to the conclusion that the multi-faceted aspects of provenance found in many modern records is eroded through strict adherence to the concept of the archival fonds.<sup>16</sup> The Australian series system seeks to describe records in their totality by linking the record to all the contextual entities that created, accumulated, owned, or transferred records into the series. Linking the record to its various contextual relationships results in a description that much more fully represents the multi-provenancial nature of the records.<sup>17</sup>

In 1964, archivist Peter Scott of the Commonwealth Archives Office (later the National Archives of Australia) developed a system to document such administrative change within a record group. He developed the system not only to document this change, but also to record its impact on record creation, while remaining within the parameters of traditional archival theory. Scott's approach was to separate the descriptions of the agencies that generated the records from the record descriptions in series, files, and items. His descriptions were "split into two structures – context, or provenance, with elements of organization, agency, family, person – and recordkeeping, with record series, item, document." The division of description into these two structures allowed for administrative change to be easily represented, and for a full and accurate

---

"Describing Archives in Context: a Guide to Australian Practice," consultation draft, August 2003. p.7. accessed February 22, 2006

<sup>15</sup> Peter Horsman, "Last Dance of the Phoenix, or The De-discovery of the Archival Fonds," *Archivaria* 54 (Fall 2002): 22.

view of the records' context to be presented.<sup>18</sup>

Since its implementation in Australia in the 1960s, the series system has evolved considerably. In early series description, context originally focussed on the persons and corporations central to records' creation and administration. Series description has now evolved to focus on a much broader and deeper context of record creation.<sup>19</sup> Series descriptions are now regarded as free-floating entities that are connected, when appropriate, to any and all other descriptions of record context or provenances that have contributed to their existence.<sup>20</sup> Advocates of the series system see the record series as dynamic and ever-changing. They believe that archival description should represent the "multiple-horizontal as well as poly-hierarchical vertical relationships" within a record series.<sup>21</sup> In essence, the series system is based on the notion that many records are the result of multiple creating entities, in that, as stated by Chris Hurley, "creation is only one aspect of provenance."<sup>22</sup>

Some have interpreted the Australian series system as an attack on the principle of provenance. However, the series system has simply proven to be a more efficient and effective means of documenting the complex nature of provenance in some modern record-keeping environments. What many archivists outside of Australia view as *respect*

---

<sup>16</sup> Duff and Harris, "Stories and Names," 267-268.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>18</sup> Peter J. Scott, Clive D. Smith and Gail Finlay. "Archives and Administrative Change – Some Methods and Approaches (part 4)," *Archives and Manuscripts* vol. 8, no.2 (December 1980): 61-62.

<sup>19</sup> Australian Society of Archivists Committee on Descriptive Standards, "Describing Archives in Context," 8.

<sup>20</sup> Adrian Cunningham. "Dynamic Descriptions: Australian Strategies for the Intellectual Control of Records and Record keeping Systems." <http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/control/strategies/default.htm> p.3. This paper was originally presented at a symposium organized by the Royal Society of Archivists of the Netherlands to honour the centenary of the publication of the Dutch Archives Manual of Muller, Feith and Fruin, Amsterdam, October 23, 1998, accessed February 22, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Duff and Harris, "Stories and Names," 272-273.

<sup>22</sup> Chris Hurley as cited in Duff and Harris, "Stories and Names," 269.

*des fonds* is, in fact, regarded as disrespect of true provenance by Australian archivists.<sup>23</sup> The fonds concept, as articulated in 1841, simply does not meet the needs of adequate description for the many complex modern record-keeping environments and the multi-provenance records that result from ever-changing administrations.

The Australian series system consists of two interrelated components: context control and record control. The contextual entities (individuals, families, organizations, project teams, government agencies and portfolios, functions, activities) are record creators, and are linked to the records and record-keeping systems, illustrating the dynamic nature of the relationship between record and creator.<sup>24</sup> From the Australian series proponent's perspective, description captures knowledge that was always present, and was always a component of the record. It is not formulating new knowledge or imposing context on the record; it is preserving the context of records in an environment where this knowledge can no longer be assumed to exist in the minds of archivists and researchers, or represented in the mono-hierarchical structure of the traditional fonds used by RAD.<sup>25</sup>

The Australian series system has had great influence in Canada in recent years. The Archives of Ontario (AO) has all-together abandoned the fonds-level arrangement approach for their government record holdings, in favour of an approach modeled on the Australian series system. The AO has not abandoned RAD completely; rather, it has adapted the implementation of RAD so that series-based arrangement can be implemented. The fonds-based approach to description is still maintained in the private

---

<sup>23</sup> Cunningham, "Dynamic Descriptions," 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Chris Hurley, "The Making and Keeping of Records: (1) What are Finding-Aids For?" Archives and Manuscripts (vol. 26, no. 1): 60.

records of the AO, the records of individuals, families, associations and businesses relevant to the history of Ontario.<sup>26</sup>

The issue of how to define fonds in a government context is both a theoretical and practical question. What is the purpose behind applying the concept of the fonds? It is meant to highlight and secure the context of a records creation, the central principle of archival arrangement.<sup>27</sup> The complex hierarchical nature of modern, large government organizations and their subjectivity to rapid administrative change does not harmonize well with the fonds approach. Often a body of records from a government cannot be simply linked to one creating agency; therefore, highlighting and securing their multi-provenancial nature must allow for a system of arrangement and description that accommodates multiple creating agencies.<sup>28</sup> Bob Krawczyk, former Descriptive Standards Officer, Archives of Ontario, states this succinctly:

In modern governments ministries, branches, offices, and other “agencies” are continually created, renamed, reconfigured, again shuffled, merged, and divided in the glorious push and pull of constant administrative adjustment. This fact is much lamented by archivists, for it makes their lives complicated. How is it possible to divide the resulting detritus of administration into comprehensible, mutually exclusive groups in order to establish provenance?<sup>29</sup>

What has resulted from the problems presented by records of multiple creating agencies is the Canadian series system. This system captures the multiple creators who contribute to a series over time, and in hierarchies, allowing for better insight into the context of the

<sup>26</sup> Bob Krawczyk, “Arrangement at the Archives of Ontario: A Canadian Series System.” <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/English/about/series.htm> accessed September 9, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Bob Krawczyk, “Cross Reference Heaven: The Abandonment of the Fonds as the Primary Level of Arrangement for Government of Ontario Records,” *Archivaria* 48 (Fall 1999): 131.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

records.<sup>30</sup>

Previous to the implementation of the series system at the AO, their government records were grouped into "record groups." The record groups corresponded (approximately) to single creators, multiple creators over time, or groups of similar creators. Creators were usually defined at the ministerial or department level, with some independent agencies given their own record group. The AO, like many institutions, experienced problems with the record group system. The creation of records groups for subordinate bodies like agencies, boards and commissions was not standardized. The assignment of a unique record group number, combined with frequent administrative change, resulted in arrangement decisions frequently being revisited and modified.<sup>31</sup>

In 1993 the AO addressed the problem of frequent administrative change by introducing a system of "flexible description." In fact, it was a system of flexible arrangement. Archivists were given more options concerning providing provenancial information in their inventories. This new system allowed for a more sophisticated access to series descriptions within the government records. The series are largely based on their previous record group arrangement. Within an inventory for a department or ministry, cross references were provided between the creating agency and the series created by that agency. This allowed for series to be linked to more than one creating agency, if the name or function of that creating agency changed over time. This system of arrangement and description allowed a form of multi-provenancial access within the record group system. This also enabled series descriptions for multi-provenancial series to be placed in more

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>31</sup> Bob Krawczyk, "Arrangement at the Archives of Ontario"

than one inventory.<sup>32</sup>

The AO was one of the first institutions in Canada to officially adopt RAD, and, as an institution, still strongly advocates its use for the description of archival records. The AO has found little conflict between the series-based approach and the use of RAD, despite RAD's development around the fonds-based approach. There is no difference in detail or depth of description between the fonds and the series. All of the RAD elements used to describe a fonds are also used at the series level.<sup>33</sup>

The series system adopted by the AO resembles the Australian series system in many respects, most notably by the inclusion of a large database of creating agency histories. These creating agency histories can be easily linked to series level descriptions to illustrate successor, predecessor, controlling and subordinate relationships to records administrative change.<sup>34</sup>

The problems of multi-provenancial records and their arrangement and description are not exclusive to government records. The Hudson's Bay Company Archives encountered similar problems when it came to the description of their complex corporate records, and their change over time.

The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was founded in May of 1670 when King Charles granted a charter to his cousin Prince Rupert and his associates. King Charles believed that the land was his to give as no other Christian monarch had claimed it. This charter created the HBC as a corporate entity, and made the company the "true and absolute Lordes and Proprietors" of Rupert's Land. Rupert's Land consisted of the vast drainage area of the Hudson Bay basin, an area that now comprises more than 40% of

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

modern Canada.<sup>35</sup>

In 1869, Rupert's Land was transferred back to the crown under the "Deed of Surrender," and in 1870, the territory was incorporated into the Dominion of Canada. In return, the HBC received a large sum of money and substantial land holdings. From 1670 to 1870 the HBC's primary focus was the fur trade. At the beginning of the twenty-first century HBC is best known for its retail stores.<sup>36</sup>

The HBC compiled the first catalogue of its archival records in 1796. For a long time, the records were held exclusively for the company's internal use with access granted to a few favoured outsiders. In the 1920s, the HBC's head office began to arrange and describe their records for public use. In 1970, the HBC's head office was transferred to Canada. In 1973, the HBC agreed to place its records on long-term loan with the Archives of Manitoba in Winnipeg. The records were shipped to Canada in 1974, and opened for public access by the next year. In 1994, the Archives of Manitoba became the permanent home of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA).<sup>37</sup>

During the 1920s and 1930s, a classification scheme was developed for records kept by the HBCA in London. The records were divided into sections of broad administrative origin, and further divided by the company records-keeping system, and then by item. In the 1980s, record group categories were applied to most twentieth-century records.<sup>38</sup>

The HBCA's decision to apply the series system approach to the re-description of

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Hudson's Bay Company Archives, "Hudson's Bay Company History." [http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbc\\_history.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbc_history.html) accessed September 9, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Hudson's Bay Company Archives, "HBCA History." [http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbca\\_history.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbca_history.html) accessed September 9, 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Hudson's Bay Company Archives, "HBCA Holdings."

their holdings was a natural one, as it allowed for a more accurate demonstration of how the records were created, by whom, in what context and for what reason. It simply provides a better understanding of the contents of the records

HBCA recognized that the original classifications and subsequent descriptive work did not pay significant attention to record creators or to the complexity of records creation and company organization. These classifications imposed an artificial and sometimes simplified structure on the records. For example, our former Section B: Post Records implied that all posts were at the same level and created similar records. Our authorities will now demonstrate that several very fluid administrative levels existed to carry out the administration of the HBC in the vast regions of Rupert's Land. Related series descriptions will show that the records created by a department are very different to those created by a post and that it is useful to know the hierarchical structure.<sup>39</sup>

Under the HBCA series system, information about the records is kept separately from the information about record creators. Descriptions of records are linked to descriptions of all relevant multiple record creators within the HBC organization, from post and outposts to higher levels of administration in the company in London and North America. This approach highlights the complexity of the company's administrative history, organizational relationships and records creation. Understanding the complex hierarchical nature of the relationships behind these records helps the researcher see the inter-dependency of the record creators, and to find the records relevant to a particular administrative body. The result of this approach is a more detailed record of the administration of the HBC over time. Authority records have been created for each level of the administrative hierarchy. Included in the authority records are information about

---

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/holdings/arrangement.html> accessed September 9, 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

administrative history, dates of existence and a note about the function of the body being described. Authority records are linked to predecessor and successor bodies if applicable. They are also linked to the bodies to which they report, as well as all the bodies over which they are in charge. These links allow the researcher to navigate the HBC's administration more clearly and see its various changes over time. This information is key in understanding the operations and administration of the company, as well as the decision-making, communication and creation of the records.<sup>40</sup>

If one examines the Fort George (Que.) and district report series (Appendix G), the series approach, and its benefits to the HBCA, are well illustrated. If one examines the series description, one will notice that it contains all of the basic elements of a fonds level RAD description. However, the series is linked to four separate creating entities rather than a single point of provenance like the traditional fonds. If one clicks on the name of any of the four creating entities, they are given a description of that creating entity, and its place within the HBC administration. This clearly places the servants' contracts within the hierarchy of the HBC administration. If one further examines the creating entity descriptions there are links to "archival records created by this entity." This provides a listing of the series created by this entity, placing the original series, in this case, the Fort George (Que.) and district report series, laterally within the HBC administration. This is simply a level of context that could not be provided with the fonds approach.

The Fort George (Que.) and district report series physical description entry indicates that the series contains 4 maps and 1 photograph. These items are later mentioned in the Scope and Content note. However, the items seem to have changed to 1

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

map, 1 photograph and 3 drawings. If one examines the item level listings for this series (Appendix H), any indication of the whereabouts of the photo and drawings remains absent. It is unclear why an institution would take such care in ensuring that records are kept in context through the undertaking of a massive re-description project, yet leave these items as a mere mention in the series description.

Within the archival profession, as noted before, some have recognized the need for development of better descriptive standards for non-textual materials. However, none of these works offer a structure that provides more context, or a more researcher-friendly approach. Graphic Materials: Rules for Describing Items and Historical Collections, compiled by archivist Elisabeth W. Betz, head of processing at the Library of Congress, is an aid for description of visual works using AACR2.<sup>41</sup> As RAD was already developed under the guidelines of AACR, a bibliographic model, Betz's work does not add any useful alternatives or new additions to the method of description outlined in chapter 4 of RAD. Similarly, Cataloging Nonbook Materials: Problems in Theory and Practice by Carolyn O. Frost is a similar companion to AACR2.<sup>42</sup> As well, Organizing Nonprint Materials 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by American archivist Jay E. Daily is also item-level oriented in the bibliographic tradition. Two pages of Daily's 300-page work are devoted to "art prints." His work is mainly concerned with description of sound recordings and audio-visual records.<sup>43</sup> The cataloging examples given indicate the artist, the title of the work, publication information and measurements. Clearly Daily was not even considering the

---

<sup>41</sup> Elisabeth Betz, Graphic Materials: Rules for Describing Original Items and Historical Collections (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1982), 1.

<sup>42</sup> Carolyn O. Frost, Cataloging Nonbook Materials: Problems in Theory and Practice (Littleton, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited Inc., 1983), 11.

<sup>43</sup> Jay E. Daily, Organizing Nonprint Materials 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (New York: Marcel Dekker Inc., 1986), 102.

notion of the collection of original works of art, or the varying contexts of creation or their subsequent custodial history. The most recent of these books was published in 1986.

Online resources are the best avenue for research for new approaches to item-level description of works of art. Numerous heritage profession and collections management websites have resource areas examining this topic. Some of the better known sites include the Canadian Heritage Information Network's "CHIN Data Dictionary – Humanities,"<sup>44</sup> the Visual Resources Association Standards Committee's "VRA Categories Version 3.0,"<sup>45</sup> and the Art Museum Consortium Incorporated's "Art Museum Consortium Data Specifications."<sup>46</sup> Again, none of the above offer any improvement to RAD's item-level descriptions. The Canadian Heritage Information Network's resources, as well as the advice offered by the Visual Resources Association, do nothing to help expand context at the item level. The Art Museum Consortium Incorporated site's "Art Consortium Data Specifications" is, if anything, too thorough. Too much descriptive license is given to the archivist/cataloger. In the hands of an inexperienced or visually illiterate archivist, this format could result in a seriously compromised record. There are six separate fields for description of the item visually. As well, there is a field for "critical responses," a field completely inappropriate for keeping a record within its original context.

Of the available on-line resources, the most in-depth and notable is the J. Paul Getty Trust's Categories for the Description of Works of Art (CDWA).<sup>47</sup> The J. Paul

---

<sup>44</sup> Canadian Heritage Information Network "CHIN Data Dictionary – Humanities"  
[http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Collections\\_Management/index.html](http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Collections_Management/index.html) accessed March 26, 2006

<sup>45</sup> Visual Resources Association Standards Committee's "VRA Categories Version 3.0"  
<http://www.vraweb.org/vracore3.htm#core> accessed March 26, 2006

<sup>46</sup> Art Museum Image Consortium, "Art Museum Consortium Data Specifications"  
<http://www.amico.org/AMICOLibrary/docs/amico.dataspec.1.2.pdf> accessed March 26, 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Murtha Baca and Patricia Harpring (eds.), J. Paul Getty Trust & College Art Association Inc., 2005.

Getty Trust funds the famous Getty Center in Los Angeles, California. The center itself is a museum, archives, art gallery, research institute and conservation institute. The amalgamation of all these interests into one institution is cutting edge. One could choose to see the center as an anomaly; however, those within the profession tends to view the center as a sign of the future, where all collecting institutions will share their knowledge, experience and technologies.

One of the largest philanthropic supporters of the arts in the world, the J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic organization serving both general audiences and specialized professionals. Educational in purpose and character, the Getty focuses on the visual arts in all of their dimensions and on their capacity to strengthen and inspire aesthetic and humanistic values. The Getty makes a difference by weaving together the presentation, enjoyment, study, and conservation of the visual arts in order to increase the public's knowledge and sensitivity, expand its awareness and creativity, sharpen its understanding and caring—all with the conviction that cultural enlightenment and community involvement in the arts can help lead to a more civil society.<sup>48</sup>

The CDWA articulates a conceptual framework for describing and accessioning information about works of art. The framework includes 381 categories and sub-categories, but also includes “core” categories, a much smaller sub-set of ten fields. This sub-set is CDWA’s minimum amount of information required to identify and properly describe a work of art (see Appendix I). Each category is outlined in great detail, giving specific instructions for what should be included in the fields, as well as the function of

---

“Categories for the Description of Works of Art: List of Categories and Definitions”  
[http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting\\_research/standards/cdwa/8\\_printing\\_options/definitions.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/cdwa/8_printing_options/definitions.pdf)  
 accessed February 22, 2006.

<sup>48</sup> J. Paul Getty Trust, “About the J. Paul Getty Trust,” <http://www.getty.edu/about/trust.html>

each field. Library and Archives Canada has a similar list of core categories outlined in their “Introduction to Entering Data onto the Minisis Icon Data Base”<sup>49</sup> (see Appendix K). Out of the 255 available fields for describing works of art, there are 22 that Library and Archives Canada regards as elemental. It must be noted that RAD is considered a guideline for archival description; therefore, no set of required fields is indicated in Chapter 4 on “Graphic Materials,” beyond those relevant to all media: administrative history, biographical history, scope and content, etc. Under RAD it is up to each individual institution to determine what is required as a minimum amount of information. With no solid visual descriptive examples to work from, the quality of the resulting descriptions will depend completely on the describing archivist’s visual literacy, and experience working with visual records.

At present, many visual collections go straight from collection-level description to the item-level description. Keeping visual records in context does not require that archivists reinvent the wheel. All the descriptive tools needed to do so are present. They are just spread out in various professional approaches, archival or otherwise. At the highest level of description, the fonds or collection, applying a method that accommodates multi-provenancial qualities should be the only acceptable professional approach when dealing with collections containing multiple creators. If aspects of the Australian series framework were applied to The Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana, not completely abandoning the fonds/collection level approach, it would allow for far more contextual descriptive information to be presented, and therefore a researcher-friendly stimulant to use the collection more imaginatively.

---

accessed November 4, 2006.

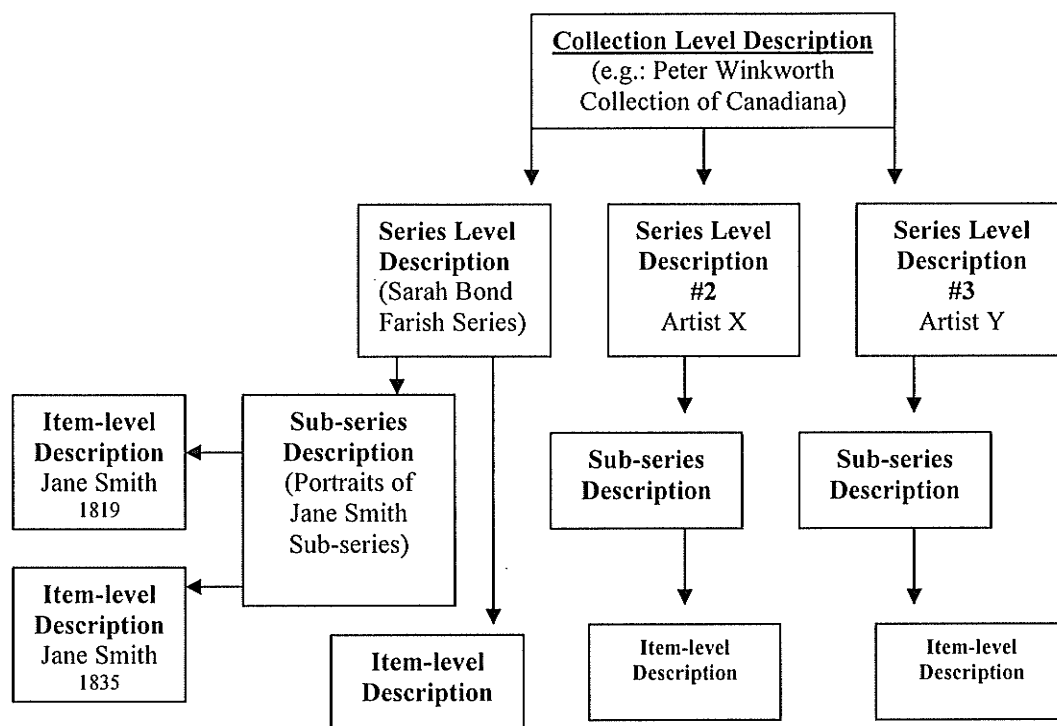
<sup>49</sup> National Archives of Canada “Introduction to entering data into the Minisis Icon database” prepared by

The collection-level authority would remain at the highest level, as that person/agency is responsible for the creation of the collection. Peter Winkworth would get his just place. But each artist should then have his or her own series with a creator authority file attached, including all known basic biographical information of the artist. Should any sub-series present themselves within the series of a particular artist, for different media (visual or textual) for example, they would be identified at this level. A sub-series will be easily recognizable, as it should be something that makes itself known from the character of the records themselves, not something that the archivist looks for. A sub-series will be a number of works within an artist's series that have something in common, something unique that separates them from the rest of the works. This unique attribute could be a medium unusual for the artist, a particular geographic location, or a series of portraits of one figure, essentially, a very pronounced theme. Once the collection description and series descriptions have been established, given richer context, then one can move on to the item level.

Should the archivist be in the situation of having to describe a few thousand works of art with no more than a few works by the same artist, then one might consider devising series based on medium. Should there be only one item by an artist in a collection, a series of discreet items could be formed alongside various series by individual artists. These single item-level descriptions would contain an artist's biographical sketch and related contextual information. Whatever the circumstance, the end result should be a collection or fonds that includes its visual materials in the actual description, beyond the physical extent entry. The arrangement, and the logic behind the

arrangement of the visual materials, should be made clear to the researcher in the fonds/collection level, as in the following illustration:

### Modified Collection Description - Including Individual Artists' Series



The current collection level description of the Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana is adequate, except for its exclusion of the artists and their role as creators. The series level descriptions, as indicated in the above schematic, would include information very similar to the information included at the collection level description. The series extent would be indicated, that is, the number of works in the series. These works would be further divided by media (watercolour, oil etc.). A biographical history of each artist would be included at this level. A scope and content note would expand on the extent note, giving further information on the visual records included in the series. If there are any restrictions on the use or reproduction of the records in the series as a whole, they should be indicated here, as well as at the item level. If the terms of use and

reproduction vary from work to work in the series, a note should be made to consult the item level description for terms of use. Similarly, if the series shares the same custodial history, it should be noted at the series as well as the item level. If the items in the series do not share the same custodial history, a note to consult their custodial history at the item level should be included. The inclusion of such information at the item level is also very beneficial to the researcher in the database environment. For example, if one were to do a database search of works by Sarah Bond Farish at the item level, the resulting search would include not only the works included in the Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana, but works in other fonds/collections within the institution's holdings.

The Australian series system allows for multiple relationships and creators to be included in one collection or virtual fonds. For example, if Sarah Bond Farish had donated her records directly to Library and Archives Canada, this organic group of records would be referred to as the Sarah Bond Farish fonds. This fonds would be linked to the Sarah Bonds Farish series in the Peter Winkworth collection, perhaps to items or series in other collections as well. This fluidity in the Australian series system would allow for all the works of Sarah Bond Farish to be viewed within their separate contexts of creation, as well as in relation to each other.

The above structure is not radical, it allows for multiple creators at the series level and for linkages of any related fonds, series and items. Why this has not been adopted as practice with works of art is unclear. Perhaps those archivists working with works of art in the early stages of the Public Archives of Canada's acquisition of visual holdings were educated in the museum and art gallery professions, environments that tend to focus more on item-level cataloguing than collection, fonds or series-level description. This would

also account for the reliance on technical item-level descriptions. These professionals simply would not be used to working with the needs of researchers in mind.

Not all visual materials will be found in large collections like the Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana, or the W.H. Coverdale Collection of Canadiana. Often a small number or even a substantial number of works of art can be found in an individual's personal records, or in the fonds of a large company. However, these records tend to be marginalized when put side-by-side in a fonds with their textual counterparts. This was examined in the Franklin Carmichael fonds description (appendix B) in the previous chapter. One can only suspect that perhaps there is an underlying reluctance to describe these visual materials. As a result, the works of art get swept under the archival description carpet. They are indicated to be within the fonds, but not actually described. To the researcher, this does not suggest much for their evidentiary value. Many archivists do not realize that it is completely acceptable to have a collection within a fonds. The visual works within this fonds are not exclusively works by Franklin Carmichael, so once again the archivist is faced with the situation of multiple creatorship. In situations where there are simply a few pieces of art in a fonds, they too can be described as a collection, series, or sous-fonds. It is not necessary to give each artist his or her own series under these circumstances; however, each description must contain a biographical note for the artist, attached to each item description, recognizing the artist's role as a co-creator within the fonds.

Once a standard of any sort has been established in an archival institution, it is very hard to change. Resistance to change has been well illustrated with the reluctance of many archivists to acknowledge postmodern theory and its insights for the archival

profession. However, the advantages of describing all works in as full a context as possible at the fonds/collection level is time wasted, if the item-level entry is indecipherable to the researcher, or not linked to the fuller context of a fonds/collection level description.

When the LAC and CDWA minimum requirements for item-level description are compared, the intentions of, as well as the similarities and differences between, each of the approaches are highlighted. In common are the following minimum requirements: unique identifier/call number, name of artist, title, date of execution/creation, class, medium, measurements, transcription, and description of the work. These should be regarded as the bare minimum of information needed just to keep a collecting institution organized and functioning.

In addition to these minimum requirements, the LAC requires the name of database, archivist, location within repository (e.g., room number), credit (proper citation), copyright and reproduction restrictions, and negative number, if a negative of the image is available. These minimum required fields seem to be tailored to easy indexing and retrieval by subject. In addition to the common minimum requirements identified above, the CDWA approach includes the level of description (e.g., item, series), materials and techniques, repository location (geographic location and repository name), person or corporate body authority, and creation (extension of person or corporate body authority). This approach provides much more contextual information than the LAC requirements, and is obviously structured for research purposes. This is surprising, as the LAC is an archive, with a clear mandate to keep records in context for research, while the Getty Center is known for cross-disciplinary work in art history, conservation,

museology, and collections management. One would assume that contextual information would be the priority for LAC, and be less so for the Getty Center since it serves so many professions structured towards collections management at the item level.

In light of issues concerning chain of custody, postmodernism, and the notion of “authoring,” as well as the vast research potential held in these visual records, one could argue for the addition to the minimum required fields of custodial history, conservation history, and exhibition and loan history, for item-level description of visual records. If the commonalties and differences of these two item-level approaches were combined, it would result in a researcher-friendly item-level description that is also of use to the archivist for basic retrieval and indexing. If the custodial history, conservation history and exhibition and loan histories were included at the item level, it would, in addition, open up the records to new and interesting avenues of research and examination. If the approaches of the LAC and CDWA were combined, including all of each program’s requirements for a basic item-level entry, the result would appear as follows below. If a field entry appears in italics, the information is not available for this work. It has been included in the hypothetical description for purposes of illustrating the breadth of this suggested approach. Custodial history, conservation history and exhibition and loan history have been included for the reasons discussed above.

**Item-level Description Incorporating LAC/CDWA Minimum Requirements**

**Originating fonds/collection:** Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana

**Description level:** item

**Artist:** Farish, Sarah Bond

**Title(s):** Yarmouth Taken from Milton (Nova Scotia)

**Date of execution:** 1829

**Artist Biographical Sketch:**

Sarah Bond Farish (1807-1887) was born to the prominent Loyalist Bond and Farish families. Like many young, wealthy women of her day, she took an interest in watercolours, studying briefly under J.B. Comingo. A small number of her watercolours have survived, and can be found in the holdings of the Yarmouth County Museum, in Yarmouth Nova Scotia.<sup>50</sup> Sarah Bond Farish married Rev. John T.T. Moody, longtime Yarmouth Rector. The couple had two sons.<sup>51</sup> There is no known evidence of Farish continuing artistic production later in life.

**General medium:** Watercolour

**Specific medium:** Watercolour over graphite

**Support:** wove paper

**Technique:** *No distinct technique or tools known to have been employed in the production of this work. Were distinct materials or methods used, they would be outlined in this field.*

**Height of support:** 36.2 cm

**Width of support:** 25.5 cm

**Height of image:** support

**Width of image:** support

**Inscription:** Inscribed on back in ink, as follows:

Sarah Bond Frarish [sic]

Painted in 1829

Yarmouth town view taken

From

Milton, Nova Scotia

**General description:** Landscape

**Image description:** Distant view of Yarmouth, as seen from Milton across body of water. Cows in pasture in foreground, various boats in water between Milton and Yarmouth.

**Custodial history:** *details of complete custodial history of item should be outlined, beyond description given at collection level: individual owners, purchases, auctions etc.*

**Conservation history:** stained\*, foxed\*, rubbed\*, recent repair (11/2004) to upper-left

<sup>50</sup> Library and Archives Canada, "Introduction – Artist's Biographies"

<sup>51</sup> Dr. G.W.T. Farish, "A Medical Biography of the Bond-Farish Family," The Canadian Medical Association Journal XIII (November 1930): 698.

section of image.

**Exhibition/loan history:** *details of any previous loan or exhibition, including institution and dates of loan or exhibition.*

**Publication history:** Lawson, J.M. Yarmouth Past and Present: A Book of Reminiscences (Yarmouth, 1902). Works appear on p. 1, 9, 37. Illustrated works are from the collection of the Yarmouth County Museum.

**Comments:** This work is thought to be a copy of a similar work by J.B. Comingo held in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. Farish studied under Comingo and is presumed to have copied the Comingo watercolour after he left Nova Scotia in 1829.

**Copyright/restrictions:** expired

**Access restrictions:** No restrictions on access or use for publication or reproduction

**Negative number:** C-151102

**Database:** Minisis Icon

**Archivist:** BK

**Accession number:** R9266-225

**Inventory number:** W4

**Location within repository:** WMB rm#10

**Geographic Location and Repository Name:** Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

**Credit:** Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. R9266-225 Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana

**Source:** ICON 189306

\* Conservation terms would be explained through a link to a glossary.

What results when the item-level requirements of LAC and CDWA are combined is an entry that allows the records to remain in context at the fonds/collection level, as well as the item level. The information will actually guide researchers, instead of intimidating them, while remaining useful to the archivist. Archival descriptions no longer have to be confined to the physical parameters of index cards, so why not take advantage of the descriptive tools now available and bring visual records in from the margins of archival holdings? When presented alongside textual records, arranged and described with the same attention to contextual origins, these art works are simply more likely to be recognized and used as bona fide primary sources for research.

In summation, current approaches to the archival description of works of art have been examined. Using examples from Library and Archives Canada, the lack of

contextual information provided in fonds/collection-level descriptions, as well as at the item level have been discussed. Current descriptive practices are not useful to the layperson interested in studying visual records. Through the examination of alternative archival methods, as well as item-level methods developed outside of the archival profession, potential solutions for remedying the current approaches to the description of visual records have been suggested. Using a multi-provenancial approach, while not completely abandoning RAD, is possible, allowing for the context of collection creation as well as the context of the record creation to take their rightful places in the collection/fonds-level description.

Item-level descriptions need not be intimidating. Methods developed outside of the archival profession, the Getty Center's Categories for the Description of Works of Art for example, as well as current expanded item-level requirements from Library and Archives Canada, have been compared. Employing the best of both approaches, with some modern research considerations and insights from the Australian series approach, allows for an item-level description that maintains its context of collection, as well as its context of creation and subsequent use. What results is a guide useful to both the archivist and the researcher, where a fuller appreciation of provenance has been combined with greater access to subject content.

## Conclusion

Archival theory, as archivists have come to know it, has been in development since the mid-nineteenth century. With the articulation of the concept of *respect des fonds* in 1841, the codification of professional standards for archivists began. The work of the Dutch archivists, Muller, Feith and Fruin, widely disseminated many concepts that remain central to archival theory to this day. Later, the practices of Sir Hilary Jenkinson and T.R. Schellenberg led to a further examination of the role of the archivist, and continued development of modern solutions for modern archival problems. Jenkinson and Schellenberg's observations facilitated the development of later manuals for archival description, addressing in yet more detail modern archival realities. In Canada, the Rules for Archival Description (RAD) were published in 1990, with revisions in 2003, the culmination of the efforts of a decade of work by archival associations, bureaus, working groups, and peer-reviewed chapter publications. Yet somehow, in over 150 years of development, all this archival theory had managed to overlook developing adequate standards for the description of visual materials.

As the development of RAD was based on a bibliographic model, its standards for description naturally favour textual records, as had library-cataloguing methodologies. This textual favouritism has led to sub-standard descriptive practices for visual materials in archival fonds and collections. Those archivists working with visual records within the profession, who were critical of this approach, have looked inward, focussing on current archival practice and current descriptive standards for reasons to explain the medium's lack of recognition. This marginalization of visual materials has resulted in poor representation of works of art in repositories, and therefore, these records have been overlooked as primary sources for research. Greater attention needs to be given to the functional and contextual origins of visual works, for these records to be brought into the mainstream, and regarded as bona fide primary sources for scholarly research. Many ask how visual records can be used as primary sources for research. In fact, visual records have a unique evidentiary value all of their own, an evidentiary value that can be well illustrated by archivists if they are visually literate and understand the nature of the records they are working with.

Postmodernism has challenged the archival profession to reassess the profession's approach to the record. Through these challenges, many discoveries concerning the nature of records and role of the archivist have been made, including many constructive insights into description. If postmodern insights were effectively applied to arrangement and description, descriptive standards based on the fonds would expand dramatically. What would result is a descriptive framework with broader approaches to the notion of provenance, allowing for richer, multi-provenancial, multi-relational, multi-contextual linkages within descriptions. This mode of description would move away from the

current media restrictive and mono-hierarchical structural parameters of RAD, to a system that would accommodate the evidentiary value of records in all media, while securing their complex contextual origins.

Crucial to understanding postmodernism, and its affect on the archival profession, is recognizing the “authoring” role archivists play in the creation of the historical record. Archivists play a vital part in the presentation of history and the formation of societal memory. Their work decides what is included and excluded from the historical record, and what is consciously or subconsciously highlighted in archival description. Postmodernism has moved the focus of the archival profession away from the record, to include not only the record, but, the creative act, authoring intent, process and functionality behind the record. These relationships establish and secure the meaning and evidentiary nature of records, as well as secure these factors over time, and in the midst of change. The archivist will always play an “authoring” role in the shaping of collective memory, and as a profession, archivists need to recognize their authoring role, rather than resist it. By recognizing this role, archivists will be better able to balance which records are included or excluded from collective memory, and the range and depth of how they are re-represented, or represented, to researchers through archival description.

One of the attributes of works of art as archival records is that they often render a fonds or collection multi-provenancial, that is, the body of records has multiple creators instead of the usual single creator or single agency of origin. To many Canadian archivists, unfamiliar with the fluidity of the Australian descriptive system, this is an intimidating factor concerning description and context, often causing works of art to be acknowledged in fonds/collection-level descriptions, but not actually described. In large

collections, the notion of the artist as creator has usually been lost, through brief item-level descriptions with relatively no contextual information. These item-level descriptions are of great use to the archivist for controlling the records internally, but an intimidating hurdle to the researcher.

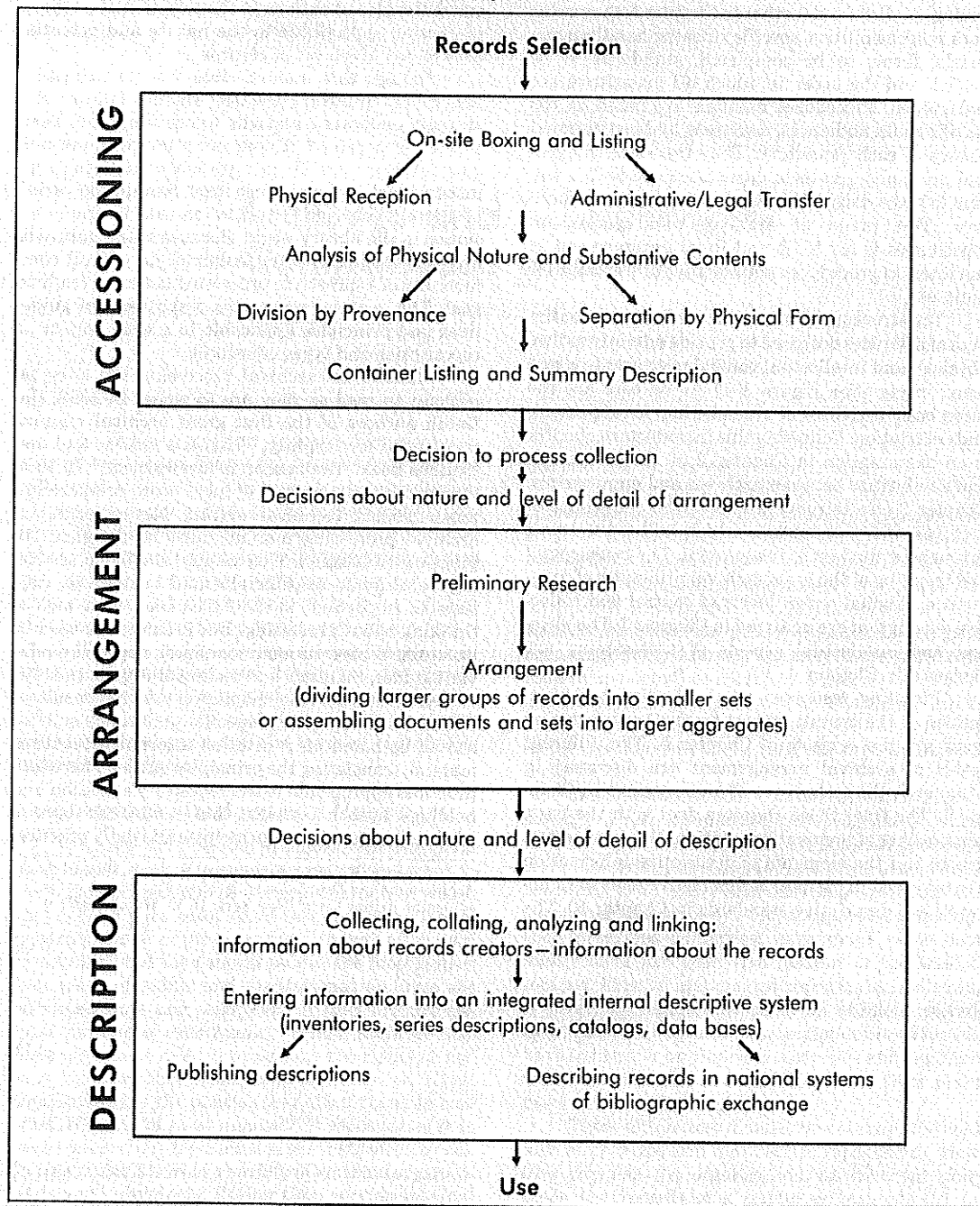
Within the archival profession, tools can be found to remedy this situation without setting entire archival descriptive programs on their heads. The Australian series system allows for multi-provenancial description, and is a system that is easily adaptable to RAD, now that descriptive tools are all automated. The Australian series system accommodates numerous creating entities, allowing a wide variety of records to be described in context under one fonds or collection, and, indeed, between fonds and collections. As demonstrated, the Hudson's Bay Company fonds is an excellent Canadian example of such a blend of approaches.

Outside of the archival profession, many related disciplines have devoted much time and effort to developing standards for the description of works of art at the item level. Of particular interest is the Getty Center and College Art Association's Categories for the Description of Works of Art (CDWA). When the minimum item-level requirements of CDWA are combined with the new minimum item-level requirements of Library and Archives Canada, the resulting entry is an item-level description much more useful to both the archivist and the researcher. This method of item-level description allows the records to remain in context at the fonds/collection level as well as the item level. The information will actually guide researchers, instead of intimidating them, while remaining useful to the archivist for basic organization and retrieval purposes.

Archival description no longer has to be confined to the physical parameters of small index cards, so why not take advantage of the more sophisticated descriptive tools now available and bring visual records in from the margins of archives? When presented alongside textual records, arranged and described with the same attention to contextual origins, these works are likely to be more recognized and used as bona fide primary sources for research, as evidence of our rich past rather than mere illustration. Art in archives would then take its rightful place in the descriptive universe of the archival profession and in recording, witnessing and revealing the past.

## Appendix A

Figure 1-2 Schematic of Arrangement and Description



Source: Frederick M. Miller, *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1990) 9.

## **Appendix B**

### **Franklin Carmichael fonds**

[textual record, graphic material, object]

Fonds Consists of: [708 lower level description\(s\)](#)



[Show Arrangement Structure](#)

1908-1987.

485 photographs: b&w and col.

340 drawings: pencil, black pen and ink, watercolour.

64 prints: wood engravings, lithographs, serigraph, linocuts.

16 watercolours: gouache and pencil.

89 cm of textual records.

#### **BIOGRAPHY/ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:**

Frank Carmichael, artist, was born in Orillia, Ontario, the son of a carriage-maker. He was a founding member of the Group of Seven. In 1911, he moved to Toronto to apprentice with the Grip Engraving firm but left with artists Arthur Lismer, Frederick Varley, Tom Thomson, and Frank Johnston the following year to join the commercial art firm Rous and Mann. In 1913 he went to Europe to study at l'Académie royale des Beaux-Arts in Antwerp. After returning to Toronto and sharing quarters in the Studio Building with Tom Thomson, he married Ada Went in 1915 and worked as a carriage stripper in Bolton. In 1916 he rejoined Rous and Mann, where artist A.J. Casson became his assistant in 1919, and moved to Sampson-Matthews in the late 1920's, continuing to work as a commercial artist until his appointment to the Ontario College of Art in 1932. He remained at the Ontario College of Art, as head of the graphic and commercial art department, until his death.

Carmichael became known for his oil and watercolour landscapes and woodcuts. He exhibited with the Group of Seven throughout the 1920's. He was also a founding member of the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour (1925) and the Canadian Group of Painters (1933). He was a member of the Ontario Society of Artists and its president, 1937-1940, as well as a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. He was a member of the Arts and Letters Club, Toronto, and an amateur musician who played with the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

#### **SCOPE AND CONTENT:**

Fonds consist of photographic material depicting artists F.H. Varley, A.Y. Jackson, Lawren Harris, Barker Fairley, F. Johnston, Arthur Lismer, and J.E.H. MacDonald taken by Arthur Gross, at the Arts and Letters Club, Toronto, Ontario. Other photographs depict road construction work, Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario; Franklin Carmichael, Frederick Varley, and their wives having a picnic, Ontario; Fred Haines cooking over an open campfire, La Cloche, Ontario; views of the interior of the Carmichael home, 21 Cameron Avenue, Toronto, Ontario; portraits of Gustav Hahn and Rowley Murphy, Toronto, Ontario; activities of the artist Franklin Carmichael, his family, and friends such as Grace Campbell, A.J. Casson, Joe Gauthier, Gustave Hahn, J.S. Hallam, Fred Haines, Tom Thomson, Fred Varley, Florence Wyle, as well as activities at the Carmichael cottage at Cranberry Lake, Ontario, and sketching trips in Ontario, ca. 1915-1978; views of National Parks and other tourist-oriented activity in Alaska, British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia, ca. 1927. Photographs are by Franklin Carmichael, William Notman & Son, Canadian Railways and unidentified photographers.

Other graphic material consists of 35 drawings of allegorical studies, studies for a poem entitled *Am I Alone?*, as well as studies for greetings cards; drawings from the Franklin Carmichael Estate; layout sketches for the Toronto General Trusts; cover design by Jesse Edgar Middleton for "Toronto's 100 Years". Also included are works by Franklin Carmichael such as 4 Exhibition Catalogue designs, 6 Christmas card designs, 3 book designs, 11 lettering designs, 10 commercial art designs, printed designs done for the 68th Annual Exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists Catalogue, 1940, 23 woodblocks, 2 engraved metal plates, 37 linocut blocks, 7 linocut blocks mounted on wood. Works by Fred Haines include 92 folios and 111 drawings of a trip to Europe taken by Haines and Carmichael in 1913. Other graphic material includes designs (proofs) for Willards Forkdip Chocolates; visual material, mostly of a commercial design nature, created by Franklin Carmichael during his commercial career, ca. 1915-1945; a booklet and two greeting cards from the Ford Motor Company of Canada; a card from McConnell & Ferguson, and the title page from the Ontario Society of Artists catalogue. As well, there is a large and varied collection of pictorial items, 1910-1943, done and/or owned by Franklin Carmichael including 3 sketchbooks, 21 commercial designs for a variety of companies, 21 works relating to book illustration and design, 30 original designs for greeting cards including hand-painted and printed cards, 13 greeting cards by other artists including Walter Phillips and Fred Varley, 11 engraved wood blocks cut by Carmichael, and 14 engraved wood blocks collected by Carmichael. Textual material relates to Franklin Carmichael's commercial art and design; teaching; exhibitions; and unpublished manuscripts. Also included is additional memorabilia and miscellaneous material, as well as subject files, correspondence and clippings.

#### FONDS CONSISTS OF:

- MG30-D293 — Commercial art and design (additional material) [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Teaching notes (additional material) [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Exhibitions (additional material) [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Unpublished manuscript: book on lettering [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Memorabilia and miscellaneous material (additional material) [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Commercial art and design [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Teaching notes [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Exhibitions [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Ontario Society of Artists [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Unpublished manuscript: history of signs [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Memorabilia and miscellaneous material [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Commercial art and design (additional material) [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Teaching notes (additional material) [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Exhibitions (additional material) [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Unpublished manuscript: history of signs (additional material) [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Memorabilia and miscellaneous material (additional material) [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Subject files [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Correspondence [textual record] ( Series)
- MG30-D293 — Clippings [textual record] ( Series)

#### REFERENCE NUMBERS:

NEW: R903-0-4-E

FORMER: MG30-D293

**CONSULTATION/REPRODUCTION:**

Textual records 18: Restricted by creator/donor : Textual records: Access restrictions. [r000000433.pdf](#)

Graphic (photo) 90: Open

Graphic (photo) 99: To be determined

Graphic (art) 90: Open

Graphic (art) 18: Restricted by creator/donor

Graphic (art) 10: Closed by creator/donor : Acc. no. 1986-076: This material must be consulted under close supervision for conservation reasons.

**USE/REPRODUCTION:**

Photographs (accession nos. 1982-218, 1988-190): no restrictions on use or reproduction. Copyright: expired.

Graphic material (accession no 1984-042): reproduction of this material requires the permission of Mary Mastin. Copyright expired. Credit: National Archives of Canada.

Graphic material (accession nos. 1988-026, 1988-007): access to this material is for research purposes only and use for exhibition or publication requires the permission of Mary Mastin. Copyright expired. Credit: National Archives of Canada.

Photographs (accession no. 1986-183): restrictions on use and reproduction are to be determined. Items less than 50 years old are subject to copyright. Various copyrights on photographs not taken by Franklin Carmichael; copyright holder on photographs taken by Franklin Carmichael is Mary F. Mastin.

Drawings (accession no. 1989-382): donor is required to be contacted for access; material is restricted according to the terms of the donation agreement. Copyright has expired. Credit: National Archives of Canada.

Graphic material (accession 1989-177): there is no access to this material without the written permission of the donor. Copyright has expired. Credit: National Archives of Canada.

Graphic material (accession no.1986-076): permission of the donor is required to gain access to this material. Copyright expired. Credit: National Archives of Canada.

35 drawings of allegorical studies, studies for a poem and for greeting cards: no restrictions on use or reproduction. Copyright has expired.

**FINDING AID:** Paper - Textual records: The finding aid is a descriptive file list of volumes 1-3 and 5. No. MSS1381

Electronic - Textual records: Finding aid. No. MSS1381 [p000000212.pdf](#)

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Received in 1982, 1986 and 1988 from Franklin Carmichael's daughter, Mary Mastin of Willowdale, Ontario.

**CREATORS:** Carmichael, Franklin, 1890-1945

**SUBJECT HEADINGS:**

Artists - Canada, 1909-1987  
Ontario College of Art, 1930-1942  
Art - Canada, 1909-1987  
Ontario Society of Artists, 1909-1987  
Art, Canadian, 1909-1987  
Group of Seven, 1909-1987  
Art schools - Canada, 1909-1987  
Canadian Group of Painters, 1909-1987  
Art, Canadian - Exhibitions, 1909-1987  
Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, 1909-1987  
Commercial art - Canada, 1909-1987  
Artists' Co-operative Association, 1909-1987

**SOURCE:**

MIKAN 97650  
Updated: 2006-03 from MIKAN3

## **Appendix C**

### **Commercial art and design**

(additional material) [textual record]

**Series Part of:** Franklin Carmichael fonds

**Date(s):** 1929-1945

**Extent:** 5 cm of textual records.

#### **Scope and content**

Series consists of correspondence and other material relating to work commissioned by Canadian National Telegraphs and Toronto General Trusts, and other clients, photographs and photostats of samples of Carmichael's commercial designs and illustrations and reference material.

#### **Conditions of Access**

Textual records

(Volume) 4

18: Restricted by creator/donor

#### **Reference Numbers**

Former archival reference no.: MG30-D293

Volume: 4

#### **Additional Information**

Language of material: English

**Source:** Private

**MIKAN No.** 107326

## **Appendix D**

### **Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana at the National Archives of Canada \***

[graphic material, cartographic material]

1565 – 1971

- 8 paintings oil.
- 453 watercolours watercolour, pen and ink, pencil.
- 240 drawings pen and ink, pencil, pastel.
- 7 albums of watercolours 100 watercolours, 84 drawings, 8 prints, 6 photos, 1 map.
- ca. 3260 prints etchings, engraving, aquatints, mezzotints, lithographs, serigraphs.
- 27 volumes of prints (198 prints) etchings, engravings, lithographs.
- ca. 100 maps and plans etchings, engravings, lithographs.

#### **Biography / Administrative History**

Peter Winkworth was born on April 25, 1929. He attended Bishop's College School in Canada, Wadham College, Oxford, and worked as a stockbroker for a Canadian firm in London, England. His passion for Canadiana began with his purchase of a set of Canadian prints from his uncle, John Bernard. He subscribed to English and French art catalogues and, in the 1950s and 1960s, attended salesrooms and art auctions in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and New York. His knowledge of Canadiana is legendary. For many years, Mr. Winkworth maintained a close relationship with the McCord Museum in Montreal where he was made honorary curator of prints. In the 1970s he began working as an unpaid consultant in repatriating works of art relating to Canada for major national institutions, in particular, the National Archives of Canada. Peter Winkworth was awarded the Order of Canada (C.M.) in 1984.

#### **Scope and content**

The Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana is sweeping and invaluable in its scope and content for the visual history of Canada. Much of the material, even the prints, is unique and not held in any other public institution in the world. Included are a wide range of subjects and individuals: portraits and views of the life of First Nations peoples, portraits of colonial officials, administrators, naval and military officers, explorers, politicians, and other celebrated Canadians; flora and fauna, including rare wildflowers, animals, and birds depicted by such artists as John James Audubon, Maria Miller, and John Edwards; scenes of settlement, industry, trade, commerce, transport, and agriculture, by artists including Cornelius Krieghoff, James Pattison Cockburn, Frances Anne Hopkins, John H. Caddy, Edward Roper, Edward Richardson, Alicia Killaly, James Duncan, Henri Julien, Emile Petitot, and many others; views of towns and cities across Canada; records of events and disasters, including battles, ship launchings, shipwrecks, fires, floods, and tempests; and images of everyday life. Views of the Seven Years' War and the War of 1812 are well-represented. The history of Canadian printmaking can also be discerned through an examination of the print collection, which represents many

media, and a wide variety of unique items, including a copper plate etched in Canada in 1781; a set of early lithographs showing the construction of the Chaudiere Falls bridges across the Ottawa in 1827; and a portrait print of Lord Elgin and his wife done in Toronto in 1847, among others. Finally there are significant and unique views of the 1885 Rebellion in western Canada, and of the Yukon Gold Rush.

### **Reference Numbers**

NEW: R9266-0-1-E

### **Consultation/Reproduction**

Graphic (art)	Access Conditions 90: Open
---------------	-------------------------------

### **Use/Reproduction**

All items will be copied. Copyright expired for all but a very few items. Please credit Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana and the National Archives of Canada.

### **Custodial history**

Acquired by the vendor from a wide variety of sources, including individuals, dealers, and auction houses in Canada, the USA, Great Britain, France, and Italy.

### **Finding aid**

Wordperfect list available. (Electronic)

### **Additional Information**

The collection is being arranged alphabetically by name of artist for all original paintings, watercolours, and drawings; and by series, theme, geographical location, or chronologically for prints. Maps are being catalogued separately. A large number of items have been scanned digitally and will be available through a website.

Added languages of material: French

Added languages of material: English

The Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana is a unique art collection which documents four centuries of Canadian history and focuses on exploration, settlement, trade, industry and urban growth, and developments in society, art and literature. The collection includes such well-known artists as Edward Roper, Peter Rindisbacher, and Frances Anne Hopkins. This is the single largest acquisition of works of art which Canada has ever seen. Historical themes highlighted in the collection include The Seven Years' War, General Wolfe and his officers, aboriginal life in North America, Arctic exploration, the War of 1812, the Rebellions of 1837-1838, Montreal, Quebec, and Niagara Falls, and the history of Canadian printmaking.

**Additional name(s)**

Roper, Edward, 1833-1909

Julien, Henri, 1852-1908

Peachey, James, fl. 1773-1797

Caddy, John Herbert, 1801-1883

Cockburn, James Pattison, 1779-1847

Duncan, James, 1806-1881

Fisher, George Bulteel, 1764-1834

Rindisbacher, Peter, 1806-1834

Heriot, George, 1759-1839

Hopkins, Frances Anne, 1838-1919

Killaly, Alicia, 1836-1916

Krieghoff, Cornelius, 1815-1872

Hébert, Louis Philippe, 1850-1917

Winkworth, Peter, 1929-

**MIKAN No.**

191488

\* Please note that the Peter Winkworth Collection was processed under the institutional name of "National Archives of Canada," and that the institutional name was incorporated into the title of the description. The "National Archives of Canada" is now legally titled Library and Archives Canada, however, the title of the collection remains unchanged.

**Appendix E****Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana  
ArchiviaNet Item level description:****Yarmouth Taken from Milton (Nova Scotia)**

[graphic]

1829 — Watercolour over graphite on wove paper

**SCOPE AND CONTENT:** *Inscription:* verso, in ink: Sarah Bond Farish[sic]/ painted in 1829/  
Yarmouth town view taken/from/Milton/Nova Scotia

**REFERENCE NUMBERS:** ACCESSION: R9266-225  
REPRODUCTION: C-151102

**CONSULTATION/REPRODUCTION:**

Graphics: art    Open. No restriction on access or on use for publication or reproduction.

**USE/REPRODUCTION: Copyright:** expired

**Credit:** Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. R9266-225 Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** watercolour / aquarelle

*Support:* 25.5 x 36.2 cm (sheet )

*Inventory number:* W4

**CREATORS:** Farish, Sarah Bond (1807-07-09-1887-05-20)

**SUBJECT HEADINGS:**

landscape / paysage

**SOURCE:** ICON 189306

**Source:**

[http://data4.collectionscanada.ca/netacgi/nphbrs?s1=Sarah+Bond+Farish&l=20&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THERESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=ICONPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=ICON&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/02011602\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://data4.collectionscanada.ca/netacgi/nphbrs?s1=Sarah+Bond+Farish&l=20&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THERESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=ICONPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=ICON&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/02011602_e.html&r=1&f=G)  
accessed March 20, 2006

Appendix F**Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana  
Finding Aid Item-level description:**

- W4 FARISH, Sarah Bond (1807-1887)  
Yarmouth taken from Milton, N.S.  
 w.c. over graphite: 25.5 x 36.2 cm; 10 x 14 1/4 in  
 Inscr. verso in ink: Sarah Bond Frarish[sic] / painted in 1829/ Yarmouth town  
 view taken/ from/ Milton/ Nova Scotia -  
 Condition: stained, foxed, rubbed; repair u.l.  
 Comments: This subject, with some variation, is the same as a w.c. by J.B. Comingo in colln. PANS. Comingo taught Farish; Presumably Farish copied the Comingo w.c., as he had left N.S. by 1829.  
 Refs: Lawson, J.M. Yarmouth past and present., Yarmouth 1902, p. 1, 9, 37 for  
 ill. of 3 of Yarmouth by same, in colln. of Yarmouth County Museum. Sparling  
 1980, p. 61 [ill], p. 70 [cat.]; and p.62, #5-18 which is virtually same view as  
 above, by J.B.Comingo, w.c. of ca. 1819.  
**Image has been scanned.**

## Appendix G

### Archives of Manitoba Search

Keystone Archives Descriptive Database

[Next Record](#) | [Previous Record](#) | [Return to Search Results](#)  
[New Search](#) | [Choose Another Database](#)

#### Fort George (Que.) and districts reports

- [About these records](#)
- [Entity or entities that created this record](#)
- [View an online list of these records](#)
- [How to proceed](#)

<b>Title</b>	Fort George (Que.) and districts reports
<b>Dates of Creation</b>	1817-1840, 1876-1901
<b>Physical Description</b>	3.5 cm of textual records including 4 maps, 1 photograph
<b>Scope and Content</b>	Series contains annual reports detailing the social and economic conditions of Fort George and the other posts in its districts. Reports dated 1817 to 1821 describe the trade and oil business of the Whale River District, since Fort George was district headquarters at the time. The reports from this period were submitted by the postmaster to Thomas Vincent, governor of the Southern Department, in Moose Factory. Reports dated 1837-1839 deal with the business of the Rupert's River District. The reports dated up to 1840 usually contain comments on the trade, the district's servants, aboriginal hunters, gardening conditions and other factors affecting the business at Fort George. Some are written in the form of a monthly narrative, while others contain accounts records. The reports from 1876 on were submitted to the Commissioner's Office in Winnipeg. Some reports from the 1880s cover the business of the Eastmain District. Those dated 1891 and 1901 were written by an inspecting officer. These are typewritten and use standardized forms, reporting on the buildings, stock, furs, accounts, expenses, personal (personnel) and general information, in that order. There is

also one memorandum from the Commissioner's Office addressed to the officer in charge of the Eastmain District. The series also contains one black and white photograph of the dwelling house at Fort George, as well as 1 map of the Eastmain coast from the Eastmain River to Richmond Gulf, dated 1818; two sketch plans of the layout at Fort George; dated 1891 and 1895; and a sketch plan of Eastmain, dated 1901.

**Restrictions on Access** There are no restrictions on access to these records.

**Terms For Use and Reproduction** Researchers are responsible for observing the terms of the Canadian Copyright Act. Permission of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives is required for any form of publication or exhibition.

**Custodial History** The Archives Department of the Hudson's Bay Company was created in London in the 1920s. The Archives Department had custody of the records until they were transferred on deposit to the Archives of Manitoba in 1974, according to the 1973 Agreement between the HBC and the Province of Manitoba. In 1994, the HBC donated the records to the Province to be maintained permanently by the Archives of Manitoba.

**Former Codes** B.77/e

[\[Top\]](#)

### Entity or entities that created these records

These records were created by the following Hudson's Bay Company entity or entities. Click on the name of the entity for information about this entity and other records it created.

1817-  
1901 : [Fort George](#)

1817-  
1821 : [Whale River District](#)

1837-  
1839 : [Rupert's River District](#)

1876-  
1890 : [Eastmain District](#)

[\[Top\]](#)

**How to proceed**

These records may be consulted on microfilm or in the Archives Research Room.

For photographs, consult finding aids in the Archives Research Room or contact HBCA.

Consult listings database to find location codes and microfilm numbers.

This material is available for microfilm loan.

[View an online list of these records](#)

[Next Record](#) | [Previous Record](#) | [Return to Search Results](#)  
[New Search](#) | [Choose Another Database](#)

**Appendix H**

Archives of Manitoba

**Search**

Keystone Archives Descriptive Database

Series Title: Fort George (Que.) and districts reports

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Microfilm #</b>	<b>Additional Info</b>
1817-1818	Whale River District report	B.77/e/1b	1M778	
1818	Whale River District report	B.77/e/2a	1M778	
1817	Whale River District report	B.77/e/1a	1M778	
1818	Map of Eastmain coast from the Eastmain River to Richmond Gulf, and sketch of the Lead Mine (on dorse); supplement to Whale River District report, 1818	B.77/e/2b	1M778	
1823	Whale River District report	B.77/e/3	1M778	
1823	Fort George (Que.) report	B.77/e/4	1M778	
1822-1823	Fort George (Que.) report	B.77/e/5	1M778	
1823-1824	Fort George (Que.) report	B.77/e/6	1M778	
1824	Fort George (Que.) report	B.77/e/7	1M778	
1837-1838	Rupert's River District report	B.77/e/8	1M778	
1838-1839	"Report & Comparative Statement of Eastmain Oldfactory and Fort George, Big River Indians, Hunts for Outfits 1833-1838"	B.77/e/9	1M778	
1839-1840	Fort George (Que.) report	B.77/e/10	1M778	
1876	Copy of Eastmain District report	B.77/e/11	1M1255	
1885	Eastmain District report	B.77/e/12	1M1255	
1889	Eastmain District report; includes remarks from Commissioner's Office	B.77/e/13	1M1255	
1890	"Memorandum for the Officer in Charge of the District on the Accounts and Report for Outfit	B.77/e/14	1M1255	

	1889 of Eastmain District"	
1891	Copy of Fort George (Que.) inspection report	B.77/e/15 1M1255
1895	Eastmain District report	B.77/e/16 1M1255
1901	Copy of Fort George (Que.) inspection report	B.77/e/17 1M1255

[Back](#)[\[Top\]](#)

## Appendix I

### **Categories for the Description of Works of Art (CDWA): Core Categories**

**OBJECT/WORK:** An identification of the type and number of works described.

Object/Work – Catalogue Level: An indication of the level of cataloguing represented by the record, based on the physical form or intellectual content of the material (e.g., group, sub-group, volume, item, first level).

Object/Work – Type: The kind of object or work described (e.g., refectory table, altarpiece, portfolio, drawing, drinking vessel, basilica, dome).

**CLASSIFICATION:** Placement of a work of art or architecture within a classification scheme that groups other, similar works together on the basis of similar characteristics.

Classification – Term: The term from a classification scheme that has been assigned to a work (e.g., furniture, painting, architecture, graphic arts).

**TITLES OR NAMES:** The titles or names given to a work of art, architecture or group, as well as the type of title, and the dates when the title was valid.

Titles or Names – Text: Titles, identifying phrases, or names given to a work of art, architecture or material culture.(e.g.: Venus and Cupid, Empire State Building).

**MEASUREMENTS:** Information about the size, shape, scale, and dimensions of a work of art or architecture.

Measurements – Dimensions Description: Information about the dimensions, size or scale of the work. It may include the scale of the work. It may also include the number of parts of a complex work, series, or collection (e.g.: 23.9 x 35.8 x 8.3 cm, 76 x 41 x 39 feet, 56.8 cm (diameter), sheets range from 20.3 to 49 cm in height).

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES:** The substance or materials used in the creation of a work, as well as any implements, manufacturing techniques, processes or methods incorporated in its fabrication. This includes a description of both the materials used to create the work and the way in which they were put together.

Materials and Techniques – Description: An indication of the substances or materials used in the creation of a work, as well as any implements, production or manufacturing techniques, processes, or methods incorporated in its fabrication For works on paper, descriptions of watermarks may also be included (e.g.: oil on canvas).

**CREATION:** The creation, design, execution, or production of a work of art or architecture and its components, including all those responsible for the creation of the work or items in the group, the dates of that activity, and where the creation took place.

Creation – Creator Description: The name, brief biographical information, and roles (if necessary) of the named or anonymous individuals or corporate bodies responsible for the design, production, manufacture, or alteration of the work. If there is no known creator, make reference to the presumed culture or nationality of the known creator. (e.g.: Christopher Wren, attributed to Kicking Bear, unknown Maya)

**Creation – Creator- Identity:** The identity of any one individual or corporate body that has played a role in the creation of a work of art or architecture, ideally a link to the person/corporate body authority.

**Creation – Creator - Role:** The role or activity performed by a creator or maker in the conception, design or production of a work (e.g.: draftsman, designer, artist).

**Creation – Creation Date:** A concise description of the date or range of dates associated with the creation, design, production, presentation, performance, construction, or alteration of the work or its components. (e.g.: 1667, ca.1210, 17th century, before 952 BCE, reign of Rameses II).

**SUBJECT MATTER:** The subject matter/content of a work of art is the narrative, iconic, or non-objective meaning conveyed by an abstract or figurative composition. It is what is depicted in and by a work of art. It also covers the function of an object or architecture that otherwise has no narrative content.

**Subject Matter – Indexing Terms:** Indexing terms that characterize what the work depicts or what is depicted in it, including generic terms and proper names. (e.g.: Madonna, Jesus, enclosed garden, pear, landscape, storm clouds).

**CURRENT LOCATION:** Identification of the repository that currently houses the work of art, and the geographic location of the work of art or architecture.

**Current Location – Geographic Location:** The name and geographic location of the repository that is currently responsible for the work, for monumental works and architecture, the geographic location of the work. If the work is lost, destroyed, has location unknown, or the work is in an anonymous private collection, indicate this, along with the last known location. (e.g.: Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg).

**Current Location – Repository Numbers:** Any unique identifiers assigned to a work by the current or last known repository (e.g.: H1/503/1913, 1967.776).

**PERSON/CORPORATE BODY AUTHORITY:** Information about artists, architects, and other individuals and corporate bodies responsible for the design and production of works of art and architecture. This authority may also be used to store information about patrons and other people or corporate bodies important to the record for the work.

**Person/Corporate Body Authority – Name:** The name appellation, or other identifying phrase assigned to an individual, group of people, or corporate body that played a role in the creation or production of works of art or architecture. It is the indexing form of the name that is most commonly found in scholarly literature, or the form preferred by the cataloguing institution (e.g.: Michelangelo Buonarroti, Kicking Bear, Master of Dido).

**Person/Corporate Body Authority – Biography:** A description of the individual or corporate body’s nationality, professional roles and dates (e.g.: English Architect 1632-1723)

**Person/Corporate Body Authority – Biography - Birth Date:** The date when the artist or architect was born, or when a corporate body came into existence. If only the date of first activity is known, or if the date of birth is uncertain or approximate, this is the earliest possible or estimated year when the artist was born.

**Person/Corporate Body Authority – Biography – Death Date:** The date when the artist or

architect dies, or when a corporate body ceased to exist. If only the date of last activity is known, or if the date of death is uncertain or approximate, this the latest possible or estimated year when the artist died.

Person/Corporate Body Authority – Nationality/Culture/Race: The national, cultural, or ethnic origins of the artist, architect, or corporate body (e.g.: English, Berber, African American).

Person/Corporate Body Authority – Life Roles: The major professional roles played by the individual throughout his or her lifetime, or the major roles that define the activities or purpose of the group of individuals (e.g.: architect, painter, sculptor, architectural firm).

Person/Corporate Body Authority – Related People/Corporate Bodies: Information about any people or corporate bodies important to the artist, architect or corporate body. It includes student/teacher relationships, relationships between a firm or studio and its members, and part/whole relationships between a corporate body and its divisions (e.g.: probably was apprentice of Niccolo di Ser Sozzo, Siense painter and illuminator, active ca. 1334, died 1336).

**SUBJECT AUTHORITY:** Information about a named subject that may be depicted in a work of art or architecture. This authority includes the names of literary, mythological, or religious characters or themes, events, animals, or any other named iconographical subjects.

Subject Authority – Hierarchical Position: An indication of the broader context of the subject, to be used to build hierarchies (e.g.: presentation of the gifts, adoration of the Magi, Magi).

## Appendix J

### **Library and Archives Canada ITEM-LEVEL DESCRIPTION PROCEDURES (minimal fields) for works of art**

The item-level descriptions for art works should include at least the following fields:

- a010 name of sub-data base - i, r, or m2
- a020 Entered by: initials
- a200 Accession number down to item-number
- a300 Location - at least include the room
- a400 Artist - last name, first name at least, or unknown and unknown no.
- b100 Title
- b300 Date of execution
- b400 Class
- b500 Medium
- b600 Specific Medium
- b700 Support
- c200 Height of support
- c300 Width of support
- c400 Height of image
- c500 Width of image
- c600 Inscription
- c700 Credit
- c800 Restrictions/copyright
- c900 Negative number
- r800 Transcription
- r900 Description
- z100 Date of creation of record

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

#### Archival Finding Aids

British Columbia Archives  
Maynard Family fonds  
Fonds level description  
Call number: MS-1077;198908-010

Hudson's Bay Company Archives  
Fort George (Que.) and district reports  
Series description  
<http://198.163.9.120/scripts/minisa.dll/385/6/1/137?RECORD>  
accessed November 16, 2006

Hudson's Bay Company Archives  
Fort George (Que.) and district reports  
Listings  
<http://198.163.9.120/scripts/minisa.dll/385/6/1/137?RECORD#list>  
accessed November 16, 2006

Library and Archives Canada  
Franklin Carmichael fonds  
Fonds level description  
Mikan #97650

Library and Archives Canada  
The Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana  
Collection level description  
Mikan #191488

Library and Archives Canada  
The Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana  
Inventory list of works purchased March 28, 2002  
Prepared by Jim Burant

## Archival Policy and Procedural Documents

Archives Association of Ontario  
Archives Advisor's Notebook  
<http://aao.fis.utoronto.ca/aa/principles.pdf>  
 accessed August 22, 2005

Art Museum Image Consortium  
 "Art Museum Image Consortium Data Specifications"  
<http://www.amico.org/AMICOLibrary/docs/amico.dataspec.1.2.pdf>  
 accessed March 26, 2006

Australian Society of Archivists Committee on Descriptive Standards  
Describing Archives in Context: a Guide to Australian Practice, consultation draft,  
 August 2003.  
<http://www.archivists.org.au/cds/Series%20system%20codification%20-%20August%202003.pdf>  
 accessed February 22, 2006

Baca, Murtha and Patricia Harpring (Eds.),  
 J. Paul Getty Trust & College Art Association, Inc., 2005.  
 "Categories for the Description of Works of Art  
 (CDWA): List of Categories and Definitions."  
[http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting\\_research/standards/cdwa/8\\_printing\\_options/definitions.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/cdwa/8_printing_options/definitions.pdf)  
 accessed February 22, 2006

British Columbia Archives  
 "Overview – Visual Materials."  
<http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-3FF4E98/visual/visual.htm>  
 accessed April 22, 2006

Coles, Laura Millar. A Manual for Small Archives. Vancouver: Association of British Columbia Archivists, 1988.

Canadian Council of Archives  
Rules for Archival Description  
<http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/archdesrules.html>  
 accessed March 2, 2005

Canadian Council of Archives  
Rules for Archival Description, Consolidated Rule Revisions 1998-2003  
[http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/RAD\\_consol\\_revisions1998-2003\\_Aug2003.pdf](http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/RAD_consol_revisions1998-2003_Aug2003.pdf)  
 accessed March 2, 2005

Canadian Heritage Information Network  
 "CHIN Data Dictionary – Humanities"  
[http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Collections\\_Management/index.html](http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Collections_Management/index.html)  
 accessed March 26, 2006

Getty Center  
 "Events Related to the History of Collecting."  
[http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting\\_research/provenance\\_index/events\\_complete.html#PSCPforumIV](http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/provenance_index/events_complete.html#PSCPforumIV)  
 accessed April 21, 2006.

Getty Center  
 "Provenance Research (Research at the Getty)"  
[http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting\\_research/provenance\\_index/](http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/provenance_index/)  
 accessed April 21, 2006

Gracy, David B. Archives & Manuscripts: Arrangement & Description. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1977.

Henson, Steven L. Archives, Personal Papers and Manuscripts: A Cataloguing Manual for Archival Repositories, Historical Societies, and Manuscript Libraries, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1983.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives  
 "HBCA History"  
[http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbca\\_history.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbca_history.html)  
 accessed September 9, 2006

Hudson's Bay Company Archives  
 "HBCA Holdings"  
[http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbca\\_holdings.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbca_holdings.html)  
 accessed September 9, 2006

Hudson's Bay Company Archives  
 "Hudson's Bay Company History."  
[http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbc\\_history.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbc_history.html)  
 accessed September 9, 2006

Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules  
 "A Brief History of AACR"  
<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/history.htm>  
 accessed June 8, 2005.

Krawczyk, Bob

“Arrangement at the Archives of Ontario: A Canadian Series System”

<http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/English/about/series.htm>

accessed September 9, 2006

Library and Archives Canada

“Introduction – Artist’s Biographies”

[http://www.collectionscanada.ca/art/050602/05060207\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/art/050602/05060207_e.html)

accessed March 11, 2006

Part of the online exhibit “Canada - Collector’s Passion: The Peter Winkworth Collection”

Library and Archives Canada

ArchiviaNet Item-level description:

“Yarmouth Taken from Milton ( Nova Scotia )” by Sarah Bond Farish.

<http://data4.collectionscanada.ca/netacgi/nphbrs?s1=Sarah+Bond+Farish&l=20&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=ICONPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=ICON>

[&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/02011602\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/02011602_e.html&r=1&f=G)

accessed March 20, 2006.

Miller, Frederic M. Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts. Chicago:

Society of American Archivists, 1990.

National Archives of Canada. “Introduction to Entering Data onto the Minisis Icon Data Base.” Prepared by Jim Burant, February 24, 1999.

National Gallery of Canada

“Provenance Research: European and American Works of Art”

[http://cybermuseum.gallery.ca/cybermuseum/enthusiast/provenance/index\\_e.jsp](http://cybermuseum.gallery.ca/cybermuseum/enthusiast/provenance/index_e.jsp)

accessed April 21, 2004

Jeff O’Brien

BASIC RAD: An Introduction to the preparation of *fonds*- and *series-level* descriptions using the Rules for Archival Description, Section 2.4.

<http://scaa.usask.ca/rad/section2.htm>

accessed July 17, 2005.

Task Force on Institutional Evaluation, Society of American Archivists, Evaluation of Archival Institutions: Services, Principles, and Guide to Self-Study. Society of American Archivists, 1980.

Towards Descriptive Standards, Report and Recommendations of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards. Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1985.

Visual Resources Association Data Standards Committee  
 "VRA Categories, Version 3"  
<http://www.vraweb.org/vracore3.htm#core>  
 accessed March 26, 2006

### Secondary Sources

Bamford, Anne. "The Visual Literacy White Paper: What is Visual Literacy?"  
[http://www.adobe.com/uk/education/pdf/adobe\\_visual\\_literacy\\_paper.pdf](http://www.adobe.com/uk/education/pdf/adobe_visual_literacy_paper.pdf)  
 accessed September 16, 2006

Bearman, David. "Archival Methods," in David Bearman (ed.) Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report. Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1989.

Berner, Richard C. Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: A Historical Analysis. Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1983.

Betz, Elisabeth. Graphic Materials: Rules for Describing Original Items and Historical Collections. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1982.

Burant, Jim. "Visual Archives and the Writing of Canadian History: A Personal Review." Archivaria 54 (Fall 2002).

Burke, Peter. Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Cappon, Lester J. "Historical Manuscripts as Archives: Some Definitions and Their Application." American Archivist 19 (April 1956).

Chong, Denise. The Girl in The Picture: The Kim Phuc Story. Toronto, Ontario: Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 1999.

Cook, Michael and Margaret Proctor. A Manual of Archival Description: Second Edition. Brookfield, Vermont: Gower Publishing Ltd., 1986.

Cook, Terry.

"Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives."

<http://www.mybestdocs.com/cook-t-postmod-p2-00.html>

Originally published in Archivaria 51 (Spring 2001)  
 accessed March 14, 2006.

- . "Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts."  
<http://www.mybestdocs.com/cook-t-postmod-pl-00.htm>  
 Originally published in *Archival Science*, vol.1, no. 1 (2000): 3-24.  
 accessed March 3, 2006
- . "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1989, and the Future Paradigm Shift." *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997).
- . "The Impact of David Bearman on Modern Archival Thinking: An Essay of Personal Reflection and Critique." *Archives and Museum Informatics* 11 (1997).
- . "The Concept of the Archival Fonds: Theory, Description, and Provenance in the Post-Custodial Era." in Terry Eastwood (ed.) *The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice*. Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1992.
- Cook, Tim. Book Review "Review of *The Art of Nation Building: Pageant and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* by H.Vivian Nelles." *Archivaria* 50 (Fall 2000).
- Cunningham, Adrian.  
 "Dynamic Descriptions: Australian Strategies for the Intellectual Control of Records and Record keeping Systems."  
<http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/control/strategies/default.htm>  
 This paper was originally presented at a symposium organized by the Royal Society of Archivists of the Netherlands to honour the centenary of the publication of the Dutch Archives Manual of Muller, Feith and Fruin, Amsterdam, October 23, 1998.  
 accessed February 22, 2006
- D'Addario, Arnaldo. "The Development of Archival Science and its Present Trends," in Oddo Bucci and Rosa Marisa Borraccinni Verducci (eds.) *Archival Science on the Threshold of the Year 2000*. Ancona, Italy: University of Macerata Publications, 1990.
- Daily, Jay E. *Organizing Nonprint Materials 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. New York: Marcel Dekker Inc., 1986.
- Daley, Elizabeth. "Expanding the Concept of Literacy."  
<http://www.avid.com/solutions/education/ExpandingtheConceptofLiteracy.pdf>  
 accessed September 16, 2006
- Duchien, Michel. "The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe." *American Archivist* 55 (Winter 1992).
- . "Theoretic Principles and Practical Problems of *Respect des fonds* in Archival Science." *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983).

- Duff, Wendy M., and Verne Harris, "Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings." Archival Science 2 (2002).
- Eastwood, Terry. "From Practice to Theory: Fundamentals US Style." Archivaria 39 (Spring 1995).
- . "What is Archival Theory and Why is it Important?" Archivaria 37 (Spring 1994).
- . "Introduction," In Terry Eastwood (ed.) The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice. Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1992.
- Farish, Dr. G.W.T., "A Medical Biography of the Bond-Farish Family," The Canadian Medical Association Journal XIII (November 1930).
- Finnegan, Ruth. Oral Literature In Africa. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970.
- Frost, Carolyn O. Cataloging Nonbook Materials: Problems in Theory and Practice. Littleton, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited Inc., 1983.
- Gorman, Michael and Paul W. Winkler (eds.), Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Chicago: American Library Association, 1978.
- Gorman, Michael and Pat Oddy.  
 "The Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules Second Edition: Their History and Principles"  
[http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/300/jsc\\_aacr/aacr\\_sec/r-aacr2e.pdf](http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/300/jsc_aacr/aacr_sec/r-aacr2e.pdf)  
 Paper presented at the International Conference on the Principles and Future Development of AACR, Toronto, Ontario, October 23-25, 1997.  
 accessed June 7, 2005
- Granstrom, C. in C. Granstrom (ed.), "The Janus Syndrome," in The Principle of Provenance. Stockholm: Swedish National Archives, 1994.
- Haworth, Kent M. "The Voyage of RAD: From the Old World to the New." Archivaria 36 (Autumn 1993).
- . "The Development of Descriptive Standards in Canada: A Progress Report." Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992).
- Henson, Steven L. "The First Shall Be First: APPM and its impact on American Archival Description." Archivaria 35 (Spring 1993).
- . "Standards for the Exchange of Descriptive Information on Archival and Manuscript Material in the United States." Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992).
- Horsman, Peter, Eric Ketelaar and Theo Thomassen. "New Respect for the Old Order: The Context of the Dutch Manual." American Archivist 66 (Winter/Spring 2003).

- Horsman, Peter. "Last Dance of the Phoenix, or the De-discovery of the Archival Fonds." Archivaria 54 (Fall 2002).
- Hurley, Chris. "The Making and Keeping of Records: (1) What are Finding-Aids For?" Archives and Manuscripts vol. 26, no.1. (May 1998).
- J. Paul Getty Trust, "About the J. Paul Getty Trust," <http://www.getty.edu/about/trust.html> accessed November 4, 2006.
- Jenkinson, Hilary. A Manual of Archive Administration. London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd., 1937.
- Kaplan, Elisabeth and Jeffery Mifflin. "Mind and Sight: Visual Literacy and the Archivist." Archival Issues: Journal of the Midwest Archives Conference 21, no. 2 (1996).
- Ketelaar, Eric. "Archives of the People, By the People, for the People," South African Archives Journal 34 (1992).
- Krawczyk, Bob. "Cross Reference Heaven: The Abandonment of the Fonds as the Primary Level of Arrangement for Ontario Government Records." Archivaria 48 (Fall 1999).
- Millar, Laura. "The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance: Archival Context in Space and Time." Archivaria 53 (Spring 2002).
- ."The Spirit of Total Archives: Seeking a Sustainable Archives System." Archivaria 47 (Spring 1999).
- Muller, S., J.A. Feith and R. Fruin, Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives. New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1968.
- Nelles, H. Vivian. The Art of Nation Building: Pageant and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary. Toronto: 1999.
- Nesmith, Tom. "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives." Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists. Ottawa, May 1997.
- . "Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the "Ghosts" of Archival Theory." Archivaria 43 (Winter 1996-97).

- . in Tom Nesmith (ed.) "Archival Studies in English Speaking Canada and the North American Rediscovery of Provenance." Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance. Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1993.
- O'Toole, James M. Understanding Archives and Manuscripts. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1990.
- Pederson, Ann. "Unlocking Hidden Treasures Through Description: Comments on Archival Voyages of Discovery." Archivaria 37 (Spring 1994).
- Samis, Peter. "Artworks as Interface." Archives and Museum Informatics 13 (1999).
- Schellenberg, T.R. Draft of a Manual on Archival Techniques. Austin: University of Texas, 1961.
- . The Management of Archives. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.
- Schwartz, Joan M.  
 "Negotiating the Visual Turn: New Perspectives on Images and Archives"  
<http://www.archivist.org/periodicals/aa-v67/schwartz.pdf>  
 Originally published in American Archivist 67 (Spring/Summer 2004)  
 accessed February 18, 2006
- . "Coming to Terms with Photographs: Descriptive Standards, Linguistic "Othering," and the Margins of Archivry." Archivaria 54 (Fall 2002).
- Schwartz, Joan M., and Terry Cook. "Archives, Records and Power: The Making of Modern Memory." Archival Science 2 (2002).
- Scott, Peter J., Clive D. Smith and Gail Finlay. "Archives and Administrative Change – Some Methods and Approaches (part 4)." Archives and Manuscripts vol. 8, no.2 (December 1980).
- Spurgeon, Greg. "Pictures and History: The Art Museum and the Visual Art Archives." Archivaria 17 (Winter 1983-84).
- Stapleton, Richard. "Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison." Archivaria 17 (Winter 1983-84).
- Stibbe, Hugo. "Implementing the Concept of the Fonds: Primary Access Point, Multilevel Description and Authority Control." Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992).
- Stotyn, Keith. Book Review of Rules for Archival Description by the Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards. Archivaria 32 (Summer 1991).

Sweeney, James Johnson. Vision and Image: A Way of Seeing. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967.

Swift, Richard. "Myth and Memory: Truth in History is Elusive." New Internationalist 247 (September 1993).

Taylor, Gary. Cultural Selection. New York: Basic Books, 1996.

Taylor, Hugh A. "Documentary Art and the Role of the Archivist." The American Archivist 42 (October 1979).

Yenawine, Philip. "Thoughts on Visual Literacy."  
[http://www.org/download/Thoughts\\_Visual\\_Literacy](http://www.org/download/Thoughts_Visual_Literacy)  
accessed September 16, 2006

Originally published in Handbook of Research on Teaching Literacy through the Communicative and Visual Arts. (1997)