

**Picturing Archives: The National Photography Collection, Public
Archives of Canada, 1975-1986**

by

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Abstract

With a countless number of photographs in their care, archives are places where much of our collective memory is preserved. Photographs contribute to this memory as a visual record of our past that questions our present and shapes our future. The invention of photography itself is relatively recent. Thus the enormous volume and significance of written records over the centuries before the invention of photography gave prior shape to archival work and to ideas about archives that lasted long after the advent of photography. This thesis examines the efforts of leading photo-archivists at the Public Archives of Canada (now Library and Archives Canada) to place photographic archives at the heart of archival priorities alongside written records. The main institutional base of these archivists was the National Photography Collection (NPC) of the Public Archives of Canada (PAC) which existed between 1975 and 1986. It is the focus of this thesis.

Archivists are knowledge creators. The work they do in selecting and acquiring what shall be in the archives and representing it in research tools, exhibits, and publications shapes the knowledge derived from the records. The work of the NPC made a significant contribution to knowledge by pioneering the study of the history of photography in Canada. The NPC members not only changed the way in which photographs were understood by archivists, but also by scholars in various fields in Canada as well as in other photographic repositories in libraries, museums, and art galleries.

These NPC members did so by stressing a contextual approach to the understanding of photographs across time. This thesis examines the ideas about

photographs and archives of this pioneering group of archivists and its intellectual contributions to the study of the history of photography in Canada. No such study has been done of these archivists despite their considerable impact on archives and study of the history of photography in Canada. This study benefits from responses to an extensive questionnaire by leading members of the NPC.

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This thesis would have not been possible without the work of former NPC members. Thank you to Lilly Koltun, Andrew Birrell, Peter Robertson, Andrew Rodger, Joan Schwartz, and Richard Huyda for your devotion to archival photographs, and to Jim Burant, for your devotion to them as well elsewhere in LAC. I would also like to acknowledge all who took the time to share their reflections with me.

I had the amazing opportunity to work with photographic archives at the National Records of Scotland for my internship in the Department of History's Archival Studies MA program under the supervision of Robin Urquhart and Steffi Metze, and at the Falkirk Archives with Elspeth Reid. Thank you to Shelley Sweeney for her mentorship during and after my employment at the University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections. To my colleagues (past and present) at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: thank you for the group thesis whining and much needed laughter. A special thank you to my thesis buddy, Jessica Nichol, for all of our attempts at 'finishing early.'

To all of my friends whom I have not seen for extended periods of time over the past few years, thank you for understanding. However, without you I probably would have graduated earlier. To Parsa, honk.

Michele and Joe: I apologize. You have heard nothing but historical facts your entire lives, and have been forced on more than one occasion to dress in historical costumes. I love you both. To my parents: without your love and support this thesis, my two degrees, and my constant ventures around the globe would not have been possible. Thank you for letting me eat the food from your fridge.

Introduction

The invention of photography is relatively recent, as Nicéphore Niépce produced the first heliograph or photographic image in France in 1826.¹ However, the importance of images within the history of communication was evident before the Western world became a literate society, and these images are some of humankind's oldest 'records.' With that said, overwhelming reliance on the written record prevailed in archival discourse and theory throughout the nineteenth century and on until the early twentieth century.² This is reflected in the absence of discussion of photographs in the first major statements of archival theory produced in the Western world at the turn of the twentieth century.

The devotion to the written record in archival theory is apparent in Samuel Muller, Johan Feith and Robert Fruin's *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* published in 1898, Sir Hilary Jenkinson's *Manual of Archive Administration: Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making* in 1922, and lastly, T.R Schellenberg's *The Management of Archives* in 1965. These manuals provided an intellectual framework for archivists within the Western world for the first half of the twentieth century. Although archives had been acquiring and appraising photographs as well as other visual media for decades, their inclusion in archival theory and practice did not truly begin until the second half of the twentieth century.

¹ Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O'Connor, "Introduction," in *Photographs: Archival Care and Management*, ed. Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O'Connor with Helena Zinkham, Brett Carnell and Kit Peterson (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006), 1.

² John Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory* (Duluth, Minnesota: Litwin Books, 2009), 19.

In her 1977 book *On Photography*, Susan Sontag states that “to collect photographs is to collect the world.”³ With a countless number of photographs in their care, archives are places where much of our collective memory is preserved. Photographs contribute to this memory as a visual record of our past that questions our present and shapes our future. Thus the enormous volume and significance of written records over the centuries before the invention of photography gave prior shape to archival work and to ideas about archives that lasted long after the advent of photography. This thesis examines the efforts of leading photo-archivists at the Public Archives of Canada (now Library and Archives Canada) to place photographic archives at the heart of archival priorities alongside written records. The main institutional base of these archivists was the National Photography Collection (NPC) of the Public Archives of Canada (PAC) which existed between 1975 and 1986.

This thesis focuses on the National Photography Collection (NPC) and its leading members: Peter Robertson, Richard Huyda, Andrew Birrell, Lilly Koltun, Joan Schwartz, and Andrew Rodger. It will also include discussion of archivist Jim Burant’s role, as a leading contributor at LAC to this movement but who was not a formal staff member of the NPC.⁴ The NPC was created in 1975, and was disbanded in 1986 as it merged with the documentary art archives program to form the Documentary Art and Photography Division at LAC. The thesis focuses on the photo-archival work at LAC mainly during the years the NPC was active (1975-86) and it offers just the beginning of such a study of the NPC, its members, and of photo-archival work at LAC. The thesis will not be limited

³ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1977), 174.

⁴ This study benefits from responses to an extensive questionnaire by Birrell, Burant, Huyda, Koltun and Schwartz. A transcript of their responses is attached to the thesis by those who granted permission to do so. See Appendix A and Appendix B below.

to the time period when the NPC existed, but will present the influential role the former members continued to play within LAC and the international archival profession.

Archivists are knowledge creators. The work they do in selecting and acquiring what shall be in the archives and representing it in research tools, exhibits, and publications shapes the knowledge derived from the records. The work of the NPC made a significant contribution to knowledge by pioneering the study of the history of photography in Canada. The NPC members not only changed the way in which photographs were understood by archivists, but also by scholars in various fields in Canada as well as in other photographic repositories in libraries, museums, and art galleries. These NPC members did so by stressing a contextual approach to the understanding of photographs across time. They explored the evolving societal, intellectual, institutional, and technological contexts in which photographs were created, used, and archived. They pointed to the richer meanings photographs convey when viewed in these contexts. The NPC members pursued this work across the various archival functions they performed and in publications, conference papers, and exhibits. Their emphasis on the value of photographic evidence has borne fruit in even wider fields and among a new generation of contemporary photo-archivists they inspired. This thesis will examine the ideas about photographs and archives of this pioneering group of archivists and its intellectual contributions to the study of the history of photography in Canada. No such study has been done of these archivists despite their considerable impact on archives and study of the history of photography in Canada.

The first chapter will focus on providing an overview of what led to the creation of the NPC. It will set this development in the context of the influence of Hugh Taylor,

who was Director-General of the Archives Branch (1971-77), an archival scholar himself, an admirer of Marshall McLuhan's media theories, and the administrator responsible for establishing the NPC. In addition, the emergence of social history in the 1970s, and its look to archives for a wider range of documentation for study of those who often did not leave written records, set the stage for the NPC members to take advantage of this moment to further promote the use of photography to enhance research. Social history perspectives also supported the contextual approach of the NPC staff as these archivists especially stressed the importance of understanding the societal context in which photographs were created and used.

The NPC members were critical of the traditional narrow emphasis on both photographic technology, divorced from its social context of creation and impact, and on the surface image content of photographs as it downplayed at best and effaced at worst crucial information about the context in which photographs were made and used. In their view, a greater understanding of context or the history of the photograph would significantly increase its value as evidence beyond the modest illustrative purposes photographs had typically served. While outlining this key preliminary point, the first chapter will focus more on providing an overview of what led to the creation of the NPC.

Chapter two will emphasize the ideas of the NPC members and the movement of ideas about photography that they spearheaded in Canada. This chapter will unpack the key aspects of their arguments for a much more contextual approach to these records. For example, it will examine their emphasis on the societal context shaping photography at given points in time. It will also look at the institutional functional contexts in which photographs have been produced by institutions. As well, the NPC members played an

important role in exploring genres of photographs (photography of urban places, for example) and conventions of representation they employ, as contextual frameworks for the information content they carry. The chapter will also discuss the NPC members' ideas about the influence of photographic technologies or the materiality of photographs on the messages they convey. It will emphasize that the photographic history prior to the 1970s is heavily based on the examination of photographic technology and the content information photographs express.

The chapter will trace these contributions to early publications the NPC staff produced, such as the special issue of *Archivaria*, titled "Photographs and Archives," published in the winter of 1977-78 and perhaps most importantly the exhibition (mounted in 1983) and related 1984 publication of *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada, 1839-1940*. The chapter will not only discuss early responses to publications by the photo-archivists but also their archival practice. The larger archival community began to take notice and soon these ideas and practices about photographs played a part in igniting the 'total archives' debate and the rethinking of Canadian archival theory and practice.

The final chapter will ask, what happened? After much success, the NPC was ultimately disbanded. The chapter will explore why the NPC was gradually wound down through budget pressures and retirements, especially of key leaders of the group. The Canadian government's decision not to proceed with the Portrait Gallery of Canada under LAC administration in the early 2000s was the final blow to the group. More recently, the former Librarian and Archivist of Canada, Daniel Caron (2009-13), pulled back on the

prominent program of exhibits of photographs and other archival materials that had highlighted the work of photo-archivists at the LAC.

Although the prominence at LAC of the NPC members waned, throughout the profession and in academia, their role remained very influential. The final thesis chapter will provide evidence of the great impact the NPC members continue to have on the archival literature on the history of photography. The NPC members are constantly cited in both archival works based on photography, as well as in other research disciplines that have incorporated photographs into their work. Examples of the interdisciplinary influence of the LAC photo-archivists will be provided. An illustration of this is Andrea Kunard and Carol Payne in their *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada* (2011). Their study recognizes the pioneering contribution of the LAC photo-archivists to the study of the history of photography in Canada through their publications and related archival work of acquiring and making available to other scholars millions of photographs. Kunard and Payne show that as a result the study of the history of photography is now well established in this country.

This thesis will conclude with a look to the future and what work is left to be done by photo-archivists and others with photographs. As well, it will provide a brief examination of the opportunities for photo-archival work at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation archives at the University of Manitoba (NCTR) to undertake its mandate in a predominantly digital archive.

Chapter One: Archiving Photographs: From Image to Document and the Creation of the National Photography Collection at the Public Archives of Canada in 1975

“The introduction of the small, hand-held Kodak camera by George Eastman in 1888 boasted the slogan ‘You press the button, we do the rest.’”¹

In 1867 Canadian Confederation not only brought the new country together politically, but also led some to think that writing Canada’s history was essential to its proper development. To support this goal, the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec (LHSQ) lobbied successfully for the creation of a Canadian archives, which opened in 1872 as the Archives Branch of the Department of Agriculture and ultimately became the Public Archives of Canada (PAC).² This chapter will provide a brief historical overview of the PAC in order to throw light on the evolving place of photographs in its work. Archival work with photographs began modestly at PAC, but by 1975 it had become significant enough to warrant creation of a separate division devoted to it – the National Photography Collection (NPC). By then, the PAC had acquired several million valuable historical photographs and had a newly hired small staff of photographic archival specialists, mainly in the NPC, who were spearheading a dramatic change in the place of photographs in archival work and research.³ This thesis is about this pioneering contribution to the study of the history of photography in Canada and its implications for the professional identity of archivists. These photo-archivists showed that by studying the

¹ Library and Archives Canada, “Archived: Framing Canada: A Photographic Memory,” last modified May 12, 2011, accessed October 16, 2016, <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/framingcanada/045003-2102-e.html>.

² Library and Archives Canada (LAC) was known as the National Archives of Canada between 1986 and 2004 and the Public Archives of Canada (PAC) from 1912 to 1986. It will be referred to in this chapter as the PAC.

³ Andrew Birrell, “Foreword,” in National Photography Collection, *National Photography Collection* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1984), viii.

history of records in order to select, describe, and explain documentary materials researchers require, archivists are knowledge creators when performing their professional tasks.

In 1824, the LHSQ was formed to promote research into and publication in the field of Canadian history. To achieve this goal, the LHSQ undertook a quest for historical documents about Canada located outside the country, and scattered in the archives of the country's French and British colonizers.⁴ To pursue this project, historians and archivists would not only have to look to collections of documents in England and France for these colonial roots, but also in Canada's own provinces.⁵ The LHSQ was the first to play a fundamental role in the collection of records in both English and French, further stimulating the acquisition of records in the now two official languages of Canada. This inclusion of both colonial histories set the stage for an investment in the future of the PAC.

The origins of the PAC and its attention to cultural history can be traced to the LHSQ. The LHSQ urged Parliament in 1871 to create an archives to house documents concerning Canada's colonial history, in order to promote a national narrative for the emerging new nation. The LHSQ had influential leaders of society – both in Quebec City and Montreal – support a petition calling the federal government to establish an archives service.⁶ As the petition reached Ottawa, it was passed through Parliament to the “Minister of Agriculture, responsible for ‘Arts and Manufacturing.’”⁷ As a result, the

⁴ Ian Wilson, “‘A Noble Dream’: The Origins of the Public Archives of Canada,” *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83), 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Canadian government established the Archives Branch in the Department of Agriculture in 1872.⁸

Douglas Brymner – a former journalist – was appointed the first federal archivist and a Senior Second Class Clerk in the Department of Agriculture. Brymner quickly undertook a large-scale acquisition program for records throughout the Canadian provinces, as well as in Britain. The program did not include the acquisition of Canadian government records, as the Secretary of State was responsible for the control of records created by the Canadian government. In 1873, Henry J. Morgan was appointed by the Secretary of State to arrange and describe government records. This created a rivalry between the two arms of government responsible for records.⁹ Former Librarian and Archivist of Canada Ian Wilson argues that “had the petitions of the LHSQ in 1871 been referred to the Secretary of State for action rather than the Minister of Agriculture, the Archives would undoubtedly have developed more as a public record office.”¹⁰ However, this was not the case, and the beginnings of the PAC were filled with tension due to the division between its two archival branches: the Archives Branch under the Department of Agriculture and the Records Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State.¹¹

This decision would have immediate consequences for the PAC and the records it would come to acquire, as federal government records were seen as outside its mandate, which pushed historical records to the forefront of its work. The disjuncture between the two branches created a historical and cultural focus for Brymner and the newly formed

⁸ Ibid., 22. See Jay Atherton, “The Origins of the Public Archives Records Centre, 1897-1956,” *Archivaria* 8 (Summer 1979).

⁹ Atherton, 36.

¹⁰ Wilson, 22.

¹¹ Ibid.

PAC, which he was happy to have in any case. Morgan and the Department of the Secretary of State, however, did not actually devote much energy to their role as the “Keeper” of current government records, leaving these documents in a kind of limbo.

This division of labour had ramifications for the acquisition of photographs. Brymner’s historical focus limited the range of photographs that could be available to the archives simply because photography did not exist for the colonial era that he was most interested in.¹² Secondly, contemporary Canadian government photographs were not within his mandate. The early Canadian government was creating photographs, yet they fell under the mandate of the Secretary of State, which, of course, paid them little attention. Due to this, the first recorded historical acquisition of photography by the archives did not come until 1897. Such acquisitions, however, were often as incidental material tied mainly to the collection of manuscripts.¹³ Unlike the PAC, state archives elsewhere were usually only acquiring the documents created by the state. Archivist Bronwen Quarry observes that this also had a limiting affect on the fate of photographs:

When photographs did appear in those archives at the end of the nineteenth century, they comprised a small portion of their archival holdings, as photography still had limited uses in governmental work in comparison with textual records and these state archives did not acquire personal photographs of private life.¹⁴

In the meantime, photography, was undergoing change.

¹² Nicéphore Niépce produced the first heliograph or photographic image in France in 1826. The first practical form of photography was the creation of Louis Daguerre in 1839 and known as the daguerreotype. See Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O’Connor, “Introduction,” in *Photographs: Archival Care and Management*, ed. Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O’Connor with Helena Zinkham, Brett Carnell and Kit Peterson (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006), 1.

¹³ National Archives of Canada, *Documentary Art and Photography Division*, 2.

¹⁴ Bronwen Quarry, “Photograph/Writing with Light: The Challenge to Archivists of Reading Photographs,” (MA Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2003), 32.

Following Brymner's death in 1902, the Archives and the Records Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State merged (in 1903).¹⁵ The newly created position of Dominion Archivist and Keeper of the Records was now responsible for combining the two separate entities into one institution, while still reporting to the Minister of Agriculture. In 1904, the Canadian government appointed Arthur G. Doughty to this office.¹⁶ With the government's continued low emphasis on archiving Canadian government records, Doughty followed in the footsteps of his predecessor and remained focused on the collection of historical records from the colonial era rather than more recently created federal government documents.

Doughty's new role proved to be fruitful for the PAC. Wilson argues that Doughty "paid little heed to distinctions amongst archives, libraries, museums and art galleries."¹⁷ Wilson continues, "The archives itself assumed a museum atmosphere, attracting both official and casual visitors to see Doughty's latest treasures. Travelling exhibits and circulating series of lantern slides took some of the more colourful of the archives holdings to a broader public and classroom."¹⁸ In 1903, the PAC held 3,155 volumes of records, and under Doughty's tenure the holdings expanded to 500,000 textual documents, 30,000 maps, and 10,000 pamphlets.¹⁹ Doughty's efforts to acquire materials outside the traditional framework of archives, allowed for a transition to take place. By 1926 the PAC would also come to house 25,000 photographs and pieces of documentary art.²⁰ Photographs entered the PAC sporadically, and mainly by

¹⁵ Wilson, 16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁰ Raymond Vézina, *General Guide Series, 1983: Picture Division* (Ottawa: Public Archives Canada, 1984), 1.

accompanying private acquisitions until the mid-1930s.²¹ Doughty specifically targeted the acquisition of photographs in the early twentieth century, which eventually led to the creation in 1906 of a separate Picture Division in the PAC.²²

The Public Archives Act of 1912 moved the PAC from the Department of Agriculture and placed it under the Secretary of State and formalized a wide-ranging acquisition mandate. The act gave it permission to acquire all manner of historical documents in all media and from government records to personal ones. As a measure of Doughty's broad reach, in 1925 *The Catalogue of Pictures Including Paintings, Drawings and Prints in the Public Archives of Canada* was published.²³ The catalogue is an inventory of documentary art and photographs amassed by the PAC. It is important to note that the catalogue reflects the ambitious but still mainly historical mandate of the PAC "where," says the catalogue, "are preserved sources of every kind having value for the study of the history of Canada."²⁴ The work of the Picture Division encompassed all types of visual records. In fact, prior to the 1930s, documentary art overshadowed the photographs that were being donated to the PAC as it eagerly sought out documentary art to fill the vaults of the Picture Division.²⁵ By the 1930s, as photographs were becoming more commonplace, they slowly found their way into the Public Archives in greater abundance.²⁶

²¹ National Archives of Canada, *Documentary Art and Photography Division*, 2.

²² *Ibid.*, 3.

²³ James F. Kenney, *Catalogue of Pictures including Paintings, Drawings and Prints in the Public Archives of Canada* (Ottawa: The Mortimer Company, 1925).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ National Archives of Canada, *Documentary Art and Photography Division*, 2; Joan M. Schwartz, "Some Major Canadian Collections: The National Archives of Canada," *History of Photography* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1996), 166.

²⁶ Quarry, 19.

Although the Picture Division faced hardships during the Great Depression (1929-1939), the division did manage three important acquisitions of photographs that would enhance its significance: a private photographic collection (Sandford Fleming), the collection of a commercial photographer (W.J. Topley), and the federal Department of Interior Collection.²⁷ Archivist Jim Burant reflects on these acquisitions:

The Department of the Interior Collection (Acc.No. 1936-271) was the first major acquisition of documentary photography from a federal government department; it confirmed the Archives' role as repository of the federal government's photographic records. The W.J. Topley Collection (Acc. No. 1936-270) was the first complete *fonds* of a Canadian photographic studio to arrive; as a major collection of portraiture, it underscored the role of the Archives as a national portrait collection. Finally, the Sandford Fleming Collection (Acc. No. 1936-272) was the first significant photographic collection to be acquired from a private source rather than a commercial or government agency.²⁸

These three acquisitions would become photographic treasures for future archivists and researchers.

Although cultural aims played a central role during these early years in the history of the PAC, and Doughty acquired key photographic collections, photographs were by no means the main focus or concern. This low priority on photographs, shared by archivists and researchers, was maintained by Doughty's successor. Like Doughty, Dr. Gustave Lanctôt, Dominion Archivist (1937-1948), focused his attention on historical textual records rather than the expanding volume of post-Confederation federal government records or photographs.²⁹ Much greater attention to modern Canadian government records did not occur until Dr. W. Kaye Lamb became Dominion Archivist (1948-69).³⁰ Lamb's devotion to records management is evident in the establishment of the Public Archives Record Centre, which opened in 1956 to house federal government records.

²⁷ National Archives of Canada, *Documentary Art and Photography Division*, 2-3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Wilson, 16; National Archives of Canada, *Documentary Art and Photography Division*, 3.

³⁰ Wilson, 35.

Archival theorist Terry Cook states that shortly after Lamb took on the role of Dominion Archivist,

An archival revolution occurred in North America in the two decades after 1950. The archival profession was transformed, and so too were archival institutions and their collections. The focus shifted from a semi-antiquarian enthusiasm for collecting the personal papers of heroic figures of a distant or pioneering past to a more scholarly, systematic, and professional approach for acquiring the records of contemporary society and especially managing effectively those of their burgeoning governments.³¹

During his tenure, Lamb modernized the PAC and photographs played a central role in this shift. Although Doughty established the Picture Division, it was not until Lamb that the acquisition of photographs began to steadily increase. Richard Huyda, the first Head of the Historical Photographs Section of the PAC in 1965, recalls that Lamb “personally appreciated photo documentation” and had considerable knowledge of these PAC holdings.³²

Although the PAC had acquired some photographs prior to Lamb’s tenure, the institution and Lamb’s interest in them was still engulfed in larger assumptions about photographs that limited their place in archives. Photographs were still marginal within the historical records sought by the PAC. The vast volume of information-rich textual materials was its priority and also among the historical researchers who used the PAC. Both archivists and researchers saw photographs as illustrative images, supporting textual research, rather than documentary evidence to be studied for its own substantive particular contribution to knowledge of the past.³³ At the PAC and among archival

³¹ Terry Cook, “An Archival Revolution: W. Kaye Lamb and the Transformation of the Archival Profession,” *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005), 186.

³² Richard Huyda, Questionnaire, Question 8, p.131. (See Appendix B for this and all other citations from the Questionnaire.)

³³ Peter Robertson, “More than Meets the Eye,” *Archivaria* 1, no. 2 (1976), 42.

leaders elsewhere there was little thinking about photographs, or how to employ them most effectively in research.

The larger archival theoretical developments taking place in Europe and the United States continued to focus archival attention on textual documents.³⁴ The definitive European works on archival concepts and practice by the Dutch archivists Muller, Feith, and Fruin (*Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* published in 1898) and Britain's Hilary Jenkinson's 1922 *A Manual of Archive Administration*, all but ignored photographs. These manuals provided an intellectual framework for archivists within the Western world for the first half of the twentieth century. Additionally, Theodore Schellenberg of the United States National Archives, while acknowledging that photographs were a significant portion of the holdings of mid-twentieth century archives, minimized the degree of complexity they possessed, as they did not require much adherence to the archival principle of provenance that was the foundation of modern archival work. He said:

Information on the provenance of pictorial records in some government agency, corporate body, or person is relatively unimportant, for such records do not derive much of their meaning from their organizational origins.... 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.³⁵

These assumptions about archival photographs stagnated archival theory and any further examination of the place of photographs within archives for some time.

³⁴ Hugh A. Taylor, "Documentary Art and the Role of the Archivist (1979)" in *Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections by Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. Terry Cook and Gordon Dodds (Lanham, Maryland: Society of American Archivists and Association of Canadian Archivists in association with Scarecrow Press, 2003), 76.

³⁵ T. R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 325; Joan M. Schwartz, "Photographic Records" in Luciana Duranti and Patricia C. Franks, eds., *Encyclopedia of Archival Science* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2015) 271.

Early archival literature on photographs was limited, and perhaps best consolidated in Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, Gerald J. Munoff, and Margery S. Long's 1984 *Administration of Photographic Collections*. It was heavily oriented towards the technical history of photography and the preservation issues that raised.³⁶ These were indeed important concerns and pioneering work that the photo-archivists at the PAC relied on. The technical history of photography would come to shape their ideas about the creation of the photograph, and preservation was a practical concern for the NPC and its holdings. For example, see NPC archivist Lilly Koltun's "The Photograph: An Annotated Bibliography for Archivists" in which she states:

In realization that literature on photography is, paradoxically, both copious and rare, this bibliography has been prepared as a preliminary guide for archivists who find themselves required to handle photographic material. The bibliography concentrates upon topics already extensively examined and published, such as general photographic history, technique and image arrangement, but also identifies subjects in less well known books and articles, such as photograph interpretation and copyright.³⁷

But these works did not explore the provenancial origins and varied socio-cultural and institutional contexts that shape the meaning of photographs in any depth, nor examine how photographic technology does so. Although essential for the practical necessity of caring for photographs, these early archival publications missed the mark on providing a theoretical foundation for archival photographs.

The study of the history of photography by the mid-twentieth century had not advanced very far. In a critical review of one such work, *A Hundred Years of Photography 1839-1939* by Lucia Moholy, published in 1939 to mark the centennial of

³⁶ Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, Gerald J. Munoff, and Margery S. Long, *Administration of Photographic Collections* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1984).

³⁷ Lilly Koltun, (co-ordinator), "The Photograph: An Annotated Bibliography for Archivists," *Archivaria* 5 (1977), 124.

the advent of photography, leading American art historian Beaumont Newhall said: “Photographers, critics, and even the historians themselves have but incomplete pictures of photography's tradition. The need for chronicling and interpreting this tradition is real; the challenge clear; the field comparatively untouched.”³⁸ It would be decades before any scholarly attempt was made to navigate the uncharted field of the history of photography in Canada.

The overwhelming preference for textual records as historical evidence and the general lack of interest in the history of photography began to change in the 1960s and 1970s. Leading works came from authors such as Newhall and German historians and collectors of photographs, Helmut and Alison Gernsheim.³⁹ In her opening section of the 1977 bibliography of photographic publications, Koltun highlighted the Gernsheims’ work as foundational for archivists starting out in photographic archiving. And her colleague Andrew Birrell emphasized in the same bibliography the establishment in 1977 of the new British journal *History of Photography* as a landmark development – the first scholarly journal devoted to the subject. The bibliography noted too the contributions of photographers and collectors of photographs to understanding some of aspects of the history of photography, especially its technical dimensions. These too were valuable sources of information for the archivist, but most focused on the surface image value of photographs or their monetary value, not on archival questions or in-depth scholarly analysis of photographs.⁴⁰

³⁸ Beaumont Newhall review of Lucia Moholy, *A Hundred Years of Photography* (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 1939) in *The Art Bulletin* 23, no. 3 (September 1941), 247.

³⁹ Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present Day* (New York: Museum of Modern Art; distributed by Doubleday, 1964); Helmut and Alison Gernsheim, *The History of Photography from the Camera Obscura to the Beginning of the Modern Era* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969).

⁴⁰ Lilly Koltun (co-ordinator), “The Photograph: An Annotated Bibliography for Archivists,” 124-25, 138-40.

Canadian historians of photography Andrea Kunard and Carol Payne deem the 1960s the pivotal decade in the development of the history of Canadian photography.⁴¹ The Canadian development was part of and influenced by the wider international movement toward greater interest in the history of photography represented by Newhall and the Gernsheims, among others. Canadian photographer, collector of photographs, and student of the history of photography, Ralph Greenhill, published his pathbreaking *Early Photography in Canada* in 1965, as the first overview history of the subject in Canada. It was during this time too, as NPC member Richard Huyda reflects, “Canadian academics began to express interest in the photo history and encouraged their students to explore the subject and or collections.”⁴²

Some archival institutions in Canada became active in the area, most notably the Notman Photographic Archives in Montreal, curated by Stanley Triggs, and which housed the important archive of nineteenth-century photographer William Notman. The National Gallery of Canada established its Photographs Collection in 1967 with both archival preservation and ‘fine art’ purposes, but it tended to concentrate on aesthetic and international materials rather than historical Canadian photography.⁴³ Other archives, libraries, and museums in Canada had acquired photographic materials over the years, but not given them much priority. Huyda recalls that “most provincial and municipal archives, libraries and museums in the 1960s and 1970s generally had very limited focus on their photo collections, and few resources and fewer if any staff specifically dedicated

⁴¹Andrea Kunard and Carol Payne, “Writing Photography in Canada: A Historiography,” in Kunard and Payne, eds., *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), 232.

⁴²Huyda, Questionnaire, Question 7, p. 129.

⁴³Ann W. Thomas, “The National Gallery of Canada,” *History of Photography* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1996), 171; and Kunard and Payne, eds., 241

to these collections.⁴⁴ The Provincial Archives of British Columbia was one exception by the 1970s, as it had a Visual Records Division and photographic specialist, J. Robert Davison, and an archivist/bibliographer of photographic history, David Mattison.

As Payne and Kunard argue, in the 1960s “photography’s full entry into the art museum, art school curriculum, and art marketplace fostered a regular body of scholarly literature.”⁴⁵ Yet not much of it dealt with the history of Canadian photography, nor the issues or requirements associated with the care of photographic archives, as such. By the early 1960s, Canadian collectors of photographs, photographers, academics, archivists, librarians, and curators had done very little to advance the study of the history of Canadian photography. Additionally, archival work with photographs was still limited, episodic, and incidental to other records work and priorities, and embryonic at best.

During the 1960s, however, changes were taking shape that would shift attitudes towards communication, and thus photographs, and which directly affected archives. Marshall McLuhan’s slogan “the medium is the message” provided theoretical inspiration for emerging archival questions surrounding various forms of media, including photography. McLuhan opens his ground breaking 1964 publication *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* with his famous aphorism:

In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium - that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Huyda, Questionnaire, Question 7, p. 129.

⁴⁵ Kunard and Payne, eds., 232.

⁴⁶ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet Book, New American Library, McGraw-Hill Book Company, paperback reprint, 1964), 23.

In short, photography – according to McLuhan – is “an extension of ourselves”. For McLuhan, means of communication ought to be studied in order to understand their profound impact on how people think, come to know their worlds, and on society generally. The message of the medium is not simply its explicit information content, but also arises from this deeper understanding of the impact of the means of communication.

In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan devotes a chapter to photography, including a short survey of its history, in which he argues for “the transforming power of the photo” in day-to-day life and the profound changes photography has brought in human communication. He notes “the revolution” photography wrought in human experience, which defines key formative stages in human history. McLuhan wrote: “The step from the age of Typographic Man to the age of Graphic Man was taken with the invention of photography.”⁴⁷ McLuhan’s stress on a contextual analysis of media occurred as greater attention was being paid to the study of photographs. McLuhan also influenced ideas about that subject and photographic archives at the PAC. Although the *content* in the pictures had always been understood as important, the medium of the photograph itself was increasingly being regarded as a legitimate object of study. As will be noted in a moment, McLuhan’s splashy statements played a part in this development at the PAC.

In the 1960s, McLuhan’s provocative ideas were entwined in a decade of immense social change. Following the privations and sacrifices of the Great Depression and a Second World War fought for human liberation from tyranny, social forces of protest against other and remaining injustices gathered strength. Historians followed suit. During the 1960s, previously underrepresented and marginalized groups became the focus of a new social history, which required resort to a wider range of source materials

⁴⁷ Ibid., 169, 171.

than the conventional political, military, and diplomatic histories that relied on the institutional and personal textual records of elites.⁴⁸ The social history movement found that new sources and contemporary ways of thinking about familiar sources were needed since many conventional textual documents found in archives left a large part of society either undocumented or poorly documented, including, minorities, women, and the lower classes.

This led many historians and others, both academic and non-academic researchers, to look at other sources of information to support these diverse histories and to look to visual documentation, such as photographs, which often tended to capture this variety of wider human experiences and conditions. Social history altered the types of archival documents historians were interested in, and also resulted in a flood of publications in this new vein of history. In the Canadian context, historian Michael Bliss reflects, “from 1972 to 1975 we issued a new book in the Social History of Canada Series every six weeks.”⁴⁹ During this decade of change, social history’s efforts to look within archives for the “other” set the stage for Canadian archivists, particularly those at the PAC, to respond in order to promote the use of photography to help establish photographic archives and enhance research.

The ferment of McLuhanism and social criticism and protest helped stimulate a new conceptual literature on photography. Published in 2009, *70s: Photography and Everyday Life* reflects back on these trends. It is a compilation of several photographers whose work throughout the decade reflects the relationship between the social-political

⁴⁸ Eileen Ka-May Cheng, *Historiography: An Introductory Guide* (London: Continuum, 2012), 118.

⁴⁹ Michael Bliss, *Writing History: A Professor’s Life* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2011), 163. See also, Andrew Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 5, pp. 97-106.

landscape and the use of the medium to display it.⁵⁰ The opening essay describes the 1970s as the decade of the “legitimization of photography” and continues, “in fact, in the 1970s, conditions were particularly favorable for redefining and updating the notion of a document.”⁵¹ These conditions and changes enhanced the study of photography as it was taken up by major intellectual figures who showed in many ways how McLuhan had been correct about the importance of doing so. These leading minds produced widely read essays, interviews, and books on the topic.

For example, British art critic John Berger’s *Ways of Seeing* sees photographs of the 1960s and 1970s as reflective of their time – as images of consumer culture. As an indicator of wider public interest in questions about media, Berger’s book began as a BBC television series in 1972.⁵² For American Susan Sontag, another highly acclaimed commentator on photography in the 1970s, photography’s power in relation to art was a concern. In a 1978 interview, she states “my interest is, above all, in photography as its own art medium. It is its own language, a language that alters the status of art.” Like Berger, she saw it bound up with capitalism and consumer culture.⁵³ Sontag also reflects on the overall impact of the proliferation of photographs since the invention of photography in 1839:

The inventory started in 1839 and since then just about everything has been photographed, or so it seems.... In teaching us a new visual code, photographs alter and enlarge our notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe. They are a grammar and, even more importantly, an ethics of seeing. Finally, the most grandiose result of the photographic enterprise is to give us the

⁵⁰ Paul Wombell, *70s: Photograph and Everyday Life* (Madrid, Spain: La Fábrica Editorial, 2009), 12.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵² John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972).

⁵³ Leland A. Poague, *Conversations with Susan Sontag* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995), 90.

sense that we can hold the whole world in our heads – as an anthology of images. To collect photographs is to collect the world.⁵⁴

These widely acclaimed books helped bring the importance of photographic analysis with a historical as well as contemporary bent to wide audiences, helping readers to think more deeply about how they affect daily life and societal conditions.

This intellectual and cultural climate, the social history movement, and McLuhan's view that the "medium is the message" help explain the emergence of photographic archives to prominence at the PAC in the 1960s and 1970s and the approach that photo-archivists took to it. McLuhan's ideas, for example, inspired Hugh Taylor, the Director General of the Archives Branch at the PAC (1971-77). Taylor's role as Director General was pivotal for the archiving at the PAC of various media, including photographs.⁵⁵ Archivist Gordon Dodds, when looking back on Taylor's tenure there states that the

creation of media divisions in the archives where he worked was a striking expression of Hugh Taylor's conviction, promoted by his reading of McLuhan ... he has always justified these changes as necessary to redress the imbalance of resources typically given over to care of and access to written records in archives⁵⁶

Photographs within the PAC had already undergone a long history of separation; but McLuhan's views on media influenced Taylor to establish separate divisions at the PAC to archive non-traditional media.

Taylor believed archivists had a lot to learn from McLuhan, both by studying the medium itself, as well as how the archival researcher would perceive it. Taylor states:

We have taken our records very much for granted, while we have respected and sought to preserve their physical nature, we have regarded them simply as

⁵⁴ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 3.

⁵⁵ Gordon Dodds, "Hugh Taylor: The Far-Away Archivist," in *Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections by Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. Cook and Dodds, 11.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

the neutral ‘carriers’ of messages or pieces of information, despite the fact that the nature of each medium does shape administrative systems.⁵⁷

Photographs shared in this reconceptualization. Like Taylor, archivists in the NPC, along with the growing number of academic students of photography across the world, ceased to view them as neutral records, and instead saw them as much more complex evidence of and influences on the societies that made, used, and archived them.

Taylor reflected on McLuhan’s ideas and their significant relevance to archives.

He states:

In *Gutenberg Galaxy*, published in 1962 and in *Understanding Media* printed two years later, Marshall McLuhan articulated much that archivists can feel in their bones: the elemental power of the media in their care and, by a process of transference; the emerging power of the archivist within society as a key figure in the information network.⁵⁸

McLuhan’s words shook Taylor into action. The PAC’s Picture Division had been reorganized to create the Historical Photographs Section in 1964.⁵⁹ Under Taylor, as the Director General of the Archives Branch, the section became a full division in 1975 reporting to him as the National Photography Collection.⁶⁰ Huyda, who had been Head of the Historical Photographs Section, became Director of the NPC. By 1975 the PAC held half a million prints and negatives; photographs could no longer be ignored as legitimate historical records in need of attention.⁶¹ Taylor’s vision cannot be overlooked, as Cook argues,

⁵⁷ Hugh Taylor, “The Medium of the Record: Archives in the Wake of McLuhan,” *Georgia Archives* 6, no.1 (Spring 1978), 1.

⁵⁸ Hugh Taylor, “Canadian Archives: Patterns from a Federal Perspective” *Archivaria* 1, no 2 (Summer 1976), 10. PAC photo-archivist Andrew Birrell echoes this view of McLuhan’s influence on his own dawning awareness in the late 1960s and early 1970s of the significance of photographs. See Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 5, p. 99.

⁵⁹ Taylor, “Canadian Archives: Patterns from a Federal Perspective,” 10.

⁶⁰ National Archives of Canada, *Documentary Art and Photography Division*, 3.

⁶¹ Andrew J. Birrell, “Foreword” in *National Photography Collection* (Ottawa: Public Archives Canada, 1984), viii.

For archivists of audio visual records of the 1970s, Taylor was a breath of fresh air, whose influential writings engendered a sense of legitimacy for archivists working with these media. The structural changes at the Public Archives that flowered from his beliefs gave media archivists scope for their knowledge to flourish, and led to a vast increase in the number of audiovisual records now held safely in the Archives and available for researchers.⁶²

By 1981, according to Huyda, the division had 20 staff members and an annual budget of \$500,000.⁶³

From this Public Archives platform⁶⁴ in the 1960s and 1970s a handful of archivists launched a significant contribution to knowledge by pioneering the study of the history of photography in Canada. NPC members Lilly Koltun, Andrew Birrell, Peter Robertson, Andrew Rodger, Joan Schwartz, and Richard Huyda led a change in the way in which photographs ought to be understood by archivists and curators in other photographic repositories, such as libraries, museums and art galleries, and by scholars in various fields in Canada. The NPC sought to influence photographic archiving and research beyond the PAC.⁶⁵ Its staff members were the leading Canadian wing of an international movement that was occurring at the same time among academics, archivists, and curators that maintained the photographs should be understood and managed by cultural heritage repositories on the basis of a new view of them – as a legitimate object of study, and not simply straightforward conveyors of obvious image content. According to Kunard and Payne, the NPC members made a lasting contribution to the study of the

⁶² Terry Cook, “Archives as Media of Communication,” in *Essays: Archives as Medium*. March 6, 2007, accessed April 6, 2017 <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/innis-mcluhan/030003-4040-e.html>; Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 5, p. 98, writes of “the winds of change” for media archives under Taylor.

⁶³ See “Employment History,” in Huyda, Questionnaire, Question 8, pp. 134-135.

⁶⁴ Public Archives of Canada, *National Photography Collection, General Guide Series* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1983), 5.

⁶⁵ Huyda, Questionnaire, Question 5, pp. 127-128.

history of photography by spearheading study of nineteenth and twentieth century photography through deployment of social historical methods.⁶⁶

Kunard and Payne also note that the NPC members' work was "shaped by the archive itself."⁶⁷ In other words, the NPC members' interest in the history of photography was driven by their commitment to archival work. They were not interested in the history of photography simply in order to establish it as a field of study, although they also achieved that. Their interest in it was sparked and sustained by the need to make archival work with the photographs in their care a contribution to the wider work of photographic archives. They sought to understand the history of photography in order to identify, appraise (to determine whether to acquire them for the PAC), describe, make accessible and intelligible, and preserve NPC archival photographs. And so their study was rarely intended to understand the history of photography per se in a fully comprehensive manner – as traditional historians might aim to do – but in order to take from that history what they as archivists needed to know to do archival work well with the photographs in their care and within their PAC mandate.⁶⁸

This "*archival* way to think about them [photographs]", as Joan Schwartz puts it, set out to overthrow the neglect and misconception of photographs in traditional archival thinking, particularly by Schellenberg, whom she says, saw "very little evidential value in pictorial records."⁶⁹ NPC members were adamant in stressing that photographs were *documents* that bore evidence about when, why, and how they were created and used and, if that is known in depth, it would make them far more valuable as carriers of information

⁶⁶ Kunard and Payne, 231-32.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 5, pp. 97-106.

⁶⁹ Joan Schwartz, Interview with Author (emphasis added). This response is in regard to Question 9 of the Questionnaire, see Appendix A.

than if their surface image content alone was assumed to be the sum total of their message. Koltun explains,

...if we don't understand how it's made [a photograph], we won't understand why it was made, who made it, for what purpose, what was it used for, how could it be used in future, what would be a resource, what nature of resource it would be, how would you actually describe it or catalogue it so it's open to [researchers]. Not buried in an archives, we all hated the word buried, and cemeteries, and dust, and so on.⁷⁰

To pursue this goal, NPC members developed and consistently stressed a contextual approach to the understanding of photographs across photographic history. They developed and explored the evolving societal, intellectual, institutional, and technological contexts in which photographs were created, used, and archived. They emphasized knowing about the role of photographers in these processes. They identified various genres of photography in their care (such as urban photography), distinct types or forms of photographs (such as the daguerreotype), and they focused on conventions of representation and aesthetic styles used by the photographs' creators to structure information in photographs and that then helped archivists to grasp sought for information content from the masses of photographs. The NPC photo-archivists pointed to the richer meanings photographs convey when viewed in these contexts and the greater utility and accessibility of them. They pursued this work across the various archival functions they performed, and shared their findings and ideas in publications, conference papers, and exhibits. Koltun says, "We were not the kinds of people or personalities that were retiring at all; we were kind of a different breed of archivists." As she writes of NPC work, "... it was very much learning to train your eye."⁷¹

The work accomplished by the NPC members on both the practical and

⁷⁰ Lilly Koltun, Questionnaire, Question 8, p. 152.

⁷¹ Koltun, Questionnaire, Question 8, p. 151 and 152.

theoretical aspects of photography was not an isolated accomplishment, nor solely an archival one. Although arguably the most influential and prominent voices in the Canadian landscape, the NPC members were surrounded by others in the cultural field of libraries, museums, and art galleries in Canada, and throughout the world. As previously mentioned, the 1960s and 1970s were decades of immense change and these external forces directly influenced archives. This broader international movement began to stray from hobbyist views of photography to a more contextual approach, in which the NPC members solidified their position as the leading Canadian voices. These global influences transcended countries, borders, and archives around the world and are reflective of what archival theorist Terry Cook notes as “analyzing the history of archival ideas requires listening to the archival discourse of the time and place involved.”⁷² Changes in cultural institutions throughout the world were beginning to rapidly take place, as archivists, theorists, photographers, historians and others spoke up on the importance of photographs.

The early work of the NPC members fundamentally changed the way archivists and academics thought about photographs. In doing so, the NPC members became knowledge creators in their role of revising the understanding of photographs – they argued against the typical previous role of photographs as mere decontextualized illustration, placing photographs without much comment or analysis in a special visual interlude within a history book, they argued in favour of thinking of photographs as visual records requiring much deeper study if they were to be used in research and archived as well as possible. The next chapter will examine more closely the key features

⁷² Terry Cook, “What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), 19.

of the contextual historical approach the NPC archivists took in their effort to understand photographs in order to archive them.

Chapter Two: Making Photographs a Subject of Study

“Most archivists are only at the beginning of changes which they often did not initiate or even anticipate.”¹

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s the archivists of the National Photography Collection (NPC) at the Public Archives of Canada (PAC) influenced the way in which the archives acquired, described, and preserved photographs.² NPC members argued that photographs need to be recognized as historical source material of equal value to the long established cornerstone of archival work – textual records. They also argued that the distinctive qualities of photographs needed to be understood by archivists and researchers. To achieve these goals, they held that the creation of photographs must be historicized or placed in historical context far more than had been done by either leading archival thinkers or researchers. In this regard they built upon then conventional notions about the study of other types of records, but showed that to understand photographs a much deeper contextual analysis was required than had been thought sufficient for the textual archival records that had shaped archival thought and practice over the centuries.

The NPC was led by six influential photo archivists: Lilly Koltun, Andrew Birrell, Peter Robertson, Andrew Rodger, Joan Schwartz, and Richard Huyda. Picture Division archivist Jim Burant was also a leading contributor to this movement at the PAC, although he was not a formal staff member of the NPC. This chapter argues that the NPC members created a watershed moment in which they played a leading role in making the

¹ Edwin Welch, “Continuing Education for Archivists,” *The Canadian Archivist* 2, no. 5 (1974), 42.

² Library and Archives Canada (LAC) was known as the National Archives of Canada between 1986 and 2004 and the Public Archives of Canada (PAC) from 1912 to 1986. It will be referred to in this chapter as the PAC.

history of photography a subject of study in Canada in order to support archival work and research.

This chapter focuses on the published work by members of the NPC as that is where they made the case that photographs ought to be a legitimate object of historical study. This chapter begins with Birrell's involvement in the late 1970s in writing *Canadian Photography, 1839-1920*. The period between the creation of the NPC in 1975 and the NPC members' collective 1984 publication *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada 1839-1940*, was the formative moment in the development of the NPC's contribution to photographic archives. During that time its staff members published widely – in the new scholarly archival journal *Archivaria*, launched in 1975 by the Association of Canadian Archivists, in *BC Studies*, *History of Photography*, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, *Material Culture*, and many other journals. In addition to the books they produced, they also mounted exhibits of photographs and published companion catalogue commentaries, contributed to PAC published annual reports, and in-house PAC publications (such as *The Archivist* magazine). Government publications were essential in reporting on the accomplishments and work of the NPC members.³ The practical archival work of the NPC members and their efforts in promoting it internally within the PAC to other branches, in addition to researchers and the general public, should not be overlooked.⁴

³ For examples of PAC publications, see Public Archives of Canada, *Public Archives of Canada Report 1959-1969: Les archives publiques du Canada rapport 1959-1969* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971); Public Archives of Canada, *Archives: Mirror of Canada Past* (Toronto: Published for the Public Archives of Canada by University of Toronto Press, 1972); Andrew Birrell, "Foreword" in *National Photography Collection* (Ottawa: Public Archives Canada, 1984); and lastly, Jim Burant (compiler), *Documentary Art and Photography Division: General Guide Series* (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1992).

⁴ Practical work completed by the NPC members and their exhibitions will be discussed in further detail in chapter three.

The chapter's main purpose is to unpack key aspects of the NPC members' historical or contextual approach to making photographs a legitimate subject of study. They emphasized knowledge of the various contexts shaping the creation and uses of photographs. These include the societal context, institutional context, technological context (and its impact on the messages photographs convey), and types or genres of photographs (photography of urban places, for example) and the conventions of representation and aesthetic styles employed to depict the subjects of the photographs, as contextual frameworks for the information content the photographs carry. The chapter also discusses the NPC members' ideas about the influence of photographers working within these contexts.

With these ideas, followed responses and debates – both from the NPC members and from colleagues – within and outside the archival field. Since the 1960s, criticism by NPC members of publications of photographs was at the heart of their work. Their ideas sparked influential debates to be discussed at the end of this chapter. Therefore, it is important to examine the types of publications that created this forum for discussion, debate, and examination of archival photographs in Canada, and internationally.

By the late 1980s and 1990s, the influence of a variety of ideas (under the label postmodernism) about the centrality of means of communication in shaping what can be known was being felt in the archival profession. Archivists would apply the ideas from this movement to the records they acquire, the archival functions they apply on records, and the role of the archivist in providing access. Those NPC members still active in the profession by the end of the century, especially Koltun and Schwartz, engaged these ideas. These ideas both affirmed and extended the NPC historical approach because they

emphasized the importance of the full history of photographs – not just study of their initial point of creation – and that that history now included the impact of archiving actions on the records. The scholarship of Schwartz, in particular, began to stress the power of the photograph and of archival actions taken with them to shape knowledge in the past and of the past. In doing so the NPC members pioneered the study of the history of photography in Canada and showed how archivists could be creators of major new areas of knowledge and not simply the custodians or guardians of records. As a result, they played a direct role in moving the archival profession in new intellectual directions in Canada and in influencing research being done at the PAC.

The contribution of avid amateur historian and photographer Ralph Greenhill, who published *Early Photography in Canada* in 1965, the first narrative history of photography in Canada, is now viewed as a turning point in the historiography of Canadian photography.⁵ Before the work of NPC members came to the fore, amateurs played a large role in Canada in advocating for the importance of preserving photographs and contributed to the first publications on photography. NPC archivist Koltun argued at the time that “whereas whole libraries have now been written about the development of photography in Britain, France, America, and the world, similar coverage of Canadian photography is woefully slight. Only one general book of substance has yet rolled off any press, that of Ralph Greenhill.”⁶ Greenhill not only filled a gap in scholarship by tracing the outline of the long history of photography in Canada – but called into question the approaches of both researchers and archivists to photography, as well as the underestimation of the medium as an evidential source.

⁵ Kunard and Payne, eds., 232.

⁶ Koltun, “The Photograph: An Annotated Bibliography for Archivists,” 127.

Although Greenhill was arguably the best of the Canadian amateur historians of photography, his work did not yet meet the emerging scholarly standards for the subject. Larger archival questions had come to the forefront of the history of Canadian photography by the time, fourteen years later, a second edition of *Early Photography in Canada* was published. This second edition, titled *Canadian Photography, 1839-1920*, was co-written by Greenhill and NPC archivist Andrew Birrell. Published in 1979, this edition incorporated biographies of photographers themselves, as well as discussion of the technology they were using to create these photographs.⁷ Koltun commented that Birrell's involvement in the second edition enhanced the text: "Here the Canadian archivist will find helpful biographical information on local photographers whose names... are almost exclusively ignored by all other books."⁸

Birrell's role in the edition allowed for larger archival questions in the history of Canadian photography to be raised. *Canadian Photography, 1839-1920* became a publication that sparked the beginning of an investment in shifting the position of photographs in research and archives, by archivists – and more specifically – NPC archivists. Looking back at *Canadian Photography 1839-1920* in 2011 art historian Carol Payne and Associate Curator at the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography Andrea Kunard address the bigger transformation the second edition represented. They argue that "Birrell's involvement in *Canadian Photography 1839-1920* signaled the deep engagement of the Library and Archives Canada (then the Public Archives of Canada) in historical scholarship on photography in Canada."⁹ The immense work accomplished by

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Kunard and Payne, 232.

the members of the NPC was instrumental in changing the place of photographs within archives and their future use within research.

This deep engagement by the NPC members was based on the historical analysis of the contexts in which photographs had been created. An example of early work completed by the NPC members on this topic is *Archivaria* 5, in which their ideas dominated the pages. The societal context was of primary importance in this analysis. The NPC members were arguing that the time in history when photographs were being created had a direct influence on the genres of photography produced. Canada's birth as a political nation at Confederation in 1867 and the country's subsequent development in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced the formative societal context in which the NPC members placed photographs. Indeed in their view, the invention of photography (in 1826) assisted the development of Canada, as it was an influential factor in the expansion of the new country across the continent and in the growth of its cities. In the early 1980s Burant argued that "the nineteenth century experienced a revolution in visual communication which affected every aspect of Victorian life."¹⁰ These societal and photographic technological developments had a direct influence on the types of photographs that were taken by both professionals and amateurs and the messages they were meant to convey. The theme of travel, exploration, and empire would permeate the publications of NPC members, as the nineteenth century, in particular, was a time of fascination with new places.¹¹

An early NPC publication with this focus is Birrell's *Into the Silent Land: Survey Photography in the Canadian West, 1858-1900*. The photographs presented in *Into the*

¹⁰ Jim Burant, "The Visual World in the Victorian Age," *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984-85), 110.

¹¹ Joan M. Schwartz, "The Photographic Record of Pre-Confederation British Columbia," *Archivaria* 5 (1977/1978), 33.

Silent Land “trace this ‘drift’ in Canada on government sponsored surveys and explorations from the first tentative and experimental uses of the new medium to the point where it became the indispensable tool in surveying.”¹² Birrell furthers this point in his article on “Survey Photography in British Columbia, (1858-1900)” in which he states, “each time the camera played a role. Each time photography advanced in importance until it became the primary instrument for surveying.”¹³ Birrell’s *Benjamin Baltzy: Photographs and Journal of an Expedition through British Columbia: 1871* discusses the photographic history of the Geological Survey of Canada and its primary photographer, Benjamin Baltzy.¹⁴ Another example of a study of photographs taken to scout out and document the resources of Western Canada is Huyda’s *Camera in the Interior, 1858: H.L. Hime, Photographer. The Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition*.¹⁵

The key role of institutions in the formation of these photographs here too is evident, as only institutions often had the equipment, need, and finances to support major photographic projects. The NPC members focused on the institutional context of photographs for two reasons: first, due to the place of institutions as a societal creation – institutions are assigned functions by society, and create photographs based on these functions. Secondly, due to the mandate of the PAC, many photographs within their holdings were created by federal governmental departments. The Canadian government and its various arms sent out its surveyors, geologists, and photographers to realize its political aspirations. The photographs reflect these underlying purposes. Joan Schwartz

¹² Andrew Birrell, *Into the Silent Land: Survey Photography in the Canadian West, 1858-1900: A Public Archives of Canada Travelling Exhibition* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1975), 2.

¹³ Andrew Birrell, “Survey Photography in British Columbia, 1858-1900,” *BC Studies*, no.52 (Winter 1981-82), 60.

¹⁴ Andrew Birrell, *Benjamin Baltzy: Photographs and Journal of an Expedition through British Columbia: 1871* (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1978), 19.

¹⁵ Richard Huyda, *Camera in the Interior, 1858: H.L. Hime, Photographer: the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition* (Winnipeg: Coach House Press, 1975).

too studied the Hime photographs and summarizes the underlying “functional” (as she calls them) societal purposes these institutional photographs had. Rather than simple illustrations of geological or landscape forms: “[We] recognize them as carefully crafted, visual arguments that expressed the political, socio-cultural, and economic aspirations of the expansionist movement embroiled in political controversy, scientific debate, and cultural confrontation.”¹⁶ Birrell states, “These photos, then, form a bridge between our time and a Canada about to be transformed by the hands of a whiteman.”¹⁷

Looking back, photography that has been used “to capture landscape views thus originates in the earliest days of its practice, and was influenced by both scientific and artistic assumptions.”¹⁸ Capturing the landscape came in many forms, one notable amateur within early Canadian photography that the NPC members focused on was the photographer Richard Roche, who was “typical of many British military men who took up photography as a hobby to document the strange and exotic lands where they were stationed.”¹⁹ Imagery then tied into the imperialistic vein of progress in conquering foreign lands and overcoming nature; this allowed nations, and later the Canadian government, to both track and flex this power.²⁰

These photographs thus document notions of ‘progress’, marked by actual Euro-Canadian settlement of these lands. Settlers played a large role in demonstrating progress through their cameras, and various settlements throughout British Columbia reflect this

¹⁶ Joan Schwartz, “‘We make our tools and our tools make us,’ Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomats,” *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995), 47.

¹⁷ Birrell, *Into the Silent Land*, 2.

¹⁸ Jill Delaney, “An Inconvenient Truth? Scientific Photography and Archival Ambivalence,” *Archivaria* 65 (Spring 2008), 80.

¹⁹ Andrew Birrell, Peter Robertson, Lilly Koltun, Andrew Rodger and Joan Schwartz, “Private Realms of Light: Canadian Amateur Photography, 1839-1940. On View: The Evolution of Amateur Photography,” *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84), 118.

²⁰ Delaney, 80.

important movement of early Canadian photography. The role of the photographer, the limitations of the technology, as well as the landscape came together to create these photographs. Schwartz and Koltun examine these themes of ‘progress’ in a variety of individual and collective publications.²¹ One such study is of the town of Yale, British Columbia in the late nineteenth century. They view the photographs of Yale through the interpretation of the settlers themselves in conveying the advancing settlement of the town by promoting images of the bustling main street, and of overcoming the vast wilderness of B.C.²² Again, the photograph plays a crucial part in presenting this record of ‘progress.’ Conquering nature in the West became a ‘cliché’ in the early history of Canadian photography. As Schwartz argues of such images:

In subtle but pervasive ways, these images describe the newcomers who transformed the wilderness and, within the practical and conceptual constraints of prevailing technology and attitudes, demonstrate what photographers considered worth recording as well as what people wanted to buy. In short the photographic record reflected the intellectual, political, economic and social milieu within which it was created.²³

Schwartz then notes, “The photographs demand examination both individually and collectively not only for their factual content but also for their underlying statements about place and society.”²⁴ For Koltun, a similar contextualization is made of the genre of ‘streetscapes’ in the early nineteenth century urbanization of Canada.

²¹ For example, see Schwartz, “The Photographic Record of Pre-Confederation British Columbia”; Schwartz and Koltun’s, “A Visual Cliché: Five Views of Yale,” *BC Studies*, no.53 (Winter 1981-1982); Andrew Birrell, et al, “Private Realms of Light: Canadian Amateur Photography, 1839-1940”; and Lilly Koltun, *City Blocks, City Spaces/Espaces urbains: Historical Photographs of Canada’s Urban Growth, c 1850-1900* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1980).

²² Schwartz and Koltun, “A Visual Cliché: Five Views of Yale,” 128. This issue of *BC Studies* was edited by Schwartz and devoted to articles on photography in British Columbia between 1858 and 1914.

²³ Schwartz, “The Photographic Record of Pre-Confederation British Columbia,” 17-18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 21. Indigenous peoples of Canada were not discussed in detail by the NPC members. These photography movements were documented from the eyes of the Euro-Canadian settler.

The aims of progress through western expansion created what might be called a genre of photographs about that societal phenomenon – or an identifiable body of photographs sharing certain traits generated by the desire to document that purpose. The urbanization of the late nineteenth-century Canadian landscape is a parallel major theme presented by the NPC members that exemplifies this emphasis on genre. Koltun’s 1980 PAC exhibit and publication *City Blocks, City Spaces: Historical Photographs of Canada’s Urban Growth 1850-1900* explores the use of photography to document urban expansion across the late nineteenth century. Birrell reflects that the exhibit was “a conscious attempt to use photography to explore historical themes, not to present a gallery-type exhibition.”²⁵ For Koltun, the photographs convey images of certain places, buildings, people, and activities, but the images would not be understood without also noting that “these photographs then are not merely documents of growth in detail, but the visual equivalent of pride in growth generally. The city conquers its landscape; the man-centred place is heroic.” Koltun examined photographs taken of Ottawa, Victoria, Winnipeg, Montreal, Toronto, Halifax, and Quebec City. “Photographs,” she adds, “show us more than the eye can see.... These photographs record the image of the city built and the city idealized.”²⁶ Urbanization as a theme is a reflection on the shifting of societal and institutional needs over time.

Most of these typical photographs of cities were taken by commercial photographers. One commentator reflects on the societal commercial factors shaping this genre (urban photography) in a contemporary review of Koltun’s exhibit: “perhaps the most important factor was simply that the photographs were taken for commercial

²⁵ Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 6, p.109

²⁶ Koltun, *City Blocks, City Spaces*, 13, 11.

purposes; the photographers wanted to sell them to architectural clients and travellers, who preferred scenes unmarred by snow or detritus.”²⁷ The idealization of urbanization in this photographic genre employed what may be called conventions of representation to pursue its various goals. Photographers of the Canadian city in the late nineteenth century often relied on what Koltun calls an “image type” or “panoramic views, street scenes, close-ups.”²⁸ For example, she explains the conventions shaping the photographs of a city’s most impressive buildings:

The photographer also follows the intent of the architecture, for example, by maximizing size and detail on a large and elaborate building, while minimizing distortion of its symbolic contour and style characteristics. With this attitude, it is no surprise to see the same angle, the same weather, the same prominent features recurring so often in the views of the same building, created by different photographers at different times.²⁹

The conventions of representation created, then become contextual frameworks for the information content they carry.

Another important genre of photographs influenced by its societal and institutional context and studied by the NPC members is wartime photography. War provided an early opportunity for photography to play a key role. The Civil War in the United States provided the first major platform for photography to alter the way war would be viewed.³⁰ Photographs followed Canadians into both World Wars at home and abroad. Early on, the acquisition and exhibition of wartime photographs were viewed as essential to the Canadian national narrative of the wartime experience.³¹ Robertson thought wartime photography represented an important stage in the history of the

²⁷ Louise Abbott, “City Blocks, City Spaces: Historical Photographs of Canada’s Urban Growth, c. 1850-1900,” *Urban History Review* 9. 3 (February 1, 1981), 88.

²⁸ Koltun, *City Blocks, City Spaces*, 11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁰ Peter Robertson, “Canadian Photojournalism during the First World War,” *History of Photography* 2, Issue 1 (1978), 51.

³¹ Public Archives of Canada, *Archives: Mirror of Canada Past*, 12.

medium. He felt that photographs documenting the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War

show[s] photography coming to grips with 20th century warfare, in the process losing much of the freedom and objectivity with which it had recorded such 19th century conflicts as the American Civil War, but also showing signs of foreshadowing the powerful photography which would later reveal the bloodshed, suffering and futility of the war in Vietnam.³²

That said, he noted that photographs most often reflected the propaganda needs of the military institutions that created them, which resulted in distortions of reality that archivists could help explain to researchers through the kind of historical contextualization of the photographs' origins that he and his NPC colleagues could provide.³³

For the NPC archivists societal contexts shaped institutional contexts, resulting in genres of photographs, their conventions of representation, and sometimes manipulation. This was the world of the photographer, who was needed to complete the work. Looking back at his career as an archivist, Huyda states that he "wanted to understand the world of photographers" and linked this in a 1977 article to the prevailing limited emphasis on seeing only the bare image content of photographs.³⁴ Huyda states "on the whole, there is an inadequate representation of the skills and abilities of Canadian photographers because

³² Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism during the First World War," 51.

³³ Ibid. See also Peter Robertson, *Relentless Verity: Canadian Military Photographers Since 1885* (Ottawa: Public Archives, 1982). For Andrew Rodger's companion study of First World War Canadian photography, see his "Amateur Photography by Soldiers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force," *Archivaria* 26 (Summer 1988). Robertson's concerns pick up on the themes of an earlier influential *Archivaria* article he wrote. This article did much to usher in a place for conversation about the interpretation of photographs in the Canadian archival community. A major argument of the article is the importance of both archivists and researchers understanding how photographs can be manipulated. In particular, Robertson discusses the manipulation of photography through examples of wartime photography and photographs used for advertisement purposes. See Peter Robertson, "More than Meets the Eye," *Archivaria* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1976).

³⁴ Richard Huyda, Questionnaire, Question 5, p. 127.

of a prevailing preoccupation with content.”³⁵ A good example of tracing the career of an individual photographer is Birrell’s *Benjamin Baltzy*. Birrell traces the story of Baltzy while providing an institutional history of the Geological Survey of Canada. He reiterates the importance of photographers in early western Canadian expeditions and highlights their emergence in roles central to institutional reporting.³⁶ Photographers, whether they meant to or not, chose the spot where they stood, what the subject of the picture was to be, whether they would delete or discard the photograph, or show it to the world. As Roberston argued, we should be “evaluating the intentions of the photographer (whether he/she be an artist, publicist, or journalist advocate).”³⁷ Simply put, as Ian Keenan notes, “context surrounds records from their creation to the present.”³⁸ If one is to look solely at the photograph for direct image content, one misses the inherent complexities that demand examination by both archivists and scholars.

The NPC members argued that the role of the photographer had been overlooked for far too long. An overwhelmingly positive review of Huyda’s book about Hime (*Camera in the Interior, 1858*) states, “the real value of this book lies with the insights it gives into the man behind the camera – his difficulties, limitations and successes.”³⁹ Schwartz discusses how nineteenth-century photographers catered to their clients, and took photos that they thought would sell as “consequently, the photographic record of this period exhibits a selectivity which is in considerable measure a reflection of pioneer

³⁵ Richard Huyda, “Photographs and Archives in Canada,” *Archivaria* 5 (Winter 1977-1978), 6.

³⁶ Birrell, *Benjamin Baltzy*, 19.

³⁷ Robertson, “More than Meets the Eye,” abstract.

³⁸ Ian Keenan, “The Archival Eye: New Ways for Archivists to Look at and Describe Photographs,” (Master’s thesis, University of Manitoba, 2011), 3.

³⁹ Elizabeth Blight, Review of *Camera in the Interior, 1858: H.L. Hime, Photographer. The Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition*, Richard J. Huyda (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1975) *Archivaria* 2 (Summer 1976), 117.

British Columbians' sense of them and their new land.”⁴⁰ The NPC members sought to recognize the photographer's role through the provision of biographies of them in their publications and research, going beyond a mere caption reference in the photograph – although that was seen as better than leaving the photograph completely undescribed.⁴¹

In 1984, years of individual and collaborative efforts surged together in the production of *Private Realms of Light*. Authored by Koltun, Birrell, Robertson, Rodger, Schwartz and Huyda, the book is a reflection of the work taken on by the archivists to advance understanding of the history and archives of photography in Canada. *Private Realms* can be viewed as an effort by the NPC archivists to draw attention to little known Canadian amateur photographers between 1839 and 1940. Ann Thomas's "Reflections on an Exhibition" reviewed *Private Realms* following the exhibition of Canadian amateur photography. She reflects

By dedicating a great deal of its human resources and years of concentrated effort to the research and organization of this exhibition, the NPC obviously perceived a serious need to address the issue of Canadian photographic practice as it existed in the latter decades of the nineteenth century until the period before the second world war...⁴²

The NPC members argued for the importance of Canadian amateurs in the overall advancement of photography through their experimental nature.⁴³ By addressing the amateur photographers of Canada, the NPC members do not just provide excellent individual biographies as well as the images of a specific photographer, they see these

⁴⁰ Schwartz, "The Photographic Record of Pre-Confederation British Columbia," 18.

⁴¹ Richard Huyda, Review of *Alberta at the Turn of the Century: A Selection of Photographs from Ernest Brown, Harry Pollard and Other Photograph Collections in the Provincial Archives of Alberta*, *Archivaria* 1 (Winter 1975), 118. Burant focuses on tracing the work of individual photographers through an archival textual record, the Canadian census. See his "A Written Portrait: Saint John Photographers and Their Studios in the 1871 Census," *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84).

⁴² Thomas, 140.

⁴³ Birrell, et al., "Private Realms of Light: Canadian Amateur Photography, 1839-1940," 115.

influential amateurs as part of a wider transition that was taking place at that time.⁴⁴

Photographs are the products in part of the stories the photographer wished to tell.

Private Realms illuminates the issues the NPC members had been collectively advancing for over a decade.

Although amateurs became a newer larger group of creators of most photography in the century after the invention of photography, and thus well worth the attention the NPC gave them, Huyda argues that the role of the photographer had yet to be fully documented in archives:

Support documentation for Canadian photographic history is even less well represented in archives... nor have recorded thoughts and attitudes of Canadian society through time concerning the merits and weaknesses of photography been accumulated. Indeed, the role of the photographer in the Canadian experience has not been preserved in any usable way; what evidence does exist remains largely buried in records created and retained primarily for other purposes.⁴⁵

As *Private Realms* points out, the NPC was truly pioneering an in-depth examination of photographers through both visual and textual records found in the PAC, as well as elsewhere. This had been difficult to achieve due to the lack of documentation.

The amateurs emerged into prominence with the assistance of technological change, an aspect of the historical context shaping the creation of photographs that was also strongly emphasized by the NPC archivists. The technology that created photographs was a focus of many NPC archivists' publications. Photographers in institutions became prominent in the early history of photography because the institutions could fund the expensive and complex photographic technologies of the first decades of photography. The technologies placed constraints on the production of photographs for individual

⁴⁴ Ibid., 118.

⁴⁵ Huyda, "Photographs and Archives in Canada," 6.

photographers and thus on the kinds of images or information they could convey.⁴⁶ Unlike photography in the twenty-first century in which cellphones capture any event and distribute the image immediately – the equipment and processes of early photography limited the photographers' ability to capture the event quickly.⁴⁷ Technology then, was not far removed from the photographer, as the relationship between the two worked together to create the photograph. From start to finish, the pair were both directly correlating to the success, failure, or manipulation of the product.

The NPC members pushed for this deeper understanding of photographic practices. As Schwartz argues,

Nineteenth century photographs should also be seen within their technological context for the photographic record of pre-Confederation British Columbia was shaped by certain practical constraints. Pioneer photographs were encumbered by the awkward paraphernalia, messy procedures and the consuming delays of collodion or wet-plate photography.⁴⁸

The technological limitations of photography allowed professional or commercial photographers to dominate early photography, as they had the needed financial and/or institutional support. However, in the latter half of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, amateur photographers came increasingly to the fore on the strength of technological developments that provided smaller, cheaper, less complex, and more portable cameras. This enabled an incalculable new volume of photographs to be made and vast new range of subjects to be photographed, with profound societal effects in the time when the photographs were created, and on what can be archived or remembered of the past. *Private Realms* told that pivotal story in the history of photography in Canada.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Schwartz, "The Photographic Record of Pre-Confederation British Columbia," 18.

⁴⁷ Burant, "Visual World in the Victorian Age," 110.

⁴⁸ Schwartz, "The Photographic Record of Pre-Confederation British Columbia," 44.

⁴⁹ Birrell, "Private Realms of Light: Canadian Amateur Photography, 1839-1940," 107.

In *Private Realms* the NPC archivists gave considerable attention to another key aspect of their contextual analysis of photographs – the aesthetics of photographic style. The nineteenth-century limitations of technology led to the success of portrait photography. Schwartz notes,

Artistic attention to microscale detail was not part of pioneer photography. Fascination with light, shape and texture had not yet entered the aesthetics of the new medium. Essentially ‘placeless’ compositions were invariably identified by captions; alone they would have satisfied nineteenth-century curiosity about the place, and abstract fine art motives would have not suited the popular concept of the photograph as a record image.⁵⁰

Looking back on it today, Koltun, who devoted the most attention to aesthetics among NPC archivists, reflects on her aspirations for the NPC when coming in as a photo-archivist with an art history background. She hoped,

To redefine the role of the NPC to address issues of meaning and documentation and how they intersect with both history and aesthetics in Canadian photography, whether historical or contemporary; to connect Canadian photography as documentary and expressive medium to trends, issues and challenges internationally, both historically and contemporaneously.⁵¹

Koltun was interested in “ideas about how art reflects the nature of society”⁵² and continued this throughout her work.

The nineteenth-century photographer’s view of photography as an objective record was soon altered. “Pictorialism” is the aesthetic style that Koltun and other NPC archivists noted in the growing amateur photography movement at the turn of the twentieth century “as the single most significant change in amateur photography.” It was marked by “its broad compositional effects, diffused focus, art-imitative techniques, and subject matter derived from the traditions of painting.” They note the appeal of

⁵⁰ Schwartz, “The Photographic Record of Pre-Confederation British Columbia,” 43.

⁵¹ Koltun, Questionnaire, Question 5, p.143.

⁵² Koltun, Questionnaire, Question 8, p.150.

pictorialism in the genre of portrait photography.⁵³ Aesthetic style might be considered an aspect of conventions of representation, as a mode of representation. Aesthetic style in photography, like other aspects of contextual analysis developed by the NPC archivists, provided a kind of shorthand of the information content of a given photograph. A photograph in the pictorial mode enhanced an artistic impression of the subject and suppressed certain other types of information associated with a more realistic depiction of it. That said, most amateurs “were interested not so much in self-expression as in recording people, places and events factually,”⁵⁴ a trend that still holds true today.

The various strands of contextual analysis were interwoven, of course, and influenced each other in the making of photographs. A photograph is the result of the interaction at a given time in history of societal context, institutional context (if created by an institution), the photographer’s agency (and even manipulation of the image), what technology allows or prevents, the types or genres of photograph chosen to be made (such as portraits), and the conventions of representation used to convey the image in them. The history of people and technology forged a link that was an essential argument for the NPC members. Analyzing the photographers, their cameras, and their audience opened up endless possibilities.

During the 1970s and 1980s the members of the NPC wanted their ideas about photographs to be widely accepted. Huyda reflects back today on their aims:

Having convinced ourselves and proven that we were on the right track in our approach to photo archival work, we naturally aspired to convince others to join us. We wanted to inspire and support our colleagues within PAC, within the

⁵³ Birrell et al., “Private Realms of Light: Canadian Amateur Photography, 1839-1940,” 123-124.

⁵⁴ Koltun, ed., *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada 1839-1940*, 50.

Canadian archival community. Eventually, these aspirations extended internationally.⁵⁵

He continues,

We aspired as well to contact and support other like-minded disciplines interested in photographs: particularly professional and amateur photographers, their associations, and those in the museum, gallery, television, film, exhibition, publishing, research and academic communities.⁵⁶

And lastly, he states “ultimately, my aspirations were to convince the powers that be that the appropriate archival attention to photo-records is of value to them, to the nation, and to the world.”⁵⁷

The NPC approach, however, generated some spirited criticism and debate among Canadian archivists. Peter Robertson’s 1976 article “More than Meets the Eye” directly addresses the role of the archivist in dealing with the ways in which photographs can mislead researchers and researchers’ lack of understanding of how to ‘read’ photographs. The result, he says, is that “whenever photographs of a subject do not exist, researchers often resort to the questionable practice of using photographs taken out of context, using the rationalization that nobody will know the difference.”⁵⁸ Not surprisingly, Robertson ends his article by urging archivists to counteract these tendencies by studying the history of the photographs in their archives – and more importantly – to relay this knowledge to researchers:

We can study photographs for evidence of the various types of distortion and manipulation mentioned in this article, and can check captions for accuracy and objectivity. We can learn as much as possible about the photographer who took the photographs, either through research into textual sources or through personal interviews: his qualifications his attitudes, his economic status. We can communicate all this information to the public by stripping away the layers of

⁵⁵ Richard Huyda, Questionnaire, Question 5, p.128.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Robertson, “More than Meets the Eye,”42.

misinformation from photographs, by bringing complete collections of photographs, bearing accurate and complete captions, into public view, by giving impartial advice to researchers, by making speeches to organizations and by publishing articles about our research, and by critically reviewing the use of historical photographs in all media. Archivists can and should spread the message that there is more than meets the eye in a photograph.⁵⁹

This article quickly initiated a debate on the topic.

This article prompted a response from City of Toronto Archivist R. Scott James on both the expectations Robertson raised about archival services and their limitations. James applauded Robertson for applying traditional textual questions to problems surrounding photographs. He commends Robertson for asking, “For what purpose was the record created, when, by whom, and in what context?”⁶⁰ James argues, however, that Robertson’s contextual analysis erred in straying too far into personal interpretation of the limitations of the photographs he discusses. He states, “the archivist must not allow himself to prejudice the work of others by imposing on his sources his own personal values and standards.”⁶¹ James maintains that this oversteps the bounds of the archivist’s role in providing information about the records to researchers.

Robertson did not respond to James. There were no other direct critics that published or voiced their criticism among Canadian archivists of the NPC archivists’ ideas about how to understand photographs through historical contextual analysis. And there was widespread endorsement of them, particularly by archivists who published work on photography, which suggests that Huyda’s hope that the NPC members’ ideas would gain traction did occur.⁶² This development and the discussion with James can be seen as part of a wider debate in the late 1970s and early 1980s on the type of knowledge

⁵⁹ Ibid., 43.

⁶⁰ R. Scott James, “Counterpoint: The Historical Photograph,” *Archivaria* 3 (1976-1977), 120.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² See *Archivaria* 65 (Spring 2008) “Special Section on Archives and Photography.”

an archivist needs, as well as its boundaries. This debate arose with the search for a new distinctive professional identity for Canadian archivists with the establishment of the Association of Canadian Archivists in 1975. How much and what type of historical or contextual knowledge did archivists need? Were they simply historians or something very different? Where was the line between the knowledge needed to do archival work properly and illegitimate influence over the direction and conclusions of archival research?

While debate on these issues remains, the many publications of NPC archivists lent support to the view that a breadth of knowledge about the past, drawn from any quarter that enabled archivists to understand the records in their care and perform their work with them was needed. In doing so they helped shape the emerging professional identity of archivists in Canada. Archivists were creators of knowledge about records in order to do their work. They were not simply the keepers of records. And when the postmodern influences began to affect archival thinking in Canada in the 1990s, questions about whether archivists should stray into interpretation of records faded since the postmodern thinking contended that all actions of representation are interpretive in one way or another.⁶³ But some NPC archivists never thought that their views had gained sufficient support in the Canadian archival profession. As will be noted in a moment, Schwartz in particular, remained a sharp critic of some conventional archival thinking and practice in the profession on photographs.

The ideas of the NPC archivists also prompted debate about their impact on the application of archival theory in day-to-day work – again as newly professionalizing

⁶³ Caroline Hoefflerle, *The Essential Historiography Reader* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011), 213.

archivists sought to clarify the foundations of their actions. The NPC's ideas ignited the 'total archives' debate in the late 1970s and caused the first sustained high level discussion of archival theory among Canadian archivists. The inclusion of all media (created by the sponsor of the archives or others) in the concept of archives had set Canadian archives apart from other national archival institutions since the founding of the PAC in 1872.⁶⁴ Dominion Archivist Arthur Doughty's collection of various forms of media and the expansion under his tenure of the mandate of the PAC in the early twentieth century into Canadian government records strengthened this concept.⁶⁵ This allowed the PAC to be a leading example of photographic archives. The NPC acquired photographs from various federal government departments and private sector sources. By the 1970s and the centennial of the founding of the Public Archives, Dominion Archivist Wilfred Smith celebrated this feature of Canadian archives by dubbing it "total archives". Total archives were seen as "Canada's single most important contribution to international archival theory,"⁶⁶ and in 1975, the creation of the NPC reflected its significance.⁶⁷ In addition to the longstanding Manuscript Division (mainly for records acquired from the private sector), by the 1970s and 1980s, the PAC had divisional units devoted to machine readable records, moving images and sound recordings, maps, textual Canadian government records, and documentary art.

⁶⁴ Laura Millar, "Discharging our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada," *Archivaria* 46 (1998); Alain Clavet, *Researchers' Guide* (Ottawa: National Photography Collection, Public Archives of Canada, 1978), 4.

⁶⁵ Public Archives of Canada, "1972-1973" in *Public Archives of Canada Report 1959-1969: Les Archives Publiques du Canada Rapport 1959-1969* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971), 1.

⁶⁶ Peter Bower, "After the Dust Settles," *Archivaria* 9 (Winter 1979-80), 221 in Lorraine O'Donnell, "Towards Total Archives: The Form and Meaning of Photographic Records," *Archivaria* 38 (1994), 106.

⁶⁷ Wilfred I. Smith in *Archives: Mirror of Canada Past*, 18-20; Wilfred I. Smith, "'Total Archives': The Canadian Experience," in Tom Nesmith, ed., *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1993).

This development prompted PAC government records archivist Terry Cook to argue that this trend was undermining the application of the bedrock archival principle of provenance. Cook's criticism included the NPC and its ideas. He argued that while total archives was a valuable concept, its application at the PAC was the problem. For Cook, too much emphasis had been placed on the distinctive features of media: "Quite simply, the internal divisions of archival institutions along media lines has created a de facto fragmentation of the archival whole, as defined by the principle of provenance." He added, "Given the relative isolation of these various archival units from one another and the lack of day-to-day coordination between them, at least at the working level, the intellectual control of the total fond ... has almost certainly been lost." This then had adverse effects on all aspects of the work of the PAC and, especially, hampered effective research.⁶⁸

The division of media in the PAC and the debate that prompted, "clattered through the pages of *Archivaria*."⁶⁹ The NPC's Birrell replied to Cook by arguing that provenance need not be distorted by due regard to the distinctiveness of media. These distinctions, he said, are significant enough to warrant specialized study and archival care. He agreed, though, that isolation needed to be addressed:

We will seriously retard scholarship in the future if we fail to recognize that there are inherent differences in the various media of communication, that they are better handled separately, and that in the long run the public will be best served this way. This does not mean, of course, that we should work in complete isolation from one another. Separation by medium is in no way inimical to the principle of provenance.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Terry Cook, "The Tyranny of the Medium: A Comment on 'Total Archives,'" *Archivaria* 9 (Winter 1979-80), 142, 145.

⁶⁹ O'Donnell, 106.

⁷⁰ Andrew Birrell, "The Tyranny of Tradition," *Archivaria* 10 (Summer 1980), 251-252.

Cook returned fire in pressing his case for a major overhaul of the structure of the PAC. He was not convinced that separation by medium could actually be administered within the realm of provenance. He claimed that Birrell's proposal for greater coordination of media units was "a band-aid approach: ameliorating the problems created by media separation rather than attacking their cause" and argued that the PAC should in one of various possible ways be reorganized "so that multi-media, *fonds*-oriented archivists are responsible for *all* the records created by an individual, institution, or agency, in both the public and private spheres."⁷¹ Cook did not reject either the archival value of photographs or archivists studying the history of photography in order to do their work.

Cook returned to the debate many years later and affirmed his position, adding that he felt that the PAC "would attempt to bring cohesion to this fragmented world" in the years that followed the debate.⁷² Birrell too recently reflected back on it. He thought about its implications for archival thinking in Canada:

Our exchange on the subject in *Archivaria* had greater impact than we expected. Before Hugh Taylor began [teaching in] the Archival Studies program at UBC, he ran a month-long course at PAC for archivists from across the country and several times Terry and I were invited to repeat our positions for their consideration. Thus we were contributing in a small way to the foundations of archival discourse in Canada.⁷³

Indeed, the Cook-Birrell debate over total archives was the first major in-depth discussion of a significant problem in archival theory in Canada and so marks a turning point in the intellectual evolution of the emerging distinct archival profession in Canada. It also showed that, however one came down on the matter of total archives, the decisions

⁷¹ Cook, "Media Myopia," *Archivaria* 12 (Summer 1981), 155. (Emphasis original.)

⁷² Terry Cook, "Total Archives" in *Encyclopedia of Archival Science*, eds. Luciana Duranti and Patricia C. Franks (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 398.

⁷³ Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 6, p.109.

archivists take to study the history of media or to organize archival institutions in one way or another involve them in acts of knowledge creation and direction.

This point was emphasized by a later contributor to the total archives discussion (Lorraine O'Donnell) in 1994. She thought that the unique aspects of photographs required their inclusion in the total archive and their study. She chose family photographs to illustrate her point that photographs shape what can be known about social conditions:

Thus, family photography is part of a system of representative practices, visual and oral, that are intimately tied in with the way the family is constructed. The family is not a stable objective reality that can simply be reflected in a photograph, as a realist might have it. A family is a process, and its history is actually made *with and through* photography. In other words, the family does not just look a certain way in photographs, but is a certain way because of photographs. The family constructs itself in its self-representations.⁷⁴

The influence of the NPC members on O'Donnell's work is clear to see.

O'Donnell's closer look at photographs had been inspired in part by archival educator Luciana Duranti's introduction of diplomatics – the European tradition of document study – to readers of *Archivaria*.⁷⁵ While diplomatics as outlined by Duranti helpfully (for those making the case for the creation of photographic archives and study of photographs) stressed the importance of study of documentary “form” and the “social system” that shaped the creation of records, O'Donnell was concerned that Duranti's version of diplomatics excluded private or personal documents such as family photographs because they could not meet the strict requirements for evidence that

⁷⁴ O'Donnell, 112. (Emphasis original).

⁷⁵ Duranti stated that “diplomatics gives importance to the broad context of creation by emphasizing the significance of the juridical system (that is, the social body plus the system of rules which constitute the context of the records), the persons creating the records, and the concepts of function, competence, and responsibility; but never distances itself from the reality of the records.” See Luciana Duranti, *Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists and Association of Canadian Archivists in association with Scarecrow Press, 1998), 177.

institutional records were said to possess.⁷⁶ Schwartz took up this line of thought in her critique of Duranti's exposition of diplomatics in regard to photographs. Schwartz felt that Duranti's views, which were widely read and influential, raised great concerns about the fate of photographs, total archives, and the direction of the still developing archival profession in Canada. Like O'Donnell, she thought this version of document study marginalized photographs and other private records as essentially not archival material of equal value as evidence as textual institutional records. This view would undermine their place in Canadian archives and thus reorient the Canadian archival profession toward service primarily to the institutional sponsors of archives, and away from the broader historical, cultural, and societal purposes that had long animated the total archives ideal.⁷⁷

The preface to the title of Schwartz's article "We make our tools and our tools make us': Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomats," reveals an aspect of the discussion that had come to the fore in the early 1990s in Canadian archival thinking in the work of Cook, O'Donnell, Brien Brothman and Theresa Rowat. Each had introduced the idea that records and archives shape what can be known and the resulting social conditions. Rowat wrote one of the first postmodern pieces in *Archivaria* looking at the actions of individual archivists.⁷⁸ As O'Donnell said in regard to how families construct themselves through family photography, "This is to recognize a key epistemological insight of contemporary critical

⁷⁶ O'Donnell, 117.

⁷⁷ Schwartz, "We make our tools and our tools make us," 64.

⁷⁸ Theresa Rowat, "The Record and Repository as a Cultural Form of Expression," *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993), 200.

cultural theory: we cannot know a subject except through representations of it.”⁷⁹ For Schwartz, decisions about how to conceptualize archival records (in diplomatics, for example) shape societal and professional outcomes – or “we make our tools and our tools make us.”⁸⁰

In taking this stance, Schwartz began her significant contribution to this wider postmodernist movement in archival thinking. Schwartz remained a strong advocate for greater attention to photographic records by archivists, many of whom she felt, had still not shown enough concern about them. This failure had become entrenched in the *Canadian Rules for Archival Description* (RAD), which had been promulgated in 1990 and had not dealt adequately with the description of photographs. The rules had obscured them by grouping them under “Graphic Materials” with art works, which betrayed the assumption that their central feature was “their observable characteristics as ‘pictures’ rather than functional origins and archival capacities as documents.” Echoing Mitchell, Schwartz writes:

Photographs are tools; classification systems are tools; descriptive standards are tools. They each manifest intentions. Yet the archival profession continues, despite the insights of current scholarship, and despite the opportunities of current technologies, to view photographic images, classification systems and descriptive standards as objective, as neutral, as natural.

These methods, she adds, “perpetuate the marginalization of visual materials, and in particular photographs, within archival theory and practice.”⁸¹

⁷⁹ O’Donnell, 112. See also, Brien Brothman, “Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice,” *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991); Rowat, “The Record and Repository as a Cultural Form of Expression,”; and Terry Cook, “Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Post-Custodial and Post-Modernist Era,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 22, no. 2 (Nov. 1994).

⁸⁰ Schwartz is quoting William J. Mitchell from his *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era* (Cambridge: MA: MIT Press, 1992), 59.

⁸¹ Schwartz, “Coming to Terms with Photographs: Descriptive Standards, Linguistic ‘Othering,’ and the Margins of Archivry,” *Archivaria* 54 (Fall 2002), 149-150, 169-70. That same year, Schwartz edited with

The postmodern movement that held that means of communication can shape what we can know powerfully reinforced what NPC members had been saying for decades. It widened the range of contextual information about media that was important to understand – from the initial creation of records, which the NPC archivists had focused most of their attention on – to the role of archiving itself in shaping knowledge and society, which Schwartz, Koltun, and Rowat began to examine. The NPC launched a new literature on photographs and archives in Canada. Their work inspired a new generation of archival scholarship on photography that is represented by the special issue of *Archivaria* devoted to photography in 2008.⁸² The contributors were not uncritical of NPC members, particularly for not addressing very extensively the practical aspects of archiving the born-digital photograph, but still recognized the NPC archivists' key contributions to the fundamental study of photographs.⁸³

By the end of the twentieth century the NPC members had contributed immensely to knowledge of the history of photography in Canada. They had done much to pioneer this field and establish its place in Canadian archival studies and other scholarship. In doing so they affirmed the role of the archivist as a knowledge creator – the conception of the archivist as someone who creates knowledge – and indeed this conception opened up

Terry Cook a double issue of *Archival Science* on the theme of the “power” of archives and records in “the making of modern memory”. *Archival Science* 2, nos. 1-4 (March and September 2002). For a further contribution by Schwartz to the postmodern approach to photographs, see her “‘Records of Simple Truth and Precision’: Photography, Archives, and the Illusion of Control,” *Archivaria* 50 (Fall 2000). Lilly Koltun had also taken the postmodern turn in addressing the impact of digital records and digitized analogue records. See her “The Promise and Threat of Digital Options in an Archival Age,” *Archivaria* 47 (Spring 1999) where she writes: “Archivists have rarely admitted the extensive reach of creation in our own activities of heritage preservation, not only in selection (which most archivists are prepared to admit does tend to shape history), but also in subsequent functions such as copying, which is a selection of our first selections; description, which orients meaning as well as research; and the permitting of new uses by the public, uses which continually redefine value and even the record itself,” 119.

⁸² See *Archivaria* 65 (Spring 2008) “Special Section on Archives and Photography.”

⁸³ See Jessica Bushey, “He Shoots, He Stores: New Photographic Practice in the Digital Age,” *Archivaria* 65 (Spring 2008), 131; and Sarah Stacy, “Note from the Guest Editor,” *ibid.*, 1-2.

an entire field of knowledge. The NPC archivists dedicated time in researching, applying, and disseminating their awareness of the intricacies of Canadian history and the advancement of photography throughout the world. More importantly, they created connections between the two, forming a solid foundation that would advance the understanding of Canadian photography in archives and beyond.

Chapter Three: The National Photography Collection and an Unfinished Task

Great people I find never read a long report but they will look over maps and pictures, and this will tell them everything if they examine the maps and the photographs carefully.¹

By 1986, the National Photography Collection (NPC) had not only made a significant contribution to the study of the history of Canadian photography, it had also used that knowledge to establish the leading photographic archives program in the country – one recognized internationally for these achievements. The difficulties the NPC archivists faced in creating this archival program were “profound” said the first Director of the NPC, Richard Huyda.² This chapter discusses these challenges and the main features of the program created to meet them. The chapter outlines the gradual winding down of the NPC from 1986 and the responses to that by its members – both great satisfaction in their accomplishments and disappointment in their inability to achieve all they sought to do. The chapter also attempts to assess the lasting contribution of these photo-archivists to their home institution, profession, and society – a contribution that outlasts the ups and downs of bureaucratic changes and priorities.

The Public Archives of Canada (PAC) had acquired a considerable amount of government and private photographs since it had begun to actively acquire the medium early in the twentieth century.³ The PAC had started to focus greater attention on them by 1964 with the creation of the Picture Division’s small Historical Photographs Section

¹ Andrew J. Birrell, “The North American Boundary Commission: Three Photographic Expeditions, 1872-74,” *History of Photography*, 20, 2 (1996), 116.

² Richard Huyda, “Photographs and Archives in Canada,” 5.

³ Library and Archives Canada (LAC) was known as the National Archives of Canada between 1986 and 2004 and the Public Archives of Canada (PAC) from 1912 to 1986. It will be referred to in this chapter as the PAC.

(HPS), which had three professional staff members when the NPC replaced it in 1975. This HPS experience, however, had begun the education, especially, of Huyda and Andrew Birrell in the promise of photographic archives and the need to expand PAC efforts in this area if it was to do justice to the great potential contribution of photographs to understanding Canadian history as well as the role of the Government of Canada in Canadian life. Birrell says that in the mid-1960s while working in the HPS “a sense of wonder began to grow in me” about the immense power and value of historical photographs to convey Canadian history.⁴ He and Huyda worked then on acquisition strategies. Birrell drafted a SNAP program for photographs, or a Systematic National Acquisition Program, and gained experience as a photo-archivist on processing the William J. Topley photographs. Huyda made further progress acquiring Canadian government photographs from the Department of National Defence and the Geological Survey of Canada, as well as photographs from the Montreal *Gazette*. As this work was done in the HPS, Huyda notes, “our aspirations evolved Ultimately, my aspirations were to convince the powers that be that the appropriate archival attention to photo-records is of value to them, to the nation, and to the world.”⁵

The creation of the NPC in 1975 reflects those aspirations and widened the opportunity to pursue them. Although a solid start had been made in the HPS, much more remained to be done to think through and develop acquisition mandates, appraisal criteria, methods of arrangement and description, preservation measures, outreach programs, and the development of a wider user group for these records on the scale needed to address these concerns *nationally*. These became the priority concerns of the

⁴ Andrew Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 5, 97.

⁵ Richard Huyda, Questionnaire, Question 5, 128.

NPC and perhaps it is revealing of the new scope of the program that the division was aptly named the *National Photography Collection*.

Huyda and Birrell led the way. Under Huyda as NPC division director, Birrell was appointed Head of Acquisition and Research when the division was launched. Peter Robertson came with them into the new division from the HPS. Over the next few years Huyda and Birrell hired the other leading members of the unit: Andrew Rodger, Joan Schwartz, and Lilly Koltun, while giving Jim Burant his start in photographic archives in 1972 as a summer student in the HPS.⁶ Looking back on this moment, Burant states:

Photo-archivists at PAC when I first began were among the only people in the country working on the concept of photographs as archival *records*. . . . [They] were defining what photo archives were, developing policies, procedures, and methodologies for handling photographs within the archival domain, and writing about their work.⁷

With eager new staff and other increasing resources the NPC could hope to undertake the challenges it set for itself.

Underlying the NPC approach was the pursuit of knowledge of the history of Canadian photography as it related to the holdings and mandate of the PAC. Birrell recalls that when new archivists were hired, “[they] were expected to read widely in the literature of the history of photography and were given practical familiarity with all the various types of photographic processes, prints and negatives represented in the PAC holdings.”⁸ This

extensive research . . . was necessary not just to build a file of basic information, but also to prepare introductions to accessions and to identify more precisely their contents and origins. Over time we created a large name file of Canadian photographers which proved helpful to all the NPC’s archivists.⁹

⁶ Jim Burant, Questionnaire, Question 1, p. 116.

⁷ Burant, Questionnaire, Question 6 (emphasis added), p. 117.

⁸ Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 5, p. 105.

⁹ Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 5, p. 101.

Library resources of historical and contemporary relevance to photographic research were built up to support this work. Huyda adds: “In order to correctly appraise, and preserve photo-archival records we needed and wanted to understand the world of photographers, the history of photography, and the interest in and use of photo-records.”¹⁰ The attention directed toward the genres of photographs (emphasized in chapter two) was not only reflected in the urge of the NPC members for users of the archives to see the importance of the variety of photographs at LAC – and the potential research opportunities – but to support their aspirations for a more wide-ranging collection policy that included everything from contemporary aesthetic photographers to nineteenth century government survey photography, and all the amateurs and professionals in between.

By 1983, the NPC adopted a wide acquisition mandate. Echoing Brymner’s “noble dream” and Smith’s “total archives.” The mandated stated the following:

First, the collection seeks to document in depth the history and environment of Canada through photographs, including all facets of social, cultural, political, military and commercial life. Secondly, the collection documents the history of photography admits impact on Canadian life as a medium of communication and expression, including its varied technical history, theory, major practitioners and significant relevant literature or accompanying manuscript material. The necessity of this dual approach arises out of the inseparable and distinctive dependency of content and technique in any photograph: the changing demands of either one are instantly reflected in the varied forms of the other.¹¹

This acquisition mandate was pursued through contacts with government agencies, businesses, collectors of photographs, as well as professional and amateur photographers in the private sector. Acquisitions were made from government agencies such as the National Film Board (NFB) and its predecessors, External Affairs, Immigration, and

¹⁰ Huyda, Questionnaire, Question 5, p. 127.

¹¹ Cited in Lilly Koltun, “The Raison d’être of the National Photography Collection,” *The Archivist*, 11, no. 2 (March/April 1984), 7.

Agriculture, major private collectors such as Andrew Merrilees, and photographers such as Michel Lambeth, Kryn Taconis, Roloff Beny, and Yousuf Karsh.¹² As Koltun reflects on her aspirations during their work at the NPC, she states it was “to expand the interest in Canadian photography to include more contemporary, challenging photography and unexpected sources like newspapers and government, scientific, amateur or commercial photography.”¹³ Koltun especially dedicated her time to acquiring strong artistic photography from, for example, photographer Michael Semak. This kind of acquisition policy led to a freedom and breadth of consideration of what is deemed worthy enough to place in the PAC.¹⁴

During their period of involvement at the PAC, the NPC members made photographic acquisitions of essential national records that had been previously overlooked. In addition, as photography began to be acknowledged as artwork globally, contemporary art collections of Canadian photographers were sought out by the NPC. Koltun states, “If you were to look at some photographs that were acquired in the 70s and 80s that would tell you a huge amount of how the archives worked, the independence of the archivists, the ideas of the archivists.”¹⁵ By 1983, the photographic holdings of the PAC had become between eight and nine million items. Peter Robertson reported that the annual average intake of photographs at the PAC was increasing to the point that by 1989 that it had reached half a million. By 1995, according to Joan Schwartz, the archives held

¹² Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 6, pp.107-108.

¹³ Koltun, Questionnaire, Question 5, p. 143.

¹⁴ Koltun, Questionnaire, Question 7, p. 149.

¹⁵ Ibid.

about 20 million photographs, making it the country's largest photographic archival collection.¹⁶

Birrell stresses that

one of the main emphases in our collecting was an insistence on acquiring whole collections – negatives, prints and whatever textual information was available. This was a major differentiation from the way galleries and museums collected. It was, and is still, my belief that in order for photographs to be used intelligently it is very important to know their context otherwise incorrect assumptions and conclusions are likely. I can cite many examples where historical photos are not what they seem, but have been accepted at face value.¹⁷

Arrangement and description of the holdings in NPC custody followed this approach, but rarely linked these records to others, such as related government records in other parts of the PAC. But with vast increases in its holdings, and no widely accepted formal descriptive standards as yet in Canada, the NPC worked nevertheless to respond to varied research needs with access to photographs.

For example, Huyda had started a system of index cards during the HPS era to allow access to more frequently requested or popular single items. The cards contained subject headings and a small copy of the photograph. This was expanded during the NPC years and became the front door to access to the collection for many researchers.

Schwartz explains that reference service worked to support various levels of need – those either looking for specific images and/or greater guidance into the history of the photographs in question: “We had somebody sitting on the [reference] desk who more or less triaged - what does this person need to know? And if all they needed to do was look

¹⁶ Andrew Birrell, “Preface,” Public Archives of Canada, *General Guide Series 1984, National Photography Collection* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1984), vii. Peter Robertson, “Acquiring Photographs at the Archives,” *The Archivist* (May-June 1989), 7; Joan M. Schwartz, “Some Major Canadian Collections: The National Archives of Canada,” *History of Photography*, 20, no. 2 (Summer 1996), 166.

¹⁷ Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 5, p. 102.

at the card catalog, they looked at the card catalog.” When the original photographs were made available, Schwartz adds,

If they had a question that required some knowledge of the collection, or some knowledge of the contexts, historical contexts – the archivists were always on call. We had a magnificent relationship with the public because if somebody comes in and says ‘I’m doing research on X, what have you’ve got?’ I mean we learned from them, they learned from us.¹⁸

In order to provide a map to other holdings of photographic archives across the country, the division also spearheaded work on the first *Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives* published in 1979 by the Public Archives, with a much expanded second edition in 1984, which covered 140 repositories and about 8000 collections.

Outreach to those who held photographic collections, to researchers, colleagues in archives, and the public prompted an ambitious program of exhibits of photographs that the NPC undertook. Again the roots of this program were in the HPS era with Huyda, Birrell, and Robertson’s 1970 exhibit, *Reflections on a Capital: 12 Ottawa Photographers*. The NPC made public outreach a high priority and by the late 1980s the NPC had provided about 80 percent of the exhibits mounted by the archives. This came at a time when the PAC was increasingly open to exhibits as a means of publicizing its work with the records it had been acquiring for just over a century. In its centennial celebration the PAC created a publication, a coffee table book (with a great number of images of documents) which was designed to do the same thing, in effect, as exhibits – make the work of the archives more appealing and better known and understood.

¹⁸ Joan Schwartz, Interview with Author. This response is in regard to Question 6 of the Questionnaire, see Appendix A.

Then Dominion Archivist, Wilfred I. Smith explains that the institution's goal is the "total utilization of archives."¹⁹ He defines this as the "use of archival materials by or for the benefit of the greatest possible number of persons."²⁰ Smith goes on to state:

There has been a recent increase in the preparation of exhibitions and particularly the sending of exhibitions to other parts of the country such as the centennial exhibitions for Manitoba in 1970 and for British Columbia in 1971. This is proving to be an effective method of bringing selected archival material to the general public, while the related publicity and exhibition catalogues inform a still broader public of the resources of their national archives and help to promote a better knowledge and understanding of Canadian history.²¹

Major NPC exhibits were on a range of subjects, including: Birrell's *Into the Silent Land: Survey Photography in the Canadian West, 1858-1900*; Koltun's *City Blocks, City Spaces: Historical Photographs of Canada's Urban Growth, c. 1850-1900*; Robertson's *1985 Phoenix on the Hill: Photos Before, During and After the Centre Block Fire of 1916*; and *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada, 1839-1940*.

Reflecting back, Koltun states:

With Andy and Richard being so open, we started to really ramp it up, and I have to say I definitely had an impact in that area, I did want to do exhibitions, I did want to do the research for collections and for exhibitions and for catalogues and so forth, and I think that's something I was able to do.²²

Many of these exhibits became publications.

The links between acquisition and exhibitions is highlighted by Birrell as he discusses the work behind the exhibition and publication of *Private Realms of Light*:

A major acquisition is an event to be celebrated beyond the walls of our humble institutions and, by not taking or making the opportunity to announce to a larger world what we have found, we miss the occasion of enriching society at large and indirectly of publicizing what archivists do.²³

¹⁹Archives: *Mirror of Canada Past*, 20.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 22.

²² Lilly Koltun, Questionnaire, Question 8, p. 150.

²³ Birrell, "Private Realms of Light: Canadian Amateur Photography 1839-1940," 106.

As explained in the NPC *General Guide Series* of 1983, the exhibits “are intended to illuminated aspects of our history and culture while promoting awareness of our photographic heritage.”²⁴ In doing so, the acquisitions of photographs were heightened and the importance of exhibiting and publishing on the photographs within the NPC and not only supported the members hard work in promoting the study of photograph, but also enhanced the role of the PAC as a place of collective memory and heritage in Canada.

The most ambitious exhibit prepared by the NPC was unquestionably *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada, 1839-1940*, which was mounted in 1983 and included over 200 original photographs. Birrell, Robertson, Koltun, Rodger, and Schwartz were its authors. Arguably the most impressive publication the PAC ever produced accompanied the exhibit in 1984. The combined efforts and intensive research spent on the project account for its overwhelming success. Yousuf Karsh wrote a foreword that extolled the exhibit and book as “a unique gift” of the amateur photographers to the country. He adds:

These photographs are a rich, artistic source of Canadian social history, evoking the immediacy of a pioneer Saskatchewan homestead, the majesty of the Rocky Mountains, the hi-jinks of turn-of –the-century Toronto medical students, the chores of farm life in the 1880s, a moment’s respite in the forging of the railroad; these have remained too long undiscovered. The ‘private realms of light’ have now become public realms of rediscovery of our own land, our own history, our own heritage.²⁵

Koltun, who edited the book that accompanied the exhibit, describes the years of hard work behind *Private Realms of Light* but modestly goes on to state, “We are only too

²⁴ Clavet, *Researchers’ Guide*, 3.

²⁵ Yousuf Karsh, “Foreword” in Lilly Koltun, ed., *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada, 1839-1940* (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1984), ix.

aware that this book says the first, not the last word.”²⁶ She adds that the authors are eager with “excitement of future discovery,” in the larger dialogue surrounding the archival and historical study of photographs in Canada.²⁷

Private Realms of Light arose from and brought together the research into the various contextual strands of the approach to the history of photography that the photo-archivists at the PAC had been advancing for many years. In her 1984 review of *Private Realms*, Ann Thomas, then the Assistant Curator of Photographs at the National Gallery of Canada, notes this pioneering achievement:

‘Private Realms’ makes a major contribution to an uncharted field in the history of Canadian photography. The Public Archives of Canada and in particular the National Photography Collection are to be congratulated and encouraged for making a contribution of this standard and depth to the history of Canadian photography.²⁸

In addition to the exhibit at the PAC building in Ottawa and the companion publication, *Private Realms* travelled to three other Canadian institutions.²⁹ Exhibits then, brought archival material to the Canadian public that had been previously limited due to the technological limitations at the time. Before digitization projects for online accessibility, many researchers were limited by their physical ability to visit PAC or order prints from the archives – limiting consultation with the photographs, and photo-archivists.³⁰

The NPC also innovated in the area of photographic archives in Canada by placing a high priority on preservation work with photographs. Although preservation as

²⁶ Lilly Koltun ed., *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada, 1839-1940* (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1984), xi.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ann Thomas, “Reflections on an Exhibition,” *Archivaria* 17(Winter 1983-84), 143-144.

²⁹ National Archives of Canada, *General Guide Series, Documentary Art and Photography Division*), 39-40.

³⁰ In addition to these major exhibits the photo-archivists also mounted smaller ones at the Public Archives building in Ottawa on a regular basis. This series was known as *Aperçu*. By 1992 thirty of these exhibits had been mounted on contemporary and historical subjects. Ibid., 39.

such was not the specific responsibility of the NPC, it realized that the PAC needed preservation expertise in photography and advocated for a hire in that area. Klaus B. Hendriks was appointed Photo Conservation Chemist at the PAC in 1975 and became Director of the Picture Conservation Division in 1977 and by 1990 Director of the Conservation Research Division. Hendriks, who had a doctorate in organic chemistry, brought the necessary scientific background to the preservation challenges of photographic archives. Huyda says that the PAC was “the first national institution to employ a full-time chemist to study the preservation and restoration of photographic images.” Huyda adds that Hendriks did and led others in “pioneering Canadian research” into the “manufacture, properties, storage, preservation, and restoration of photographs.” Hendriks worked to introduce archivists to the more technical issues in photograph conservation. At the outset of his tenure at the PAC he contributed to the special issue of *Archivaria* on photographic archives and advised readers that the impact of several factors that contribute to photographic preservation problems “remains unknown in the archival context, and much work remains to be done in order to clarify the possible role they play in the deterioration of these records.” Hendriks went on to develop an outstanding international reputation for this work.³¹ Birrell comments that Hendriks “proved to be all that we hoped for and far more.”³²

As NPC member Andrew Rodger reflects back on the NPC, he states “in the case of photography we know we were on the leading edge.”³³ The success of *Private Realms of Light* was clearly a high point in that feeling of accomplishment. By 1986, the PAC

³¹ Richard Huyda, “Obituary: Klaus B. Hendriks, 1937-1996,” *Archivaria* 41 (Spring 1996), 304; Klaus B. Hendriks, “The Preservation of Photographic Records,” *Archivaria* 5 (Winter 1977-78), 92.

³² Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 5, p. 107.

³³ Andrew Rodger to Tom Nesmith, personal correspondence, March 21, 2011. Used with permission. (Emphasis original).

had a photographic archives division of national and international renown. It had made significant contributions to the study of the history of photography and to the care of archival photographs. Yet, the NPC as a separate unit at the archives did not exist only two years after the 1984 publication of the companion book to *Private Realms of Light*. In 1986, the NPC was reunited with the Picture Division in a new Documentary Art and Photography Division that was headed by Koltun. The new division remained committed to the traditional goals of acquisition and preservation of “art and photography records of enduring historical and documentary value to all Canadians.” And it remained committed to public reference service and “in-depth research into the history of documentary art and photography as practised in this country.”³⁴ Further research needs to be done to explain why this administrative reorganization occurred. That is beyond the scope of this thesis, which focuses on the background to and work of the NPC itself.

The acquisition of photographs continued and the total number in PAC custody had reached about 20 million by 2010, according to Koltun.³⁵ Exhibits continued as well, but it may well have been that the financial deficits of the federal government in the early to mid-1990s, and ultimately the resulting severe budget cuts to the PAC, played a role in further diminishing the distinct identity and status of photographic archival work. In 1993, this responsibility was placed in a new Visual and Sound Archives Division, which had the mandate to acquire government and private sector generated non-textual records.

While these administrative changes affected the work of photo-archivists, some of the early leaders of the work in this area moved on to new positions at higher levels in the PAC. Huyda left the NPC in 1981 to become Director, Planning and Program Evaluation,

³⁴ National Archives of Canada, *General Guide Series, Documentary Art and Photography Division*, 1.

³⁵ Koltun, Questionnaire, Question 6, p. 144.

and by 1986 he became Director-General of Public Programs at the PAC. He retired in 1994. Birrell, who had not only made a major pioneering contribution to the study of the history of Canadian photography, but also had initiated the computerization of the work of the NPC, took up the position of Director-General of the new Information Management Branch, a role which gave him responsibility for an institution-wide computerization program at the archives.³⁶ Birrell stayed in that position until he retired in 1998. Koltun took an education leave in the mid-1990s to complete a doctorate in art history on the history of Canadian photographic portraiture, and returned to the PAC to become Director of the Policy Branch (1995-96), Director General of the Preservation Branch (1996-2001) and of the Archives Headquarters Accommodation Project (1996-2001), which saw her supervise the completion of the construction of the PAC's Gatineau Preservation Centre. Other key NPC staff members eventually moved along as well. Schwartz, who went back to university in the mid-1990s to complete a doctorate in the history of photography in Canada, also left the PAC after an unpaid leave (2003-06). She became a member of the Department of Art History and Art Conservation at Queen's University in 2003 (cross-appointed with the Department of Geography) where she now teaches the history of photography. Schwartz is currently Head of the Department of Art History and Art Conservation at Queen's.³⁷

Koltun was another major loss to the archives after Schwartz left. In the early 2000s there was excitement around the possibility of a National Portrait Gallery being

³⁶ Schwartz states, "Andy Birrell especially was instrumental in getting things online at the Archives. We were the very first division to have a small network, we had ten computers on an internal network and we put captions into it, you could search it. We were at the forefront of using digital finding aids at the Archives." Schwartz, Interview with Author. This response is in regard to Question 9 of the Questionnaire, see Appendix A. See also Birrell, Questionnaire, Question 4, p. 97, and Koltun, Questionnaire, Question 8, p. 152.

³⁷ Queen's University, Department of Art History and Conservation, Joan. M. Schwartz, accessed June 6, 2017, <http://www.queensu.ca/art/schwartz-joan-m>.

created under the PAC's administration. The portraits would be drawn from its extensive art and photography holdings. The national portrait galleries in Britain, the United States, and Australia served as models of what could be achieved in Canada. As a scholar with a doctorate in the study of the history of Canadian portraiture and extensive experience in archival facilities construction and maintenance, Koltun was an ideal choice to lead the project and was appointed Interim Director of the Portrait Gallery of Canada in 2001.³⁸ Work was underway in the early 2000s to repurpose the former Embassy of the United States in Ottawa, directly across from Parliament Hill, as the site for the gallery. The Stephen Harper Government, however, cancelled the plan, sought to find a new location outside Ottawa, but when no alternative site materialized by 2008, discontinued the search. The gallery program remained within the PAC.

At about the same time, the then Librarian and Archivist of Canada, Daniel Caron (2009-13) pulled back on the prominent program of exhibits of photographs and other archival materials that had long highlighted the work of photo-archivists and other archivists at Library and Archives Canada (LAC). The archives' once active and stimulating exhibition rooms in downtown Ottawa were no longer available for that purpose. Koltun left her position of leadership of the gallery project and a year later left the archives.³⁹ Andrew Rodger retired soon after in 2010 and Jim Burant in 2011. Rodger stated in March 2011 that "last week I was at LAC headquarters for a while and the

³⁸ Library and Archives Canada, "Portrait Gallery of Canada Appoints Interim Director," last modified July 31, 2001, accessed June 6, 2017, http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca/03/0354_e.html.

³⁹ CBC News, "Portrait Gallery of Canada's status 'unchanged'," last modified September 10, 2009, accessed, June 6, 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/portrait-gallery-of-canada-s-status-unchanged-1.783817>; James Bradshaw, *Globe and Mail*, "Canada's Portrait Gallery is No More," last modified September 9, 2009, accessed November 11, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canadas-portrait-gallery-is-no-more/article1204648/>. The alternative to the gallery project is now Library and Archives Canada's "Portrait Portal," last modified January 9, 2013, accessed June 6, 2017, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/portrait-portal/Pages/portrait-portal.aspx>.

archivists are not enthused either by Dr. Caron or his policies.” Rodger feared that “the ‘media’ divisions would slowly disappear.”⁴⁰ By January 2013, Caron had issued a “code of conduct” for Library and Archives Canada staff that threatened to cast a chill on the very creativity and scholarship that had spurred so much of the work and success of the photo-archivists and their colleagues elsewhere in LAC. The code received media attention and a question in the House of Commons. The *National Post* reported that “federal librarians and archivists who set foot in classrooms, attended conferences or speak up at public meetings on their own time are engaging in ‘high risk’ activities.”⁴¹ Schwartz discusses the damage done by Caron, stating “I mean our sections, our division, doesn’t exist anymore, which is a bad commentary on what was going on at the archives, especially under Caron.”⁴²

These setbacks over the 1990s and 2000s prompted disappointment with the fate of photo-archival work at LAC and in archives generally among some of the NPC pioneers. While there was great satisfaction with their accomplishments, their work felt unfinished and perhaps threatened in the long run by strong tendencies that in their view worked against it. Koltun thinks that a “mature” photo-archival program had been created since the 1960s, but in a long reflection she comments on the limits of that achievement in her view:

During that time, I saw photo-archives mature into a much larger, wide-ranging collection (from about 7 million items to about 20 million) and its value among

⁴⁰ Andrew Rodger to Tom Nesmith, personal correspondence, March 21, 2011. (Used with permission.)

⁴¹ Margaret Munro, *National Post*, “Federal Librarians Fear Being ‘Muzzled’ Under New Code of Conduct that Stressed ‘Duty of Loyalty’ to the Government,” last modified March 15, 2013, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/library-and-archives-canada>.

⁴² Joan Schwartz, Questionnaire, Question 6. By 2011, federal government cuts to LAC and LAC internal management problems had become so severe that the Canadian Association of University Teachers launched a campaign to “Save Library and Archives Canada.” See Canadian Association of University Teachers, “Save Library and Archives Canada,” accessed June 6, 2017, <http://www.savelibraryarchives.ca/campaign.aspx>.

a limited audience in the archival community and Canada become more recognized, though still significantly undervalued in the wider archival world. There, it was still marginalized and its early openness to new ideas about how meaning can be understood to be both actively imbued and unconsciously ensconced in so-called documentary media went unacknowledged, even derided. This was evident, for example, in the glancing value given to visual media in the early rules for description which was focused heavily on serving textual media. It was only in my later years that I saw this valuation begin to change grudgingly. Ultimately, the work done by the national archives (and here I think of leaders such as Andy Birrell and Richard Huyda, as well as the teams on which I worked or which I led) in acquiring and preserving such a wide range of Canadian photography became a point of pride. It also became a way to enter new audiences, such as the program to involve aboriginal peoples in the identification of people in historical photographs, and the acquisition of new photography made by aboriginal peoples themselves. The openness of the photo-archival area to digitization and new means of communication also placed that area at the forefront of contemporary archival possibilities. Ultimately, however, the archival world remains unexcited by the role, value and relevance of photography to its future; hence, great collectors and collections, including major Canadian ones, are now escaping it and gravitating, for example, to the Ryerson Image Institute or to the new Photography Institute at the National Gallery of Canada, which has just hired a world-leading librarian and archivist to guide its future.⁴³

Schwartz has similar views about the mixed results of their work. As discussed in chapter two, Schwartz shared Koltun's displeasure with the direction of Canada's *Rules for Archival Description* (RAD) in regard to photographs. But the typical methods of digitization of photographs became a comparable threat to what photo-archivists had achieved:

I think we accomplished an enormous amount, I think it got turned around because of the rush to digitize. I think just as we were making real headway, I think just as we were raising awareness of photographs, and their function within archives, their power as records. The panic over digital and the rush to digitization swept the archives community off its feet, and they seem to have forgotten all of the basics and rushed to the superficial.⁴⁴

⁴³ Koltun, Questionnaire, Question 6, p. 144.

⁴⁴ Joan Schwartz, Interview with Author (emphasis added). This response is in regard to Question 6 of the Questionnaire, see Appendix A.

That superficiality is rooted in what Schwartz believes is the fundamentally anti-archival way so many photographs have been digitized, something she thinks that goes against the grain of everything the NPC stood for. Instead of the rich contextual information about their histories that should accompany digitized photographs, there is a reversion to the photograph as mere image, not document:

... now we've got the digital homogenization, de-materialization, de-contextualization, of photographs – because they're just photographs. Blow them up, make them small, doesn't matter, all you want to do is see the detail in them. No, that's not the archival way to think about them.⁴⁵

Burant makes a similar complaint: “The archival community has devoted a ton of time to digital issues, but fails to understand the nature of digital photography, especially when it comes to authenticity, concepts of what is an original and what is a copy, the recording of metadata, and migration and long-term storage, among other matters.”⁴⁶ The role of both types of digital photographs – the born digital, and photographs that have been scanned to create a digital surrogate – has been an area of discussion that was not explored deeply by the NPC members. Koltun was the only NPC member to explore digitization.⁴⁷ This linked the NPC members traditional focus on nineteenth to mid-twentieth century photographs to a more modern one.

While photo-archival work at the LAC clearly did not die out with the various budget cuts, administrative reorganizations, the curtailment of exhibits, the demise of the Portrait Gallery of Canada, and departures of expert staff, it was no longer quite as visible or central to the life of the LAC. New and outstanding staff, such as Melissa Rombout and Jill Delaney, were hired. Good work has been done in attempting to bring forward

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Burant, Questionnaire, Question 11, p. 121.

⁴⁷ Koltun, “The Promise and Threat of Digital Options in an Archival Age,” *Archivaria* 47 (Spring 1999).

into the Internet age the ideas and knowledge of the photo-archivists who had acquired it. There are podcasts on various photographic history subjects and records and similar textual information is still available at the LAC web site under “Framing Canada: A Photographic Memory” in the “Archived” section of the site.⁴⁸ And the LAC mounted in 2002 (in conjunction with the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and Legacy of Hope Foundation) a major exhibit (mainly of Canadian government and private sector photographs in its custody) on the history of the Canadian Residential Schools. Jeff Thomas, an Indigenous scholar and photographer, was the guest curator.⁴⁹ It is of great importance that Thomas employs the very contextual and historical methods in examining these photographs that the NPC archivists had pioneered and long campaigned for in Canada. Thomas’s work will be the focus of the conclusion of this thesis, particularly as his work is related to the work of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) at the University of Manitoba, which houses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) archive of Residential School records, copied from various Canadian government and church archives. The conclusion will also show the ongoing significance of the kinds of approaches to the examination of historical photographs that the NPC developed.

The legacy of the NPC archivists carries on in other ways as well. Their acquisitions are not only being used to help address the difficult issues facing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada but also in

⁴⁸ See Library and Archives Canada, “Podcasts,” last modified May 4, 2017, accessed June 6, 2017, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/news/podcasts/Pages/podcasts.aspx>; and Library and Archives Canada, “Archived: Framing Canada: A Photographic Memory,” last modified May 12, 2011, accessed June 6, 2017, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/news/podcasts/Pages/photographic-memory.aspx>.

⁴⁹ For the exhibit catalogue, see *Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools/Que sont les enfants devenus? L’expérience des pensionnats autochtones* (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 2003).

helping to address climate change. In discussing the extensive scholarly use of photographs in LAC's collection, Burant notes that photographs are being used as never before in unexpected ways. They are valued for research into "environmental and geo-physical changes; urban development; forest fire suppression techniques; and land usage."⁵⁰ The acquisitions made by the NPC paved the way for an abundance of past, present, and future research on photographic holdings in LAC. For example, LAC photo-archivist Jill Delaney has written about the use by environmentalists of the Rocky Mountain photographs taken by nineteenth-century Canadian photographers that the NPC had acquired. These photographs are now being used in the "repeat photography" work of the Mountain Legacy Project.⁵¹ This involves comparisons of mountains and landscapes pictured in historical photographs with photographs taken recently of the exact same places. The differences in landforms, the melting of glaciers, for example, show how far advanced climate change has become.

On March 27th, 2016 the *Globe and Mail* published an article titled, "Wait. What happened to the national Portrait Gallery?" With the new Liberal government's federal budget came an increase to Canada's art and culture sectors days before the article was published.⁵² Many employees, users, and supporters of various arts and cultural institutions buzzed with this new hope. However, one cultural institution continued to be

⁵⁰ Jim Burant, "Visual Archives and the Writing of Canadian History: A Personal Review," *Archivaria* 54 (2002), 105.

⁵¹ Jill Delaney, "An Inconvenient Truth? Scientific Photography and Archival Ambivalence," *Archivaria* 65 (Spring 2008). This issue of *Archivaria* is devoted to articles on photographic records and archives. The guest editor, Sarah Stacy, then a photo-archivist at LAC, acknowledged the too-long gap between special issues of the journal on photographs (noting *Archivaria* 5 in 1977 as the last one). She intends the 2008 issue "to present new voices and perspectives on photographs in archives." See Sarah Stacy, "Note from the Guest Editor," *Archivaria* 65 (Spring 2008), 1.

⁵² Blair Gable, "Wait. What happened to the national Portrait Gallery?" *The Globe and Mail*, March 27, 2016, accessed March 29, 2016, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/wait-what-happened-to-the-national-portrait-gallery/article29384119/>.

long forgotten, the National Portrait Gallery. As the *Globe and Mail* argues, the National Portrait Gallery is,

An institution that has a rare capacity to showcase Canada's history through the eye-catching images of the great and good now lies dormant. National portrait galleries thrive in London and Washington. There is every reason to think Canada's long-hidden collection of 20,000 artworks, four million photographs, 2,000 caricatures and 10,000 assorted other representations would inspire and delight visitors when given pride of place in the nation's capital.⁵³

The appointment of Guy Berthiaume as Librarian and Archivist of Canada in June 2014 lifted much of the pall over the LAC. Budget cuts, however, have not been restored. The Portrait Gallery of Canada has not been revived, but the traditional openness of LAC to major exhibits (for example, on the history of hockey and on the Métis) and staff engagements with colleagues and users of the archives at conferences and other public venues has returned.⁵⁴ Berthiaume has also revived and renamed *The Archivist*, the LAC in-house periodical magazine that contained so many articles by photo-archivists, among other staff, during its long run. Perhaps significantly, the first issue of *Signatures* contains an article on the daguerreotype.⁵⁵ There may yet be opportunity for a new generation of

⁵³ "Canada's Portrait Gallery is No More," *The Globe and Mail*, last modified September 9, 2009, accessed November 11, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canadas-portrait-gallery-is-no-more/article1204648/>.

⁵⁴ Kate Porter, "Library and Archives Hopes to Boost Profile with Exhibits," CBC News, last modified October 29, 2015, accessed November 11, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/library-and-archives-wants-to-boost-profile-1.3295323>. Library and Archives Canada Events, "'Hockey Marching as to War,' exhibition at 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa," last modified December 9, 2015, accessed November 11, 2016, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/about-us/events/Pages/hockey-marching-war-exhibition.aspx>; and Phillip Dombowsky "Hiding in Plain Sight: Discovering the Métis Nation in the Collection of Library and Archives Canada," Exhibition Review, *Archivaria* 82 (Fall 2016). The Portrait Gallery has not been revived but may not be dead, as there is some public and media support for it. See Kate Taylor, "National portrait gallery across from Parliament an ideal opportunity," *The Globe and Mail*, last modified March 3, 2017, accessed June 6, 2017, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/art-and-architecture/national-portrait-gallery-across-from-parliament-an-ideal-opportunity/article34201512/>; and Lawson A. W. Hunter and Charlotte Gray, "It's time for Canada to create a national portrait gallery," *The Globe and Mail*, last modified, March 31, 2017, accessed June 6, 2017, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/art-and-architecture/its-time-for-canada-to-create-a-national-portrait-gallery/article34529515/>.

⁵⁵ Tania Passafiume and Jennifer Roger, "The Conservation Work Behind 'Mirrors with a Memory: Daguerreotypes from LAC'," *Signatures: The Magazine of Library and Archives Canada* (Fall/Winter 2015).

photo-archivists at LAC to examine and publish on their work and photographic holdings.

These are but straws in the wind concerning the future of photographic archives in Canada. Is the future brighter than the NPC pioneers suggest or have they put their collective finger on a stark truth? Whatever the future may hold, there is no doubt about the many things they accomplished. It may have seemed (and still seem for some) in darker moments that all they accomplished could be undone, but the more reasonable view is that even if these accomplishments have been eroded or worse, rejected by some, these pioneering photo-archivists have left an indelible mark – as both a body of thought and practice about photographs and their archiving that remains to be used and critiqued today, and on the identity and possibilities of being an archivist – as a knowledge creator, and not merely a guardian of records.

Conclusion

This thesis outlines the major accomplishments of the National Photography Collection (NPC) members at the Public Archives of Canada (PAC). In a nutshell, they established a new high standard for photo-archival work in Canada that remains today to continue to inspire and be developed further. Archivists today have a key role to continue to play in creating the knowledge needed to advance photo-archival work in always evolving circumstances. As former PAC archivist Jim Burant states, understanding of the “the relevance, context, communication, and technology [of visual records] all are part of making and keeping visual archives an essential part of the writing of Canadian history. Above all, the skill of archivists is necessary to connect all these parts into an organic whole.”¹ As Canadian Confederation enters its 150th birthday, photographs provide an accessible visual entree to the past for Canadians. But changing societal concerns prompt new questions about how archivists should make their contribution to that understanding of the country's history.

The NPC members were very vocal – perhaps one can argue, rising above the typical stereotype of the traditional archivist. Former NPC members Lilly Koltun and Joan Schwartz both noted in their interviews that archivists need to be more vocal and present in research rooms with the general public. That tradition needs to be maintained. Not only do photographs need to be seen, but archivists need to be present as they provide a gateway to information. Archivists create ways in which the general public view information. How primary documents are consulted – whether they be textual documents, audio visual, maps, or photographs – is often shaped by archivists. Today,

¹ Burant, “Visual Archives and the Writing of Canadian History,” 117.

Indigenous issues have become central to understanding Canada's past and to its future. The history of the Canadian Residential School (RS), for example, has done much to bring this to the fore. The federal government in Canada was responsible for the removal of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children from their families and communities, stripping them of their culture and instilling westernized values and religious practices by means of a misguided and unilateral RS educational system.

Photographs created by the Canadian government and the church denominations that administered the schools played a major role in both documenting this colonial project of assimilation, as photographs were framed as an objective record of the 'progress' of this project. This history of photography as it intertwines with colonialism in Canada has resulted in an abundance of RS photographs. As RS students became the subject of this narrative of progress, RS photographs found their way into various government and church archives across the country. Many thousands of these photographs were digitally copied by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) during its investigation of the schools. The commission was given the mandate to develop an archive of RS records and find a place for it to be maintained after the end of the commission's work. It chose the University of Manitoba, where the archives have found a home at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). Archives then are critically important for the future of truth and reconciliation in Canada. Archival theorist Terry Cook states:

Archives are constructed memories about the past, about history, heritage, and culture, about personal roots and familial connections, and about who we are as human beings; as such, they offer glimpses into our common humanity. Yet memory is notoriously selective – in individuals, in societies, and yes, in archives. With memory comes forgetting. With memory comes the inevitable privileging of certain records and records creators, certain functions, activities, and groups in

society, and the marginalizing or silencing of others. Memory, and forgetting, can serve a whole range of practical, cultural, political, symbolic, emotional and ethical imperatives and is central to power, identity and privilege.²

It is easy to see then that RS photographs are crucial records that reflect on Canada's colonial history, challenging ideas about truth and reconciliation today, and shaping future Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in Canada. Two projects that have sought to involve Indigenous participatory archiving of photographs are *In Pictures Bring Us Messages/ Sinaakssiiksi Aohtsimaahpihkookiyaawa: Photographs and Histories from the Kainai Nation* and Library and Archives Canada's Project Naming. One a venture by academics and the other a government initiative – the projects are connected by the understanding that past academics and governments had abused the power relationship with Indigenous communities through photography, and today there is a greater concern about returning these photographs to Indigenous communities, not only to collect names but also to collect contextual information about the photographs.

The relationship between archival photographs and social media reflects another new key concern for archivists, as the transmission of photographs by these means can undermine their integrity. As Schwartz notes, "I think in a lot of ways things have gone backwards and when you look at Flickr, Pinterest, any of these photo sharing websites, they are not sharing photographs in any scholarly ritually contextual way, they're just pictures."³ This timely statement by Schwartz is a reminder not only to the NCTR archives, but all archives struggling with staying relevant in the digital world. As an archivist at the NCTR, I aim to follow the examples of the NPC photo-archivists and

² Terry Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms" *Archival Science*, 13, nos. 2-3 (June 2013), 101.

³ Joan Schwartz, Interview with Author. This response is in regard to Question 6 of the Questionnaire, see Appendix A.

other contemporary voices in the field, such as curator Jeff Thomas, in bringing their perspectives on understanding photographs and photo-archiving into the discussion of the NCTR's work. But that is a beginning only, as new scholarship on Indigenous responses to, understandings of, and contributions to photographic archival work at the NCTR is also needed and this may both confirm and change significantly how we understand and do archival work with them.

The NCTR is central to the process of healing from the long chapter of RS history in Canada. By understanding the power of records and the archives that hold them, archivists can work towards re-conceptualizing the archive to foster the process of truth and reconciliation in Canada. The photographs in the NCTR archive are an example that can push archivists both practically and theoretically to re-examine the work of the NPC members and their legacy both within the archival communities and interdisciplinary circles. The photographs at the NCTR are only the tip of all the future work to be examined following the NPC's legacy. This thesis hopes to provide a starting point for that re-examination of photo-archival work in Canada.

Appendix A:
Sample Introductory Letter



Faculty of Arts

Department of History

403 Fletcher Argue

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, MB

R3T 2N2

Phone: 204-474-8401

Fax: 204-474-7570

Email: history@umanitoba.ca

(Insert date)

(Name)

(Email Address)

Dear (Name)

My name is Nicole Courier and I am currently enrolled in the Archival Studies (Department of History) Master's Program at the University of Manitoba. I write to invite you to participate in my research for a thesis tentatively titled: "Picturing Archives: The Contributions of the Public Archives of Canada's National Photography Collection to Photographic Archives and Study of the History of Photography in Canada" and being done under the supervision of Professor Tom Nesmith. My thesis will examine the key pioneering contributions made since the 1960s by a group of Canadian archivists at the Public Archives of Canada/National Archives of Canada, particularly in the National

Photography Collection, to the emergence to prominence of photographic archives and the study of the history of photography in Canada.

I am contacting you as a member of this group to ask you to respond by email to a questionnaire about the work described above. Your response will not only be a crucial addition to this thesis, but also contribute to a much better understanding of the history of the study of photography in Canada and the history of Canadian archives.

If you are willing to participate, please complete the questionnaire and consent form attached. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at: umcourrn@myumanitoba.ca or Dr. Thomas Nesmith at: Thomas.Nesmith@umanitoba.ca

Sincerely,

Nicole Courrier
Archival Studies MA Student
Department of History
Faculty of Arts
University of Manitoba

Sample Questionnaire



Faculty of Arts

Department of History

403 Fletcher Argue

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, MB

R3T 2N2

Phone: 204-474-8401

Fax: 204-474-7570

Email: history@umanitoba.ca

Principal Researcher: Nicole Courier (umcourrn@myumanitoba.ca)

Research Advisor: Dr. Tom Nesmith (Thomas.Nesmith@umanitoba.ca)

Please answer the questions below. Feel free to use as much space as necessary.

Please provide the following:

Name:

Birthplace and date:

Education (Degrees, Subject Areas, and Year of Graduation):

- 1) What sparked your interest in photographs?
- 2) What led you to become an archivist?
- 3) When did you begin employment at the Public Archives of Canada/National Archives of Canada and where in the Archives were you first employed?
- 4) What positions did you hold (and when did you hold them) during your time at the Archives?
- 5) What were your aspirations for photo-archival work when you worked with photographs at the Archives?
- 6) What do you think was accomplished by photo-archival work during your time on the staff of the archives? Please include in your response an assessment of the impact of the photo-archival work done by the Archives on the archival community and its contribution to the wider scholarly community.
- 7) What noteworthy contribution did others make to photo-archival work in places other than the Archives? What contribution did they make to the study of the history of photography in Canada or elsewhere? Please be sure to identify the people who made these contributions.
- 8) What contribution do you think you personally made to the activities mentioned in question six?
- 9) What remains to be accomplished in photo-archival work at the Archives?
- 10) What remains to be accomplished in photo-archival work beyond the Archives in other places where photographs are archived?
- 11) What directions in the study of the history of photography in Canada should be pursued now?
- 12) Please feel free to add any further comments.

Sample Consent Forms



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Arts

Department of History

403 Fletcher Argue

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, MB

R3T 2N2

Phone: 204-474-8401

Fax: 204-474-7570

Email: history@umanitoba.ca

Research Project Title: Picturing Archives: The Contributions of the Public Archives of Canada's National Photography Collection to Photographic Archives and Study of the History of Photography in Canada

Principal Researcher: **Nicole Courrier**

Email: umcourrn@myumanitoba.ca

Research Advisor: **Dr. Tom Nesmith**

Email: Thomas.Nesmith@umanitoba.ca

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what

the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for a Master's degree in Arts (Archival Studies) through the Joint Master's Program in History offered by the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg. The purpose of this study is to write a thesis that examines the key pioneering contributions made since the 1960s by a group of Canadian archivists at the Public Archives of Canada/National Archives of Canada, particularly in the National Photography Collection, to the emergence to prominence of photographic archives and the study of the history of photography in Canada. I ask you to respond to some general questions about this topic. The questions will ask you to reflect on your career as an archivist, your time at what is now Library and Archives Canada, and the evolving role of the history of photographs, and photo archives in Canada as well as internationally. The questionnaire involves 12 questions that should take up 90 minutes of your time, depending on the length of your answers. I hope that if you and others participate, we will be able to shed light on a subject that has received far less attention that it requires- these pioneering contributions and their important implications for the professional work and identity of archivists.

The questions relate to your professional experience and ideas. There may be a short term benefit of reflecting on your experiences and role in an important part of Canadian archival history. A long term benefit would be the inclusion of your personal experiences within this published thesis.

If you agree to participate, please sign and scan this consent form as well as the attached questionnaire and return it by email to the Principal Researcher, Nicole Courrier at: umcourn@myumanitoba.ca. In addition to the Principal Researcher, the Research Advisor, Dr. Tom Nesmith will have access to the data collected from the questionnaire.

Given that the thesis is focused on the work of a limited group of people, confidentiality cannot truly be guaranteed, as some readers familiar with the topic may well correctly determine who is commenting even if names are not revealed. I will thus ask participants to allow their identities to be revealed and linked to their responses to my questionnaire. I will also give them the option of remaining anonymous. I will then ask them to allow me to attach a transcript of their response to my published thesis. Those who do not want their response attached to my thesis, can indicate that.

Responses will be saved securely on the Principal Researcher's password protected personal computer. A copy of a blank questionnaire will be attached as an appendix to the final published thesis. Respondents are free to withdraw from the study at any time before November 2016 by emailing the Principal Researcher, Nicole Courrier at: umcourn@myumanitoba.ca. If you do choose to withdraw from this study, any data that you have provided will be destroyed and it will not be included in the thesis.

Once the thesis has been successfully defended, I intend to publish and present the findings. The thesis that includes the results of this research will be digitized and available online through the University of Manitoba's MSpace and I will email you a link to the digital copy so that you can read the results of my research.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the

above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at (204) 474-7122 or by email at: humanethics@umanitoba.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Please indicate whether you consent to have your name revealed as author of your replies to the interview questions:

Yes: No:

Please indicate whether you consent to have a transcript (approved by you) of your replies to the interview questions attached as an appendix to my thesis:

Yes: No:

If you agree to have your transcript attached to the thesis, please indicate whether you consent to have your name revealed as the author of the transcript:

Yes: No:

I want to receive a summary of findings:

Yes: No:

Please send my summary of findings to the following contact address:

Your name (please print)

Your signature

date

Your email address (this address will not be distributed and is only used for emailing you a link to the digitized copy of my published thesis)

Principal Researcher's signature

date

Appendix B:

Transcribed Interviews and Answered Questionnaires



Faculty of Arts

Department of History

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Winnipeg, MB

R3T 2N2

Phone: 204-474-8401

Fax: 204-474-7570

Email: history@umanitoba.ca

Principal Researcher: Nicole Courrier (umcourrn@myumanitoba.ca)

Research Advisor: Dr. Tom Nesmith (Thomas.Nesmith@umanitoba.ca)

Please answer the questions below. Feel free to use as much space as necessary.

Please provide the following:

Name:

Andrew Birrell

Birthplace and date:

London, England. December 21, 1942

Education (Degrees, Subject Areas, and Year of Graduation):

Honours BA, Modern History & English Literature, University of Toronto, 1965

1) What sparked your interest in photographs?

When I joined the Public Archives (PAC) I had no particular interest in photographs beyond our own family albums and the only experience I had with a camera was limited to a few snapshots with the family box Brownie when I was a child. I became passionate about photographs and photography only after joining the Historical Photographs Section of PAC.

2) What led you to become an archivist?

Nothing led me to be an archivist. In fact, I was forced into it by circumstances.

When I graduated from university in 1965 I was offered a job with the Public Service of Canada after trying a competition for a program called the Junior Executive Officer (JEO) program (yes it was really called that!). The program was searching for graduates who showed potential for developing into senior managers in the Public Service. As one of those selected (like Richard Huyda the year before me) I was offered a non-specific job and brought to Ottawa for several weeks of orientation. Representatives from all departments in the Government came and described the work done in their departments and what opportunities there might be for us candidates. PAC was one of the many departments that made a presentation.

After the presentations, we candidates chose the departments we were most interested in and went there for interviews. Through a process of mutual selection the JEO candidates would find a position.

It was my intention to work for two or three years to earn enough money to go on and study theology with the aim of ordination in the Anglican Church. At my various interviews I made this known and naturally enough the prospective departments refused me because they wanted someone with a longer-term interest in the job.

This left the JEO program staff in a quandary because I appeared to be the only guy standing in a game of musical chairs where everyone else was sitting. Seizing on my history specialization they said that I was a natural fit for PAC

even though I had shown no interest and they immediately arranged for a visit to PAC. Instead of the brief interview most departments gave, I was treated to a two-day tour of all the divisions in PAC – Manuscript Division, Map Division, Picture Division and Government Records Management. I was bewildered, bored and slightly depressed, but two things became clear. Firstly, PAC really needed archivists and I could choose any division in which to work. Secondly, the JEO staff members were quite insistent that I go to PAC since there were no more options for me.

So I chose to work at PAC. Where in PAC would I go? What on earth looked interesting there? I was certain I didn't want to work in Manuscripts or Government Records. Maps I knew nothing about and they didn't much interest me. That left Picture Division and I thought to myself that pictures are always interesting so I chose Picture Division by elimination and not because of a great interest or any special qualifications. At a brief interview with Georges Delisle (Chief of the Picture Division) I learned the opening was in the Historical Photographs Section. He suggested I call Richard Huyda, Head of the Section, to discuss what the position entailed. I did so. Over the phone Richard enthused about how enjoyable it was to examine historical photos and to *see* what they told us about the past. He said the job was mine if I wanted it and I said okay.

That was how I became an archivist. It is evident that the selection process for archivists in 1965 lacked rigour and discipline. I had not the slightest understanding of how archives worked, what principles they used or why, beyond research by historians, they were useful. I was quite ignorant and unformed when I began to work as an archivist. Because there were no archival studies programs in Canada at the time, I think that PAC and other archival repositories assumed that they would train the new archivists themselves. However, perhaps because our Section was in a separate building, I don't recall much training beyond an orientation course and I rarely went to the main PAC building on Sussex Street. Furthermore, pictures and photographs lay well outside the archival mainstream which was dominated by textual records and there were few rules governing how they should be handled (for more on the state of archival training at this time see Wilfred I. Smith, "Archival Training in Canada," *The Canadian Archivist*, 1968). I was, indeed, a stranger in a strange land.

3) When did you begin employment at the Public Archives of Canada/National Archives of Canada and where in the Archives were you first employed?

I joined PAC in June, 1965, and immediately began as the first working archivist (Richard was both an archivist and manager, and thinks of me therefore as the *second* working archivist) in the Historical Photographs Section (HPS). We were housed in a filthy warehouse known as the Loeb Building opposite the railroad

station on Besserer Street in Ottawa along with all our collections and the overflow from other divisions in PAC (Figure 1). There were no climate controls until we moved to the new PAC building at 395 Wellington Street in 1967. In the summer with the windows open our desks were frequently covered with grit.



Figure 1 Loeb Building, c.1966

4) What positions did you hold (and when did you hold them) during your time at the Archives?

a. 1965-1968, 1969-1975 Archivist

I was an archivist in the Historical Photographs Section from June, 1965 to July, 1968. After one year of theological study I returned to my former position, which was still vacant, in June, 1969. Until 1975 I was a working-level archivist, but with increasing responsibilities which I will elaborate later.

From April, 1972 until July, 1973, I was Acting Head of the Historical Photographs Section when Richard Huyda became Acting Chief of the Picture Division. This occurred when Georges Delisle became Acting Chief of a new division dedicated to motion pictures. This initiative, incidentally, was the result of the work of Richard because, for lack of a better idea, both motion pictures and recorded sound had been lumped in with photographs when HPS was created.

b. 1975-1980 Head, Acquisition & Research Section

Following the creation of a separate division for motion pictures and sound the HPS was also elevated to the level of a division with Richard becoming the Chief. At the same time the new division, now known as the National Photography Collection (NPC), was reorganized into several sections based on function. The

archival functions were placed in the Acquisition & Research Section of which I became Head. I remained in this position until 1981.

c. 1981-1986 Director, National Photography Collection

In 1981 Richard left NPC for another position in PAC and I became his successor as Director of NPC. I remained in this position until October, 1986. For a month or two in 1986 just before my next position I was Acting Director-General of the Historical Resources Branch. As an aside, during the early 1980s PAC experienced a case of bureaucratic title inflation. Thus a section Head became a Chief, a division Chief became a Director and a branch Director became a Director-General. This explains what may seem inconsistency in titles in the previous paragraphs.

d. 1986-1998 Director-General, Information Management Branch

In October, 1986, I was appointed as Director-General of the newly formed Informatics Branch, which was renamed the Information Management Branch about five years later. It was responsible for consistent implementation of computer technology in the PAC as well as records management within PAC. This was meant to symbolize for the Public Service the symbiotic relationship between information technology and information management. I remained in this position until I retired in December, 1998.

5) What were your aspirations for photo-archival work when you worked with photographs at the Archives?

My initial goal when I started in 1965 was to familiarize myself with the history of photography and the holdings of the Section. My first job was to organize the William J. Topley collection, at the time the largest collection in our holdings, comprising roughly 150,000 items most of them negatives dating from 1868 to 1926. In addition to organizing and confirming and correcting identification, I developed criteria for appraising the collection in order to eliminate non-essential material which Richard and I then submitted to the Dominion Archivist for approval.

In addition, during the period 1965-1968 I examined other notable collections in the holdings, researched their provenance, corrected identification and produced reports relating my findings. During this research a sense of wonder began to grow in me as I saw (literally) the wealth of information contained in photographs, singly and in groups. To me they were a time machine, historical documents more revelatory than textual documents. They were more closely linked to the growing interest in social history than to traditional political and economic history and were far more than supporting illustrations.

Richard and I naturally looked around to see how other institutions were handling photographic records. The closest was the Notman Archives housed in the McCord Museum at McGill. There Stanley Triggs was running a more or less one-man operation which had quite high visibility. The Archives of Ontario had an interesting photo collection, but it suffered from lack of funds as did almost all audio-visual archives at the time. Travel expenses at the time didn't allow for travel beyond Montreal and Toronto.

In the year that I was absent, vast changes had begun to take place in the Public Service and PAC. P-E Trudeau became Prime Minister in 1968 and introduced a new management style in government and placed strong ministers in charge of cultural departments. PAC occupied a new, purpose-built building. W. Kaye Lamb retired and Wilfred Smith became Acting Dominion Archivist and later was confirmed as Dominion Archivist. A new sense of freedom permeated PAC with managers and archivists allowed greater responsibility. New ideas were encouraged and considered. When Hugh Taylor arrived as Director of the Archives Branch in 1971 the winds of change continued, more money was available in the federal budgets and hiring increased dramatically over the next decade. See Terry Cook's brief essay "Archives as Media of Communication" for more on Taylor's impact on audio-visual collections in archives:
<https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/innis-mcluhan/030003-4040-e.html>

These changes were reflected across the country as other governments and large corporations also awoke to the value of archives and the necessity for sound records management. It was a decade of growth, of optimism and of excitement in the Canadian archival world and in PAC itself. Terry Cook has summarized this period well in his address *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants* found at https://r.search.yahoo.com/_ylt=A0LEV0JR4ZpVzfgAmu1XNyoA;_ylu=X3oDMTBzdWd2cWI5BGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwMxMAR2dGlkAwRzZWMDc3I-/RV=2/RE=1436242385/RO=10/RU=http%3a%2f%2fwww.archivists.ca%2fsites%2fdefault%2ffiles%2fAttachments%2fCommunications_attachments%2fcook_closing_plenary.pdf/RK=0/RS=QWoupvH0Ezg1piFcQjJikNq5jyQ-

Similar changes were taking place in the world of historical photography. On my first day of work at PAC Georges Delisle had handed me a copy of Helmut and Alison Gernsheim's *The History of Photography* which had just arrived and asked me to deliver it as I was on my way to meet Richard for the first time. Interest in and writing about the history of photography took flight in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Major auction houses such as Sotheby's and Christie's began to hold specialized photography auctions and photographs regularly set price records over the following two decades. NPC was far from working in a vacuum and we were energized by the activity in publications, conferences and exhibitions in Europe and North America.

In Ottawa, Lorraine Monk threw a spotlight on photography by extending the work of the Still Photo Division of the National Film Board through exhibitions and publications the apogee being *Canada A Year of the Land*. The National Gallery of Canada in 1967 appointed James Borcoman as the Chief Curator of photography and he began rapidly to expand the Gallery's photo holdings and to create major photographic exhibitions.

On my return in 1969 I had anticipated continuing the traditional archival work of organizing, appraising and preparing collections for public access. Three things occurred which prompted an awakening in my mind.

The first was a realization, within the first year, that I found the archivist's traditional work to be less than fully absorbing and I was rapidly becoming bored.

Second was a rapid awareness that photography is a medium that has wrought a revolution in society but in archives it was treated as a backwater, as mere illustration rather than as important primary source. Yet there we were in the age of Innis and McLuhan, watching TV every day blissfully unaware that we were living in an image-dominated society where, increasingly, textual information was losing ground to the aural and visual. Television practically begged to be married to the visual media contained in archives. This potential began to be fully realized with the work of Ken Burns in his series on the Civil War which debuted in 1990 after five years in production.

Third was the knowledge that important 19th century and early 20th century collections were still extant, but in danger of being destroyed owing to a lack of archival interest and to general ignorance of their historical value. I had already concluded that using photographs as primary sources required a somewhat different approach to the documents than those of the traditional historian and I had learned how exciting it was to work with them, to be transported to another time and place through single images and whole collections of them. Saving more of these resources was an obvious goal.

By late 1970 this awakening informed my goals for my work in the NPC and PAC. They remained constant for the next fifteen years I worked in the NPC:

- a. Do everything possible to locate, acquire, preserve and make available important early photo collections from across the country.
- b. Identify contemporary photographers whose work would be of interest to archives, meet them and explain why they should consider having their work preserved in archival institutions.
- c. Do what we can to raise public awareness of the historical value of photographs hoping that would lead to future acquisitions and would educate the public about the great, approachable and enjoyable wealth of visual

material in archives and in PAC specifically.

- d. Visit other photo archives to learn how they operate and what they have and to meet and share with other photo archivists.

Richard Huyda and I were in accord on these aims and so in 1970 I prepared a proposal for a national acquisition program similar to the SNAP (Systematic National Acquisition Program) program already existing in Manuscript Division. This proposal received a lukewarm reception from the Assistant Dominion Archivist who found the idea interesting but thought the modest budget proposed was not possible. Since he didn't say no and Richard's boss, Georges Delisle, was supportive we decided to proceed without additional budget provision.

One of the first steps was to prepare a 4 page brochure that introduced PAC and the NPC to photographers (Figure 2). This we took with us to attend the Professional Photographers of Canada annual meeting in 1971 at which Richard had wangled an invitation to address the convention. We also had a small booth in the Trade Show to further spread our message. Since the meeting was in Vancouver we stopped at several archives on the way (Glenbow Archives, Alberta Provincial Archives, Vancouver Public Library and the British Columbia Provincial Archives) to meet colleagues, to exchange information about handling and preserving photographic material and to gain an impression of the quantity and quality of photo collections across the country. Actively reaching out to living, practicing photographers and trying to stimulate a sense of community among photo archivists would remain at the core of our activities.

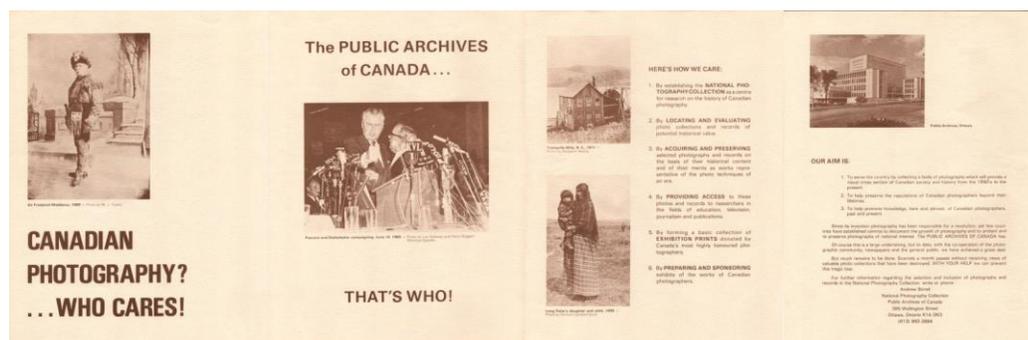


Figure 2 - NPC's First Brochure

In order to realize the four aspirations cited above I developed a strategy, by trial and error, first for myself and then, when the Acquisition & Research Section was created, for all the archivists in the section. The key elements in this strategy were: research, acquisition, exhibition, publication and education. Some of these are elaborated in the article I wrote in *Archivaria*, No. 17, "From Acquisition to Exhibition."

Research

In order to discover who the early photographers were and where they operated required extensive research using period newspapers, city directories, literature searches, archival sources, etc. Such research was necessary not just to build a file of basic information, but also to prepare introductions to accessions and to identify more precisely their contents and origins. Over time we created a large name file of Canadian photographers which proved helpful to all the NPC's archivists.

In order to support research and to remain current with contemporary photography we purchased many books and subscribed to a wide variety of photography magazines and journals. In addition, we also acquired microfilm copies and reprints of many 19th century photo journals and books.

Acquisition

Our goal was to preserve Canada's history as presented through photography and, as with the rest of PAC, we had a responsibility to do this for the Government of Canada as well as in the private sector. Richard made an excellent start in both areas prior to 1970 with the acquisition of the photographs of the Department of National Defence, of the Geological Survey of Canada and of the Montreal Gazette among many others. After 1970 I and my colleagues spent considerable time contacting photographers and newspapers to inform them of our interest in their collections and how PAC could benefit them. I became an evangelist for our photographic heritage and even though we had no acquisition fund in those early years many photographers generously contributed their work. We were interested not only in immediate acquisition, but for that moment in the future when a disposition of their work was necessary. In this way years later we acquired the collections of such well-known photographers as Yousuf Karsh, Malak Karsh, Roloff Beny, Michel Lambeth, Kryn Taconis, Ed Spiteri, Walter Curtin and Ken Bell to name only a few. Many of these were outright donations, but from the mid 1970s on we had a small acquisition fund and also made good use of tax reduction provisions for gifts to the Crown.

Exhibitions were attractive to photographers and over the years we exhibited the work of many contemporary photographers whose work fit the PAC's mandate if they would make a gift of the prints we exhibited. This proved to be extremely popular. The prints, while useful and desirable, were to me a kind of "loss leader." I wanted photographers to think of PAC or of archives in general when they thought of retirement. Throughout the 70s and 80s we also made a point of interviewing photographers whose work we had collected and these are now in the LAC Sound Archives. Not only did I feel these interviews would be a useful future adjunct to our holdings, they also underscored to photographers our seriousness about their work.

One of the main emphases in our collecting was an insistence on acquiring whole collections – negatives, prints and whatever textual information was available. This was a major differentiation from the way galleries and museums collected. It was, and is still, my belief that in order for photographs to be used intelligently it is very important to know their context otherwise incorrect assumptions and conclusions are likely. I can cite many examples where historical photos are not what they seem, but have been accepted at face value.

Our acquisition policy in NPC was refined over the years. In the late 1970s/early 1980s, PAC's Archives Branch attempted to clarify its acquisition policy division by division. Ann Thomas refers to and quotes from NPC's policy in *Archivaria*, No. 17, "Reflections on an Exhibition," 138. I had almost forgotten that exercise, but you may be able to obtain a copy from Library and Archives Canada. I'm sure it would add policy detail to what I have stated here. For that matter, if you haven't already decided to do it, exploring the records of the NPC at LAC should reveal the changes over the years.

Exhibition

Richard and I were united in the belief that photographs needed to be exhibited in an attractive and coherent format. Quite apart from anything else it would be foolish to try to convince photographers to donate their work to PAC if they felt they would be consigning it to the dark forever. They wanted their work to be visible. We were proud of the riches we had and wanted to share them with as wide an audience as possible. Since the new PAC building had several exhibition spaces we had an open venue.

It was probably Richard who had the idea for our first major exhibition, *Reflections on a Capital: 12 Ottawa Photographers*, which opened in December, 1970. Richard, Peter Robertson and I (the only archivists in the section at the time) did the selection, research and writing. This may have been the first time PAC had produced an exhibition with a catalogue. Apart from satisfying our desire to show our holdings, it was the first time we had tied an exhibition to acquisition. Richard negotiated with both Karsh and photojournalist Duncan Cameron to provide prints for the exhibition. Ultimately, years later, we purchased the collections of both photographers.

Over the next two decades NPC provided probably eighty per cent of the exhibitions produced by PAC. Many of them, through research and accompanying catalogues, added significantly to the general knowledge of photography in Canada. To mention only a few:

Relentless Verity: Canadian Military Photographers Since 1885 – Peter Robertson, 1973

Into the Silent Land. Survey Photography in the Canadian West, 1858-1900 – myself, 1975

Arctic Images: The Frontier Photographed, 1860-1911 – Claude Minotto, 1977
City Blocks, City Spaces: Historical Photographs of Canada's Urban Spaces, c. 1850-1900 – Lilly Koltun, 1980

Private Realms of Light: Canadian Amateur Photography, 1839-1930 – myself, Peter Robertson, Lilly Koltun, Andrew Rodger, Joan Schwartz, 1983

Kryn Taconis, Photographer – Brian Carey and Louise Guay, 1989

In addition to these major historical presentations we also prepared exhibitions by prominent contemporary photographers whose work coincided with our documentary orientation. Thus we had a retrospective exhibition of the work of Ken Bell, a prominent Toronto commercial photographer who had photographed in WW2 and who did a lot of work for the National Ballet of Canada. Another was the colour portraitist Cavouk who had photographed many leading international and Canadian cultural and political figures. In return for these exhibitions PAC received a set of prints which were added to NPC's holdings.

In 1974(?) the Director of the Administration Branch complained to Richard that the front hallway of the PAC building leading to the auditorium was barren with nothing to look at except a few plants. Richard offered to mount small exhibitions there and the offer was accepted provided that there would always be an exhibition there. Richard agreed and so was born the series of regular exhibitions known as *Aperçu: The Archives Looks At . . .* which continued until at least 1991. These small exhibitions, usually no more than 30 photos, alternated between historical material drawn from our holdings and the work of contemporary photographers whom we were courting. For the latter there would be a small opening ceremony and reception. The photographers were usually quite pleased. PAC photographers shot these events and their photos are still available as far as I know. The research related to the historical shows was usually published in *The Archivist*.

Publication

Research was necessary to prepare accessions for public access. I early discovered in the William James Topley studio collection that there were runs of negatives not taken by Topley. For example, he purchased some stereo negative views of Ottawa from the Stiff Brothers studio. The collection also contained the negatives Charles Horetzky had taken for the Canadian Pacific Railway Survey. This was a real treasure and led to further work on the reason the photos had been made and how they came to be in the Topley collection.

It was also necessary to map the unknown landscape of the development of photography in Canada: who were the photographers, where had they operated, why were the photographs taken if they were outside a studio environment? Once such a project was completed it seemed appropriate if not necessary that the results should be published not only to share our findings, but also to shine a spotlight on an archivist's work. When a new archivist was hired for Acquisition & Research Section, just such a project was often assigned. For example, a 1975 summer project on the pre-confederation photographers of Halifax by James Burant appeared in *The Journal of Canadian Art History* in 1977. Lilly Koltun's first assignment in 1976 resulted in an article on pre-Confederation photography in Toronto which appeared in *History of Photography* in 1978 and Theresa Rowat published her research on Prince Edward Island photographers in *Photographic Canadiana* in 1987.

All our archivists were encouraged to publish the results of their work. As a result we were able to share our findings with archivists and historians. With contemporary photographers in mind I wrote a series of articles for *Photo Canada*, a Maclean-Hunter trade magazine, to inform them about the traditions of their profession in Canada as well as to keep the work of PAC-NPC in a corner of their minds. NPC's archivists published in numerous professional journals such as *Archivaria*, *The Archivist*, *History of Photography*, *BC Studies* and *Alberta Historical Review* in addition to the occasional monographs associated with exhibitions. Furthermore a number of us carried out private research that resulted in such books as Richard's on Humphrey Lloyd Hime, mine on Benjamin Baltzly and the collaboration with Ralph Greenhill on the revision of his 1965 volume *Early Photography in Canada*.

The catalogue for *Private Realms of Light* was the pinnacle, but far from the end of the division's publications. It was also the first time that the department was willing to invest in a high-quality publication. In it we felt that we had reproduced the photographers' works in a way that would satisfy them, we had presented an approachable and attractive summary of our work and had provided, through the bibliography and notes on collection locations, a springboard for others.

If you are not already familiar with it, the article by Kunard and Payne, "Writing Photography in Canada: A Historiography," which appeared in *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada* gives an interesting summary of the publishing done by NPC archivists and its place in the canon of writing about Canadian photography.

Education

I considered the photographic education of our archivists to be of great importance and have already alluded above to the primary source research which aided in learning about the development of photography in Canada. In addition, new archivists were expected to read widely in the literature of history of photography and were given practical familiarity with all the various types of photographic processes, prints and negatives represented in the PAC holdings.

Since we were regularly in contact with photographers it was necessary to be very familiar with the practical aspects of photography in order to speak knowledgeably with them. I quickly realized that I was sadly deficient in this regard and in 1972 bought my first camera which soon became a constant companion. I built a darkroom and learned to process film and to print. This background was invaluable when meeting photographers. As a result I urged all NPC's archivists to purchase a camera if they didn't already have one and to become familiar with how it worked. Richard had a working antique whole-plate camera and on one occasion we successfully made a paper negative with the camera using single weight photographic printing paper.

Richard and I wanted NPC to be recognized nationally and internationally as a centre of archival excellence and to this end we encouraged educational leave related to further studies in the field. I had leave to continue writing a book based on the exhibition *Into the Silent Land*. Lilly Koltun and Joan Schwartz both had a year off to pursue studies at the PhD level related to Canadian photography which they completed successfully.

What we learned we were anxious to share. Accordingly, we frequently lectured on various aspects of photographic archives and Canadian photographic history at colleges and universities, art galleries, conferences, and to professional organizations such as the Professional Photographers of Canada, the Society of American Archivists and the Association of Canadian Archivists. During 1985-1986 Lilly Koltun was a **Visiting Assistant Professor** for the Master of Archival Studies Program at the University of British Columbia.

In addition to practical and formal education and lecturing, NPC also sponsored and coordinated two international conferences devoted to archives and photography. The first, the brainchild of Richard, was *Eyes of Time* held May 23-26, 1978. In conjunction with the conference, *Archivaria*, No. 5 was a special edition devoted to "Photographs and Archives." One reviewer of the conference noted, "For someone attempting to become familiar with a specialized and rapidly developing field, the conference provided a marvellous learning experience." (*Archivaria*, No. 7, p. 154). This led to a conference in March, 1979 organized

by Ryerson University, *Canadian perspectives: a national conference on Canadian photography*.

The second, organized by Joan Schwartz, was *International Perspectives on Amateur Photography* (September 23, 1983) one of the ancillary products of the exhibition *Private Realms of Light*.

EYES OF TIME

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PHOTOGRAPHY AND HISTORY
May 27-28, 1979 OTTAWA, CANADA
presented by the NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION, PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA in association with HERITAGE CANADA

AN INTENSIVE EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO:

- photographers and amateurs of photography,
- photo curators, curators, archivists,
- photo historians,
- exhibitors, television and film producers,
- publicists, librarians, exhibition designers,
- and others interested in our photographic heritage.

AN OCCASION

In bring together those who have a professional involvement in still photography to stimulate a national awareness of the photograph as an historical record.

AN OPPORTUNITY

- to meet colleagues and competitors, clients and customers,
- to learn about the photographic heritage, about photography in Canada today and what lies in the future,
- to visit some of Canada's major photo archives, galleries and repositories,
- to view major Canadian photo collections, film and exhibitions.

LES YEUX DU TEMPS

UNE CONFÉRENCE NATIONALE SUR LA PHOTOGRAPHIE ET L'HISTOIRE
du 27 au 28 mai 1979 OTTAWA, CANADA
une présentation de la COLLECTION NATIONALE DE PHOTOGRAPHIES, ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES DU CANADA, en collaboration avec HÉRITAGE CANADA

UNE CONFÉRENCE FORMATIVE INTENSIVE D'UN INTÉRÊT PARTICULIER POUR:

- les photographes et les professionnels de photographie,
- les archivistes et les conservateurs de photographies,
- les historiens,
- les éditeurs et les producteurs de cinéma et de télévision,
- les publicistes, les libraires et les concepteurs d'expositions,
- et tous ceux qui s'intéressent à notre patrimoine photographique du Canada.

UNE OCCASION

de réunir ceux qui partagent un intérêt professionnel et amateur pour la photographie et de sensibiliser les gens à la photographie comme document historique.

UNE CHANCE

- de rencontrer des collègues et des concurrents, des clients réguliers et les amateurs occasionnels,
- d'apprendre sur le passé, présent et l'avenir de la photographie au Canada et à son avenir, et sur ce que nous réserve l'avenir,
- de visiter quelques-uns des principaux dépôts, archives et bibliothèques photographiques canadiennes,
- de voir des collections de films et des expositions.

LES YEUX DU TEMPS

Quatre jours de rencontres, d'échanges et d'événements qui se déroulent:

DES SÉSSIONS GÉNÉRALES

Exploration de thèmes à travers dix-neuf ateliers et dix discussions en compagnie de dix photographes, concepteurs, experts et autres professionnels bien connus et respectés.

- LA PHOTOGRAPHIE EN TANT QUE DOCUMENT DE "REÈRE VISUELLE"
- LA PHOTOGRAPHIE ET SES ÉCARTS ACQUIS
- LA PHOTOGRAPHIE FACE À L'AVENIR

DES ATELIERS SPÉCIALISÉS

Des sessions de travail et de discussions avec entre les participants au cours de six ateliers qui porteront sur les sujets suivants:

- Connaître son matériel
- La recherche de photos et de objets utiles
- Le métier de photographe
- Le métier de collectionneur
- Tirer le profit maximal du produit: savoir reconnaître ses clients
- Les techniques sur l'usage des photos.

Figure 3 - Program for *Eyes of Time*

- 6) What do you think was accomplished by photo-archival work during your time on the staff of the archives? Please include in your response an assessment of the impact of the photo-archival work done by the Archives on the archival community and its contribution to the wider scholarly community.

a. *Cataloguing and Reference*

In his first year of work Richard established a reference catalogue system based on subject headings and accompanied by a 4"x5" image on a 5"x8" card. This provided researchers with a quick entry to some of the most used photographs in our holdings. It grew constantly as researchers ordered items not already contained in it. This card catalogue was still in use when I left

NPC in 1986. In addition, we later microfiched the whole of some important collections to be used as finding aids.

In the late 1970s Bernard Weilbrenner, the Assistant Dominion Archivist, suggested that NPC produce a guide to Canadian photo collections. Chris Seifried coordinated this major undertaking and in 1984 the *Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives* was published. I had asserted that a purely textual guide to a visual medium would be of little use. I was completely wrong. The *Guide* was a big success with researchers. Edward Cavell's remark that it was "an absolutely essential gateway to the labyrinth of Canadian photography collections" (*Archivaria*, No. 20, 190) reflected a general satisfaction with the results of the project.

b. *Preservation and Conservation*

Photographic prints, cased items (such as daguerreotypes and ambrotypes) and negatives presented an enormous variety of chemical compositions and, more often than not, were contained in highly unsuitable storage media such as acidic envelopes and destructive plastic sleeves. Richard, again in his first year, was quickly aware of this and began re-enveloping important collections in acid-free envelopes. Over the years we insisted that all collections be so housed as soon as possible even though this was an additional expense. Fortunately the photographic industry was also aware of this problem and a number of companies appeared with products that met our needs.

Repeated use of originals would obviously quickly lead to their deterioration and researchers seldom needed to view an original print or negative. As copies of originals were ordered a 4"x5" copy negative was made and used for future requests. Where important collections were primarily negatives, archivists tried to anticipate potential use and selected those negatives to be copied. In the case of negatives the PAC photo preservation unit used a direct reversal film that allowed the production of a copy negative directly from the original negative without the necessity of making a print. This saved both time and money while yielding the best possible copy.

One of the most significant actions was Richard's decision to request the hiring of a Photo Conservation Chemist. Although working in a separate branch his work was devoted to NPC. Klaus B. Hendriks was hired in 1975 and proved to be all that we hoped for and far more. His career and national/international influence is recounted in Richard's obituary of Klaus found in *Archivaria*, No. 41, 304-308.

c. *Acquisition*

I have outlined above the plan developed to alert photographers to our existence and how it could benefit them. I felt it important to overcome the general assumption that archives are dusty, old places out of touch with the modern day and of little interest to anyone but historians. I think we

succeeded quite well in this task and I myself was happy to establish long-term relationships with such photographers as Walter Curtin, John Reeves, Ed Spiteri, Neil Newton, Ted Grant, Ralph Greenhill and Ken Bell. The other archivists in Acquisition & Research did the same with their contacts.

Making PAC/NPC a visible and obvious choice for photographers to consider was borne out by later gifts, among them Kryn Taconis, Michel Lambeth and Roloff Beny. We had never spoken to or attempted to contact Beny and were considerably surprised and appreciative to find that he had bequeathed his life's work to PAC.

We successfully encouraged the establishment of an official photographer connected to the Prime Minister's Office, whose official photos would later come to PAC/NAC/LAC. I don't know if this is still the case. During the 1980 federal election we contracted photojournalist Ted Grant to cover the election for PAC. This could be viewed as a questionable practice because it might appear to be a case of an archive creating its own records. I don't believe, however, that it ever became an issue.

Numerous photo galleries, dealers and collectors sprang up in the post-1970 period and we made a point of introducing ourselves and our interests. As a result we were able to add significant historical items to our holdings. One of the most important collectors was the transportation businessman Andrew Merrilees who had been collecting photographs, publications and ephemera relating especially to Canadian railway history from long before the creation of the HPS. I visited him frequently from 1970 on. Before his death in 1979 he willed his huge collection to PAC.

d. *Research, Publication & Lectures*

I have stressed the importance I placed on research and publication. On the positive side this helped outline the features of Canadian photo history and collections. This was both an aid to and a stimulus to further work by others. In addition, it drew attention to existing collections and encouraged further examination. It is satisfying to see that in the past twenty years a number of books and theses have appeared which examine archival photo collections from a perspective other than that of the art historian and critic.

e. *Impact/Criticism*

PAC colleagues early criticized NPC for writing history based on its collections. That we did so is a correct observation but, in my opinion, a false criticism. This was, and perhaps still is, considered to be a minor sin since an archivist's job is to acquire and prepare records for interpretation by historians, not to become the interpreters as well. Nevertheless, we felt that, having acquired the knowledge, we had a duty to share it. Also, as part of the Historical Research Group in the Professional Institute of the Public Service (the union to which archivists belonged) one way of promotion without

becoming a manager was to show professional excellence. Historical research and publication was the obvious way to achieve this, whereas archival professionalism did not offer the same direct path to promotion.

Partly this criticism related to our exhibition production. Some may have thought we were verging on the role of museums and galleries, an issue both of interpretation and of aesthetics. Exhibitions cost money, catalogues added to that cost and also used up the time of archivists that could be better spent on real archival work. Some suggested that our attention to the history of Canadian photography was the equivalent of emphasizing the history of the typewriter, i.e. that such activity was patently foolish in an archival context. When the catalogue for *Private Realms of Light* appeared one PAC manager dismissed it as a “vanity publication.” Ironically, PAC produced just such a “vanity publication” in 1992 (*Treasures of the National Archives of Canada*) with the stated purpose to “overcome . . . anonymity” and “to make the institution and its work better understood and the variety, beauty, and great cultural value of its holdings better appreciated” (p. 12). To a great extent those were the reasons why we engaged in exhibiting, writing and lecturing. As for the criticism that we paid too much attention to the aesthetic elements of photography, I can only say that no exhibition will succeed that does not attend to this element. However, exhibitions such as *Into the Silent Land* and *City Blocks, City Spaces* were a conscious attempt to use photography to explore historical themes not to present a gallery-type exhibition.

Another criticism was that we did not spend enough time attending to our own knitting, as it were. This was part of Terry Cook’s concern with “total archives,” particularly what he perceived as an ignoring of the principle of provenance. Our exchange on the subject in *Archivaria* had greater impact than we expected. Before Hugh Taylor began teaching in the Archival Studies program at UBC, he ran a month-long course at PAC for archivists from across the country and several times Terry and I were invited to repeat our positions for their consideration. Thus we were contributing in a small way to the foundations of archival discourse in Canada.

Debra Elaine Barr in her thesis “Analyzing Photographs in Archival Terms” criticized photo archives in general and NPC in particular for appearing to be ignorant of archival theory. In particular she lamented that there was little evidence of attention to appraisal and little apparent awareness of the evidential value in administrative collections. She concluded that NPC seemed not to be interested in the federal government’s administrative use of photography. She probably has a point about our lack of in-depth knowledge of archival theory, but, as she points out, writing on archives and photographs in 1985 was slight and quite recent. Writing in 1985 she may have been unaware of how little formal archival training was to be found in North America 20 years previously. Her conclusion that we were overwhelmingly

interested in private collections suggests that she had not really investigated the range of federal government holdings we had and have. To mention just a few large collections in our holdings by 1985: Department of the Interior, Department of National Defence, Topographical Surveys, National Film Board, Geological Survey of Canada and Indian Affairs and Northern Development. She raises many interesting points and chapter six of her thesis repays consideration though a little strident in places.

One final impact was the sometimes thorny accusation that PAC/NPC was acquiring material that legitimately was the mandate of a provincial or municipal archive. This was difficult to counter because photographs are very specific and local. Undoubtedly other archives were rightly aggrieved. However, when we began our campaign to find collections in the private sector few if any archives were prepared or able to acquire, preserve and make available non-textual material. I had heard too many stories of glass plate collections that had been stripped for greenhouse use or just thrown away because of the difficulty of keeping them. There was urgency to finding what remained and saving it. On one occasion we offered, at our expense, to retrieve a glass-plate collection in Pennsylvania destined for another institution, to pack it and to ship it to PAC where we made two sets of copy negatives, one for PAC and one for the recipient institution. We then sent the original collection with the copy negatives on to the archives that it was being given to. For this the head of that institution offered grudging thanks, and accused us of withholding some of the originals, an accusation that was nonsense. On another occasion I was in a taxi with a Provincial Archivist and the Assistant Provincial Archivist who took me to task for “poaching” on their territory. When I asked if they were prepared to acquire and service the collection I was investigating, they said no, but they didn’t want PAC to take it. Fortunately this was a rare occurrence.

- 7) **What noteworthy contribution did others make to photo-archival work in places other than the Archives? What contribution did they make to the study of the history of photography in Canada or elsewhere? Please be sure to identify the people who made these contributions.**

NPC was not the first to see the historical value of photographs. Even though PAC had accumulated many photographs over the years they had never been a focus of attention until 1964. When HPS was established it was able to bring the resources of a large institution and a large number of people to bear on organizing, cataloguing, providing reference and finding new collections. In most other institutions all of this work was usually carried out by one or two people, nevertheless it was being done.

Ron D'Altroy established the photo collection in the Vancouver Public Library in the early 1960s and set up a reference system which he felt served the requirements of the public ("An Effective Photographic Archives," *The Canadian Archivist*, 1968). In this article D'Altroy begins by referring to the acquisition of collections as "exciting" and "romantic." Another book, *Flapjacks and Photographs* by Henri Robideau, recounts Ron's story of a trip in 1961 into the B.C. interior and how he discovered the Mattie Gunterman collection in an attic under packrat refuse.

The work of *Stanley Triggs & the Notman Photographic Archives* at the McCord Museum in Montreal was quite similar to that of NPC and probably more famous. The Notman Archives was presented to McCord Museum in 1956 and its early history is outlined by Triggs in "The Notman Photographic Archives," *History of Photography*, No. 20. Triggs, a photographer and musician, was appointed Curator of the collection in 1965 and quickly established a collecting policy. He produced during his tenure many books, articles and exhibitions and substantially increased the holdings. Martha Langford credited him with inspiring the genesis of her book *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums*.

David Mattison and *Jerry Davison* of the BC Provincial Archives both contributed significantly to the literature on BC photography and Mattison especially on bibliographic information.

Ed Cavell worked for 30 years as curator at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies. During that period he wrote many books using historical photographs bringing attention to the resources of the Museum.

8) What contribution do you think you personally made to the activities mentioned in question six?

I conceived and successfully implemented a national program to locate and bring to PAC, on a continuing basis, photo collections of documentary and historical importance. We found many important earlier collections. Of greater significance was our work in meeting contemporary photographers and making them aware of our interest in them and our ability to preserve their work for future use. This was a new concept in Canadian archives and, as indicated above, has brought many significant collections to PAC, both purchased and as gifts. I think our work in acquisitions spurred other archives to invest more in photography even if only from a sense of competition or turf protection. The result is a rich body of material available across the country.

Led by Richard the research and publications of all NPC archivists dominated the early definition of the history of Canadian photography, according to Kunard and

Payne. Richard and I both viewed this as an essential part of NPC's work and we expected our archivists to contribute through small and larger publications. By this means and through bibliographical work we helped pave the way for future studies by others. Nor did we neglect writing and lecturing on archival matters. NPC members contributed to and aided in editing *Archivaria* over the years including organizing the special issue on *Photographs and Archives* in 1978. A literature search by the names of the archivists found at the end of this questionnaire will yield an impressive number of books and articles.

I think I created a productive and stimulating environment while I was Head of the Acquisition & Research Section and the group had a good *esprit de corps*. I hope my missionary zeal was infectious. Ultimately though, that is an opinion that needs to be verified by those who worked with me: Peter Robertson, Andrew Rodger, Lilly Koltun and Joan Schwartz. When I became Director, I believe I was able to continue Richard's leadership and the NPC continued to be a generally happy and productive organization. Many of the employees who worked in NPC have written that it was one of the most enjoyable periods of their work life. It certainly was for me. I remember that on several occasions Jean-Pierre Wallot looked around our Senior Management table and wondered aloud why it was that of the nine managers there three had come from little NPC. He never tried to answer his own question, but for me that observation symbolizes the division's accomplishments.

In 1980 my life took an unexpected turn. On my own time I was engaged in writing a book based on the exhibition *Into the Silent Land* and had completed about half of it. I decided to buy a microcomputer so that I could use word processing software to speed my work. Instead I became entranced by the PC and began to automate the work of NPC. Over the next five years much of my work time and private time was devoted to networking the division and writing programs to automate many of the functions. It was quite successful, but my book was shelved and as a result I was promoted and given the responsibility of networking the whole of PAC. I left NPC in October, 1986. At the same time, owing to a reorganization that also created my new branch, NPC ceased to exist as a separate division. It was reunited with Picture Division and known as Documentary Art & Photography with Lilly Koltun as the Director.

9) What remains to be accomplished in photo-archival work at the Archives?

It has been 30 years since I left NPC and I have no way of judging what remains to be done as I have been totally removed from this work.

10) What remains to be accomplished in photo-archival work beyond the Archives in other places where photographs are archived?

See previous answer.

11) What directions in the study of the history of photography in Canada should be pursued now?

See previous answer.

12) Please feel free to add any further comments.

Richard Huyda deserves much of the credit for shaping NPC and for its success. Not only did he do a commendable job in establishing NPC, he was also responsible for setting up both the Sound Archives and the Film Archives in PAC, a fact that has been totally overlooked. He felt a responsibility for both these media because they had been included with photography as audio-visual media outside the realm of painting, drawings and prints. First he established the sound archives as a separate unit which soon became independent. Then he developed a proposal for a film collection parallel to still photography. After he demonstrated its viability the Film Archives was set up as a separate division and after a year a permanent Chief was hired. The energy and planning for both these units came from Richard, and he did not seem to be concerned that they became independent of NPC.

In NPC, Richard demonstrated his vision and leadership over sixteen years. In addition to effective management, he led the way in lecturing, publishing, organizing conferences and creating exhibitions, thus showing me possibilities I had not considered. We are very unlike in our personalities, but were able to work together fruitfully and in harmony over a long period of time. That friendship persisted outside of work as well and continues to this day.

Of all the archivists who worked in NPC while I was there, Joan Schwartz is the only one who continues to work in historical photography. She has set a standard for knowledge and scholarship in the field that knows few peers. It was a pleasure and a privilege to work with her. This is not to denigrate the work of any of the others for they accomplished much. They either moved on to other work or worked in NPC and its successors and have now retired.

FYI here is a list of the archivists who worked in HPS/NPC between 1965 and 1986 in order of their hiring:

Richard Huyda

Andrew Birrell

Peter Robertson

Claude Minotto

Kathy McLean

Martha Phemister

Andrew Rodger

Alain Clavet

Lilly Koltun

Joan Schwartz

Brian Carey

Guy Tessier

Theresa Rowat

Melissa Rombout

Andrew Birrell



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Please answer the questions below. Feel free to use as much space as necessary.

Please provide the following:

Name: Jim Burant

Birthplace and date: Ottawa, ON November 25, 1952

Education (Degrees, Subject Areas, and Year of Graduation):

Honours BA (History and Art History), Carleton University, 1974

MA, Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1979.

1) What sparked your interest in photographs?

I have now sent you my article in the *Literary Review of Canada*, 6: 8 (1997) "Of Childhood, cameras, and a canoe" in which I explain something about my first job at the then Public Archives of Canada in the summer of 1972. I was working for the National Photo Collection and as an art history student, I became fascinated by visual culture in history. This response probably also answers the next couple of questions. I will send you by e-mail my c.v. as well as a list of publications and public presentations about my work as an archivist, photo-historian, and art historian.

2) What led you to become an archivist?

The profession really fell into my lap, as I had no idea that the profession existed when I started university in 1970, nor had I ever met a professional archivist. In Canada, there was no formal academic program anywhere in English Canada (just as there was no M.A. program in Canadian Art anywhere in the country). I registered with the federal summer student's job bureau in the winter of 1971-1972, and the rest is history.

3) When did you begin employment at the Public Archives of Canada/National Archives of Canada and where in the Archives were you first employed?

I was called for a job interview in May 1972, for a summer student job in the National Map Collection. I did not get the job, but I must have done something right, because when I was called and told that I had not gotten the job, they offered me a job in the National Photography Collection instead. I began my first job in late May 1972, as a clerk (CR-02), which was the next-to-the-lowest position you could have in the Canadian federal public service.

4) What positions did you hold (and when did you hold them) during your time at the Archives?

My curriculum vitae which I have sent to you provides details on my professional employment within the Public Archives, National Archives, and Library and Archives Canada.

5) What were your aspirations for photo-archival work when you worked with photographs at the Archives?

I had no aspirations at the outset, I was probably mostly overwhelmed by the richness of the photo collections, and by the opportunities for learning about Canadian photography. What PAC offered in the early period of my career was: 1) an opportunity to see a wide breadth of material about the photo-history of the country from the earliest days to contemporary times; 2) an opportunity to learn about resources for discovering and writing about the history of Canadian photography; 3) an opportunity to learn about photographic techniques and methodologies; 4) hands-on experience in learning about photo description, arrangement, and conservation; 5) the opportunity to interact with fellow archivists, creators, researchers, and the general public; and 6) the opportunity to participate in exhibitions and publications work.

6) What do you think was accomplished by photo-archival work during your time on the staff of the archives? Please include in your response an assessment of the impact of the photo-archival work done by the Archives on the archival community and its contribution to the wider scholarly community.

This is an enormous question, and one which defies an easy answer, especially as my career spanned 38 years of work there. Let me summarize this very quickly:

- a) photo-archivists at PAC when I first began were among the only people in the country working on the concept of photographs as archival records. People like Richard Huyda, Andrew Birrell, Peter Robertson, Claude Minotto, and Duncan Cameron were defining what photo archives were, developing policies, procedures, and methodologies for handling photographs within the archival domain, and writing about their work. *Archivaria 5* is a testament to their efforts - especially that of Richard Huyda, who was initially hired by the Archives in 1964, and who may be the earliest practising photo archivist in the country. Until the 1980s, photography was not even recognized as an archival document - particularly by purists who defined an archival record in purely administrative terms.
- b) Photo staff at the Public Archives were the first to take seriously the acquisition and preservation of photographs taken by government officials in the course of their work. Early negotiations with various government departments resulted in the acquisition of what are now recognized as key visual documents in the history of photography in our country, including early survey photography, war photography, the recording of public works, works commissioned by the National Film Board and its predecessors, and

photographs taken for operational purposes by External Affairs, Immigration, Agriculture, and other departments.

- c) Acquisitions made by Photo staff over the past forty years from the private sector encompass four major areas: the acquisition of historical photographs assembled by or left behind by individuals and families on a wide variety of subjects, including portraiture, activities and events, and landscape work - for example, family photo albums, albums documenting the Klondike Gold Rush, hunting and fishing, commercial activity, etc; acquisition of major commercial photography studios or the work of individual professional photographers (Karsh, Malak, Ted Grant, Castonguay Studios, etc. etc.); acquisition of the work of Canadian photographers who were in the beginning of their career, and whose work needed to be encouraged in terms of the requirements of documentary photography, including Ed Burtynsky and Vincenzo Pietropaolo; and the photography of amateurs, whether part of organized clubs or simply ordinary Canadians whose photography documents some aspect of Canadian life not otherwise captured in other categories.
- d) Research and writing about the history of Canadian photography was an important aspect of the work of the photo archivists at the Public Archives. I personally did some of the earliest research on the history of photography in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; Lilly Koltun did the same for Toronto; Joan Schwartz for British Columbia; Theresa Rowat for Prince Edward Island; Ed Tompkins for Newfoundland; Brian Carey and Claude Minotto for Quebec; and Peter Robertson for most of the rest of Canada. Andy Birrell was the co-author of the revised edition with Ralph Greenhill of a *History of Canadian Photography*. Richard Huyda and Andy Birrell both wrote about exploration photography in the Canadian West. Claude Minotto assembled a team which did outstanding work on the history of photography in the Canadian Arctic (I was part of that team). Peter Robertson wrote a magnificent book on Canadian war photography, *Relentless Verity*. Lilly Koltun and her team wrote a ground-breaking book on Canadian amateur photography called *Private Realms of Light* (1984), while Koltun herself authored a couple of other excellent books, on *City Blocks*, *City Spaces*, and on Karsh. Many more key works could be mentioned, including the many articles by Joan Schwartz and others. Add to the research and writing the encouragement of scholarship, through summer student employment, student internships (begun as early as 1981 in conjunction with Carleton University, but also expanding in the later 1980s and 1990s to include students from the University of Ottawa, Queen's, UBC, Victoria, U. of T., and elsewhere) which introduced many now well-known Canadian photographic historians both to Canadian photographic

history, but also to subject matter and content that informed their future careers.

7) What noteworthy contribution did others make to photo-archival work in places other than the Archives? What contribution did they make to the study of the history of photography in Canada or elsewhere? Please be sure to identify the people who made these contributions.

This is kind of an open-ended question as well. *Archivaria* 5 is a good starting-point, with individuals like Stanley Triggs at the McCord and David Mattison in B.C. and Phyllis Lambert at the Canadian Centre for Architecture as important early contributors; in the 1980s, we saw the emergence of Brock Silversides and Ed Cavell in the Canadian West; Martha Hanna and Martha Langford at the National Film Board (and later the Canadian Museum of Photography and the McCord Museum respectively); Jim Borcoman, Anne Thomas, Lori Paulli and Andrea Kunard at the National Gallery of Canada; and more recently, academics interested in the history of photography, including James Opp and Carol Payne, both now at Carleton University. I won't answer this at length, as what you are asking is kind of overwhelming in its magnitude. You might want to look at *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada* edited by Carol Payne and Andrea Kundard, which was the result of a conference held a few years ago, for a further examination of this question. Joan Schwartz is of course probably the best-recognized Canadian photo historian around the world, and is notable for her contributions to both archival theory and practice, but to the history of Canadian photography, and photography in general.

8) What contribution do you think you personally made to the activities mentioned in question six?

Early in my career, I believe I contributed a great deal to the early history of photography in this country, with my photo research on pre-Confederation photography, photography of the Klondike Gold Rush and on Arctic exploration, my contributions to exhibitions, my article on Nova Scotia photography (1977) which was possibly the earliest article on the subject to appear in a Canadian art journal, my co-authored pieces on the Canadian Arctic in *The Archivist*, and my interactions with various scholars and authors during my time as a reference archivist. As I moved away from photography and began working in the Art section, my interest turned elsewhere, but I retained an interest in the subject in my collaboration with Joan Schwartz on various exhibitions and publications, and, for the last eleven years of my career, in my leadership role as head of the Art and Photo Archives, when I maintained and developed acquisition, description, and diffusion programs, continued to encourage internships and summer student jobs in photography, and spoke and published about photography.

I gave a keynote address at the Archives Association of Ontario annual conference in 2010, which I will send to you as well in this regard.

9) What remains to be accomplished in photo-archival work at the Archives?

Once again, an enormous question. The impact of the internet on scholarly research has been huge, as more and more individuals come to expect that "everything is online" and that one does not need to search further than what can be done with a computer screen. And yet, the collections of Library and Archives Canada include more than 30 million photographs, of which possibly only about 200,000 have been digitized. The costs of digitizing photographs (in terms of time spent on image capture, proper indexing and description, digital storage and retrieval, not to mention concerns about copyright, user and model rights, and other intellectual issues) mean that the digitization of not only LAC's holdings, but of the country's historical photographic imagery will probably never be completed. Further, the photographic medium demands expertise (knowledge of the medium and the creators and the context of creation and use), connoisseurship (the ability to distinguish originals from copies, different media, and to date and/or authenticate photographs), understanding of proper cataloguing and arrangement, and descriptive indexing in archives, which are all commodities in short supply in almost every archival institution in this country. This answer applies to question 10 as well.

10) What remains to be accomplished in photo-archival work beyond the Archives in other places where photographs are archived?

As I said above, there are few archivists who possess a thorough understanding of the requirements of photography as a medium and in terms of its subject matter and handling across the country. Although the number of archivists who work primarily as photo-archivists has grown, there are still far too few to deal with what has become an increasingly important method of communication in a post-modern age, where Tinder, Tumblr, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and the iPhone have transformed how people communicate and interact.

11) What directions in the study of the history of photography in Canada should be pursued now?

Given that the National Gallery of Canada has recently been given \$ 10,000,000 and devoted three days of meetings with photographic experts from across the country just to try and begin the dialogue about the future of the study of the history of photography in Canada, I feel totally unable to answer this question. You may want to refer to <http://www.gallery.ca/cpi/> for further information about

their work. I also exchanged information with Ann Thomas, the senior curator of photography at the National Gallery of Canada about this workshop.

Personally I still think that tons of basic information about the history of Canadian photography in the 19th century is necessary to understand the development of the medium in this country. I attach a spreadsheet in which we tried several years ago to capture information about thousands of Canadian photographer's pre-1900, and you can see how much is missing. We still don't know enough about the distribution of technology, about commercial endeavor, about the role of women and minority communities, and about how individuals and communities reacted to photography (Brock Silversides' *The Face Pullers* comes to mind here). Moreover, the archival community has devoted a ton of time to digital issues, but fails to understand the nature of digital photography, especially when it comes to authenticity, concepts of what is an original and what is a copy, the recording of metadata, and migration and long-term storage, among other matters.

12) Please feel free to add any further comments.

Not sure what else to say. Feel free to ask me to elaborate on any of my responses. But the pioneer contributions of people like Richard Huyda, Andrew Birrell, Peter Robertson, and of course Lilly Koltun and Joan Schwartz deserve to be widely recognized and celebrated



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Please answer the questions below. Feel free to use as much space as necessary.

Please provide the following:

Name: Richard Huyda

Birthplace and date: St. Boniface, Manitoba December 27, 1940

Education (Degrees, Subject Areas, and Year of Graduation):

MA, Canadian History, University of Manitoba, 1964

Honours BA, History- Political Science, U of Manitoba 1963

1) What sparked your interest in photographs?

I speculate that I was born genetically programmed with a penchant for archival and historical things. (Mother was the record keeper for a family that was among the first pioneer Ukrainian settlers in Western Canada. My father, a teacher was a storehouse of tradition and history).

As a child, within a family that stressed education, tradition, and historical interest I was exposed to family photos, to church icons and to ethnic artifacts. I was raised in a wartime and postwar environment of Dauphin Manitoba - a community very conscious of its historical relevance. My primary school, religious and cultural education encouraged interest in tradition and heritage.

I loved picture books, and creative activities related to history, transportation, and Western Indian lore. Family photographs interested me. Later, *National Geographic* and *Life* photo stories and the historical illustrations of C. W. Jeffreys had special appeal.

As a teenager, now living in Ottawa, with my first camera, I compiled a series of photos of historic sites in Ottawa. I also knew about Karsh and his studio as my father lauded Karsh's work and explained its significance to me. But photography was a minor interest for me, until I joined PAC.

2) What led you to become an archivist?

My initial interest in history, particularly Canadian history led to a teenage curiosity to explore the museums in Ottawa, including that in PAC. There, I saw original documents and artifacts on formal exhibition, but what really intrigued me was a painting depicting Wolfe's Taking of Quebec in 1758. This painting was not on display but in a staff area. This immediately sparked my interest. People actually worked with such old treasures. I asked my father how one got to work at an archives. He suggested that I write to the Dominion Archivist. I did so, and at age 14 went by bike to deliver the letter to the Dominion Archivist, Dr. W.K. Lamb's home. At the last moment, I hesitated and never did deliver the letter, but kept it for decades.

After high school in Ottawa and Toronto, I entered St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba in 1958 with the intention of a career in Law. While completing an Honours BA in History and Political Science, with inspirational professors I focused on Canadian studies, and went on to complete MA under W.L. Morton, for whom I was a teaching assistant.

Subsequently, in 1964, I looked for a career in teaching or historical research. I was offered several college and university teaching posts, as well as an archivist position with the Province of Alberta.

Several factors led me elsewhere. I had the notion that having had a privileged Canadian education perhaps I should strive to make some national contribution in a national institution or environment. The Government of Canada Civil Service had a reputation for rewarding, stable careers with excellent benefits. Moreover, I had enjoyed living in Ottawa earlier.

I opted therefore to apply in the Junior Executive Officer Program (JEO) of the Government of Canada. Recruited by the Civil Service Commission I arrived in Ottawa. I then chose, from numerous offers by various Government departments, to go to the Public Archives of Canada. That year, PAC used the JEO program to recruit three new professional staff. After a two-day briefing tour of the various divisions of PAC, inclination and opportunity led me to select the Picture Division.

Thus, I entered the world of archives, pursuing that earlier teenage vision of what seemed to be an exciting career for someone who loved history and pictures: working in a national institution in the nation's capital with old historical pictures.

Becoming an archivist was to my mind still a somewhat vague concept. I had not yet been exposed to the principles of archival science. But I was willing and eager. Those who hired me evidently thought that with my education in historical research, and deducing that within me was some management potential, I could be a PAC archivist.

3) When did you begin employment at the Public Archives of Canada/National Archives of Canada and where in the Archives were you first employed?

May 25, 1964 I entered the Civil Service of Canada. About June 05 I began at PAC as one of three archivists in the Picture Division. We were located at 330 Sussex as was most PAC staff.

At that point, practical and immediate factors, rather than archival theory were to impact and mould my early career.

There was the milieu of the PAC; a small government organization with 80 years of tradition and practices, still having a small staff but striving to grow and cope with new pressures of document overload and increasing demands for access.

There were the relentless exigencies and growth of a burgeoning expanding Government. There were rapidly changing technologies, and expanding opportunities and challenges in archival holdings.

There was also the milieu of the small Picture Division, under the active leadership and broad vision of its Chief, Georges Delisle. Here was a Division trying to survive and succeed within that larger PAC context dominated by a

focus on textual records. Pervasive over all were the changing dynamics of the 1960s. Canadian publishing, film, and burgeoning television industries were demanding access to and use of historical visual documentation. Canada was leading up to its 1967 Centenary celebrations. Government, industry and public expectations were high. So were mine!

4) What positions did you hold (and when did you hold them) during your time at the Archives?

1964 June – 1965 July

Archivist, Picture Division

I was one of three professionals in the Picture Division. Georges Delisle was head of the Division. Murray Inch and I were JEO archivists assigned to do basic reference, appraisal, acquisition, organization and research on the diverse Division holdings. These included paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, sound recordings, and motion picture films. The Division also had a small clerical support staff. Late in 1964 we undertook a review of the Division's holdings, responsibilities, resources, and objectives.

I don't recall being sent on any formal courses in archival principles and administration although in 1965 Carleton University, PAC, and the Canadian Historical Association sponsored such a course. I vaguely recall reading Schellenberg. It provided me with some exposure to archival theory, but theory seemed to be of little practical relevance for the immediate tasks at hand pertaining to PAC documentary art, photos, and audio-visual records.

By the end of 1964, I had completed the review of the extent of the Picture Division's existing photo, film, and audio holdings. I determined the demands upon those records, and the resources required ensuring their preservation, organization, control, and accessibility for use.

1965 July-1972 April

Head, Historical Photographs Section

On the basis of the 1964 review, the Picture Division was sub-divided into two distinct units. One was Paintings, Drawings and Prints Section. I was assigned as Head of the other- Historical Photographs Section- with archival responsibility for sound recordings and motion picture holdings as well as still photo collections.

1972 April-1973 July

Acting Chief, Picture Division

When it was decided to create a separate Division for motion picture holdings under the responsibility of Georges Deslisle, I became Acting Chief of the Picture Division which encompassed the units working on documentary paintings, drawings, prints, still photographs, heraldic devices and graphics.

1973 July 09-1975 July

Head, Historical Photographs Section

When Georges Deslisle returned as Chief of the Picture Division, I resumed my position as Head of the Historical Photographs Section.

1975 July 01-1980 Nov

Director, National Photography Collection

Following the creation of a separate division for Motion picture and sound recordings, the Historical Photographs Section was elevated to divisional level. As director, I was accountable to the Director-General Archives Branch for planning and managing a Division that was responsible for the acquisition, arrangement, access, and provision of public service and custody of the national archival heritage of still photographic records. I was also a member of Archives Branch Management Committee. In 1980 had a staff of about 20, a budget of about \$500,000, collections numbering some 7,000,000 items (valued \$50,000,000) and equipment worth \$300,000.

1980 Nov 01-1981 May

Treasury Board

I was seconded to serve on an interdepartmental reclassification Committee for several months. Then I was assigned to PAC/NLC Administration Branch as Acting Director Planning and Program Evaluation.

1981 June 29-1985 Oct.

Director, Planning & Program Evaluation PAC/NLC

Here I was accountable to the Deputy Head for providing advice and guidance on departmental policies, priorities, program formulation; for developing, coordinating and reviewing departmental strategies, plans, and performance measurement; and accountable for the systematic evaluation of all programs of both the PAC and the NLC. I was a member of the Departmental Senior Management Committee of the PAC and NLC.

1985 Nov-1993 Aug

Director-General, Public Programs Branch

Here I had executive accountability to the National Archivist for a Branch with a mandate that included the following elements:

- To plan and deliver reference and researcher services, both at headquarters and nationally in response to inquiries about the PAC, its services, holdings, and facilities;
- To manage departmental assistance to the archival community, both nationally and internationally;
- To facilitate development of the Canadian Archival System through the Canadian Council of Archives;
- To manage the PAC public awareness programs intended to inform the general public and special interest audiences about departmental activities

- and holdings through the creation and dissemination of exhibitions, publications, media relations, marketing and advertising; and
- To manage the PAC library and Canadian Centre for Information and Documentation on Archives
 - With a staff of about 71 and budget \$6,378,000
 - Member of the PAC Senior Management Committee

1993 Aug 03- 1994 Mar30

Director-General Organization Change

In this, my final position before retirement, I had executive accountability for department-wide co-ordination of all activities relating to the restructuring, organization and resource deployment of the National Archives of Canada. I was also a member of the Senior Management Committee.

5) What were your aspirations for photo-archival work when you worked with photographs at the Archives?

To recall what my aspirations were at the beginning of my career some fifty years ago is a challenge at age 75.

Obviously, I aspired to a permanent, satisfying rewarding career and felt that photo-archival work was a likely route to success.

I assume, that as the first archivist given responsibility exclusively for photo, film, and audio PAC holdings, my aspirations were at first simple, and then developed with complexity.

Initially I aspired to learn about the holdings. What did we have? Where did we get them? What do we have to do with them? How do we use them?

Then, I aspired to get the necessary resources and support to protect these holdings, and later to increase and protect these resources and this support.

Concurrently, I aspired to inform and convince others within and beyond PAC about the nature, value and potential of audio-visual historical records. I wanted to expand accessibility to and client use of these PAC holdings.

As I gained greater knowledge and experience, and with support of my Chief, Georges Delisle, and the invaluable input of our professional and technical staff, our aspirations evolved. We wanted to expand our role in the appropriate legitimate acquisition of both public and private audio-visual records of national significance.

In order to correctly appraise, and preserve photo-archival records we needed and wanted to understand the world of photographers, the history of photography, and the interest in and use of photo-records. To do this properly we aspired to know and become known by the creators, keepers, and users of photo-records

Having convinced ourselves and proven that we were on the right track in our approach to photo archival work, we naturally aspired to convince others to join us. We wanted to inspire and support our colleagues within PAC, within the

Canadian archival community. Eventually, these aspirations extended internationally.

We aspired as well to contact and support other like-minded disciplines interested in photographs: particularly professional and amateur photographers, their associations, and those in the museum, gallery, television, film, exhibition, publishing, research and academic communities.

Ultimately, my aspirations were to convince the powers that be that the appropriate archival attention to photo-records is of value to them, to the nation, and to the world.

And, I suppose, my sub-conscious aspiration during those early years of my career with direct involvement in photo archives (1964-1979) was to become one of those powers that be. And when I became one, my aspirations were to continue to promote and protect the legitimate aspirations of enthusiastic, like-minded individuals and causes.

- 6) What do you think was accomplished by photo-archival work during your time on the staff of the archives? Please include in your response an assessment of the impact of the photo-archival work done by the Archives on the archival community and its contribution to the wider scholarly community.**

I have read Andrew Birrell's excellent comprehensive response to this question 6 and his response to question 5. I concur with all that he says, and have little more to contribute.

- 7) What noteworthy contribution did others make to photo-archival work in places other than the Archives? What contribution did they make to the study of the history of photography in Canada or elsewhere? Please be sure to identify the people who made these contributions.**

As an addition to Andrew Birrell's response to this question, I make the following observations concerning the contributions of others in the 1960s and 1970s.

Within the Government of Canada, there were departments and institutions with extensive photo collections and staff well aware of its historical documentary value. However, they had neither the specific mandate nor adequate resources to focus on the appropriate archival tasks. But in general they were willing and able to support our efforts at PAC. Their experience, technical facilities, advice, support and cooperation, contributed to our success. Among these were National Defense, Public Works (Gord Thomas), the Geological Survey, the National Museum of Man (William Taylor, George MacDonald), the National Museum of Science and Technology, the National War Museum, the National Film Board of Canada with both its film production Division (William Galloway, Floyd Elliot)

and it's Still Photo Division (Lorraine Monk, Norm Hallendy, Richard Sexton, Chris Lund), and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. In addition there were the superb expertise, publications, exhibitions, and assistance of the National Gallery, (James Borcoman, Ann Thomas) and the Canadian Conservation Institute (M. Ruggles).

Most provincial and municipal archives, libraries and museums in the 1960s and 1970s generally had very limited focus on their photo collections, and few resources and fewer if any staff specifically dedicated to these collections. The Archives of Alberta promoted its Ernest Brown Collection as did the Glenbow Gallery and Archives with its Western Canada photo holdings. The others had neither time, resources, nor inclination to tend well to their photos, other than to provide basic custody, and to respond as best they could to client reference requests. If you look at the preface on page 15 of Ralph Greenhill's study *Early Photography in Canada (Oxford U Press, 1965)* where he acknowledges the research assistance he received from various Canadian archivists, librarians, and collectors you will get an indication of the players involved at the time.

In the 1960s and 1970s, our colleagues in the Canadian Museums Association, the Canadian Historical Society, and the Canadian Military History Association, contributed invaluable information and support. Although not necessarily involved with photo archival work, they shared their experiences and expertise in care, custody, management, access and use of similar visual documentation. Moreover, in April 1974 The Canadian Museums Association sponsored a Seminar on the Care and Maintenance of Photograph Collections.

Similarly, Canadian academics began to express interest in photo history and encouraged their students to explore the subject and our collections. We were invited to address their students. Early enthusiasts included professors Tom Gibson of Concordia, Michael Schrier of University of Ottawa, and Helmut Schade of the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design and Don Gillies, Phil Bergerson and Don Dickenson of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. In March 1979 Ryerson held "Canadian Perspectives: A National Conference on Photography" in which photo history featured significantly. The published proceedings are worth perusing.

Curators in Canadian museums and art galleries made their contributions through exhibitions, publications, and the hosting and participation in conferences and seminars. Noteworthy were the exhibitions and publications of James Borcoman and Ann Thomas of the National Gallery, Dennis Reid of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Joanne Birnie Danzker of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Patrick Close of the Photographers Gallery of Saskatoon.

Private researchers and photo collectors added significantly to our knowledge of Canadian photo history. Ralph Greenhill's 1965 publication *Early Photography in Canada* was certainly a seminal and landmark piece. This work, his later publications, and his friendship, encouragement and advice were invaluable to us. So too were the work and the photo collection of the architect Phyllis Lambert and that of the collector Andrew Merciless. Their collecting activity acutely raised the attention of the public to the monetary value of historical photos.

Canadian book, magazine, and newspaper publishers contributed by encouraging us to submit articles and monographs. Stan Bevington of Coach House Press, Irvine Brace of *Canadian Photography* magazine were key players here. Local and national newspapers occasionally featured our work.

Likewise, Canadian professional media researchers, writers, filmmakers, and exhibition and television producers contributed by expanding our knowledge of their needs for and their perceived use of historical photo records. Individuals such as Lester Machan of the CBC, and Floyd Elliott and Bill Galloway of the NFB also gave us introductions and leads to key collections held by individuals, institutions, corporations. Television and radio media periodically drew public attention to our work.

Professional Canadian photographers, such as Duncan Cameron, Ken Bell, Yousuf Karsh, Malak Karsh, also made important contributions. They were often the sources of knowledge of the works and careers of earlier Canadian photographers, or they themselves were the creators and custodians of prime photo collections of interest to PAC. Their collections enriched our holdings. They became advocates of our interest in archival work and in the study of photo history. We also had the support of the Professional Photographers of Canada Association at whose conferences we exhibited and spoke.

Canadian amateur photo societies and clubs, and other historical and collectors clubs afforded us ample opportunity over the years to present our interests and the results of our research.

International contributions to Canadian photo archival work and to the development of Canadian photo history studies were twofold. First, in 1964 and thereafter we at PAC could benefit from the earlier photo historical research and archival work and literature produced in the U.S. and in Europe. Secondly, our ongoing dialogue with international colleagues reinforced our own archival and research work. We developed lasting contacts with most of the key authorities in the field. We had the opportunity to travel to and visit key North American and European institutions with significant photo holdings. Our attendance at international conferences evolved into significant program participation and leadership. The Canadian approach to photo archives management and to photo

historical research and writing became noteworthy and respected by our international colleagues. But it is to them that we owe gratitude for their willingness to share their knowledge, experience and expertise.

8) What contribution do you think you personally made to the activities mentioned in question six?

Fulfilling all those aspirations that I identified in my response to Question 5 was my contribution.

I certainly did not do this on my own. I had good mentors and supervisors. The Dominion Archivist W. K. Lamb, personally appreciated photo documentation and had a surprisingly detailed knowledge of many NPC holdings. His successors W. Smith and B. Weilbrenner on the whole supported our initiatives. Branch Directors Hugh Taylor and Michael Swift understood and supported our approaches. My initial supervisor, Georges Delisle was my mentor recognizing my potential, giving me increasingly more responsibility, providing his knowledge, guidance, and full support. Above all I had a superb NPC team of loyal, dedicated, competent staff. Each one of them I appreciated fully. My successors Andy Birrell and Lily Koltun led them on to even greater accomplishments. And we fortunately always had the continuing support of colleagues, and professional, technical and administrative services from elsewhere in PAC and beyond. I am proud of what we together have accomplished and contributed to the field of photo archival work and to the studies of the history of photography.

In summary, my own contribution has been small but essential:

- In those early years, I initiated, planned and managed and promoted the PAC photo archives program. I sought, received, managed, inspired, supported and protected the staff. I sought, acquired and managed the necessary resources.
- Throughout my career, I recognized and successfully used the bureaucratic, cultural, and corporate systems necessary to sustain, and improve the NPC/PAC program and its successors.
- I sought and gained the support of others, within the PAC, within the Government of Canada, within the Canadian archival, museum, corporate and general public, and eventually internationally.
- I established and enhanced the knowledge and reputation of NPC/PAC in Canada and abroad.
- As a working archivist I undertook all of the standard archival tasks relating to photo collections.
- I sought knowledge of the intent and experiences of photographs and of the technology they developed. I sought knowledge of the needs and requirements of the users of photo records and historical documentation.
- I undertook photo selection for specific publications, exhibitions and visual presentations
- I also practiced historical photo research and writing
-

If you wish further details, I include below a profile of my career. Take from it what you need.

Profile: RICHARD J. HUYDA

Background Data

Born in Manitoba in 1940. Completed post-graduate studies in Canadian History at the University of Manitoba. While at the University, was a Seminar instructor and Reader in Canadian History, and during the summers worked for Canadian National Railways and for Frontier College as a Labourer-Teacher.

Entered the Public Service of Canada in 1964 as Junior Executive Officer, on staff with the Public Archives of Canada. Became Head of the Historical Photographs Section in 1966, acting Chief of the Picture Division 1971-73, and subsequently, Director of the National Photography Collection until 1981. Was then appointed Director of Planning and Program Evaluation, Public Archives of Canada and Director of Program Evaluation, National Library of Canada until 1985.

From 1985 to 1992, I was Director-General, Public Programs Branch, and National Archives of Canada. The Branch has responsibilities for the institution's Researcher and Reference Services and for Communications including departmental publications, exhibitions, media relations, advertising, outreach, animation and public education programming. The Branch is also responsible for Archival Community Programs including assistance projects and services of the Canadian Centre for Information and Documentation on Archives.

From 1993 to 1994, was Director-General, Organisation Change Directorate. This Directorate has responsibility for co-ordination of all activities relating to the restructuring, organisation, and resource deployment of the National Archives of Canada.

As an executive member of the Senior Management Committee of the National Archives of Canada, and as an official representative of that institution, has served over the years on various committees at the interdepartmental, national, and international level. Member of the Organising Committee, and Chairman of the Finance Committee, for the 1992 International Congress on Archives.

As a lecturer, consultant and author, has a special interest in the history of photography and in the development and promotion of archives. His writings include works on early Canadian photography: particularly the careers of H.L.Hime and S. McLaughlin, and photography in the Western Prairies and in the Queen Charlottes.

A member of various associations, including the Association of Canadian Archivists where he has made contributions to Archivaria and to several ACA annual conferences programs.

Married with three children, resides in Ottawa and is active in community affairs.

CAREER OBJECTIVE

Executive leadership in cultural resource management at the national and international level including program planning and development, policy creation, and the co-ordination and control of resources. It is my belief that the protection, preservation and use of heritage resources is essential for the enrichment and understanding of life and for the growth of common bonds amongst peoples and nations.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Birthplace: St. Boniface, MB, Canada

LANGUAGES: Bilingual (English and French)

EDUCATION Master of Arts [Canadian History]
 Bachelor of Arts [Political Science, History]

MANAGERIAL TRAINING

Completion of numerous courses, seminars, sessions in executive and middle management, public administration, specialised operational skills. Other Professional Training: Archival Science

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Thirty years' experience in cultural affairs administration at the federal government level.
- Executive corporate management in a national institution
- Program development, implementation, and evaluation
- Policy development and evaluation
- Communication and public programming management
- Central Agency Government of Canada experience
- Committee involvement: departmental, interdepartmental, inter-institutional, national, international
- International/inter-institutional/intergovernmental affairs
- Grants/contributions administration
- Educator/education advisor and consultant
- Archival science/history/visual records expertise
- Author/lecturer/researcher

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

March, 1993 to March 1994

Director-General, Organisation Change Directorate, National Archives of Canada (NAC). Executive accountability for department-wide co-ordination of all activities relating to the restructuring, organisation, and resource deployment of NAC.

October 1986 to March, 1992

Director-General, Public Programs, NAC, Executive accountability to the Deputy Head for a Branch with a mandate to: plan and deliver reference and researcher services, both at headquarters and nationally in response to enquiries about the department, its services, holdings, and facilities; to manage departmental assistance to the archival community, both nationally and internationally; to facilitate the development of the Canadian Archival System, through the Canadian Council of Archives, to manage the department's public awareness programs (exhibits, publications, community programming, media relations, marketing and advertising) intended to inform the general public and special interest audiences about departmental activities and holdings; to manage departmental records management program (1986,1987); and to manage the departmental library and Canadian Centre for Information and Documentation on Archives. Member of Senior Management Committee.

Dimensions: staff -71; budget \$6,378,000

June 1981 to Oct 1986

Director, Planning and Program Evaluation, National Archives of Canada and Director, Program Evaluation, National Library of Canada, Ottawa. Accountable to the Deputy Head for providing advice and guidance on departmental policies, priorities, program formulation; for developing, co-ordinating and reviewing departmental strategies, plans, and performance measurement; and accountable for the systematic evaluation of all programs of both the Public Archives of Canada and the National Library of Canada. Member of Departmental Senior Management Committee.

Dimensions: staff - 6; budget \$210,000;

Department budget \$29,000,000 PAC \$21,000,000 NLC

July 1975 to Jun 1981

Director, National Photography Collection, NAC,

Accountable to the Director-General Archives Branch for planning and directing the activities of the Division responsible for the acquisition, control, arrangement, access, and provision of public service for the national archival heritage of still photographic records. Member of Archives Branch Management Committee.

Staff=20; budget \$500,000;

Assets (Collections)\$50,000,000

1971 to 1973

Acting Chief, Picture Division, PAC

1967 to 1975

Section and Unit Head, Picture Division, PAC

1964 to 1967

Archivist, Picture Division, PAC

1962 to 1964

Seminar Instructor, University of Manitoba

Summer 1962

Labourer/instructor, Frontier College, CNR, NB, Quebec

Summers 1959 1960, 1961, 1963

Accounting relief, Regional Comptroller, CNR, Winnipeg

MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Training:

Basic Course in Government Administration (C.S.C. 1966); Classification-Staffing-Staff Relations (PAC 1971-72); Introduction to Computers for Managers (PC 1971). Senior Management Seminar (PC SIB 1976). French Language Training (PC 19656-75). Reading Skills (PC SIB 1979). Project Management (PC SIB 1979). Program Evaluation Seminars (PC-OCG). Executive Management Seminar (P1986). Communication Seminars (PC)

Experience:

Corporate executive management: Nine years as member of the Senior Management Committee of the National Archives of Canada and four years as Director-General, Public Programs Branch.

Corporate staff experience: Five years as Director, Planning and Program Evaluation for the National Archives of Canada and Director of Program Evaluation for the National Library of Canada.

Departmental operational experience: Four years as Director-General, Public Programs Branch, and the National Archives of Canada. Five years as Director of the National Photography Collection Division. Eighteen months as Acting Chief of the Picture Division of the Public Archives. Nine years as Head of the Historical Photographs Section of the Public Archives.

Central Agency experience: includes active membership on Treasury Board Secretariat Senior Management Category Classification Committees, Treasury Board Secretariat Advisory Committee on Still Photo Processing, Treasury Board Secretariat Collective Bargaining negotiations with PIPS, and extensive interdepartmental negotiations on archival/records management issues.

National and International Committee experience: includes responsibility for Canadian Council of Archive Secretariat support, active member of the Priorities and Planning Committee, Canadian Council of Archives; chairman, *Eyes of Time, a National Conference on Photography and History 1979*; Co-chairman of *Workshop on the History of Photography, Rencontres internationales de la photographie, 1980* Arles, France; archival advisor, 1981 Cologne, Germany and to various European and North American archives/museums; chairperson, *Finance Committee, International Council of Archives 1992 Congress*.

Other Work Experience Canadian National Railways Regional Comptrollers Office, Western Region; Canadian National Railways Ballast Gang, Eastern Region; Frontier College Labourer/Teacher; Consultant and author.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

Formal Training:

Post-Graduate studies in Canadian History, Master of Arts, 1964; Bachelor of Arts Honours in History and Political Science, 1963 (University of Manitoba). Archival Principles and Administration, PAC, 1965. Institute for Graphic Communications Advanced Study Conferences, 1970-77. See attached Appendix 1, Outline of studies.

Experience:

Thirty years in the national and international cultural affairs environment, with progressively more complex professional archival, curatorial, and managerial responsibilities and accomplishments, including:

Executive managerial experience as Director-General, Public Programs Branch for four years, and as member of the Senior Management Committee of the National Archives of Canada for eight years

Archival, curatorial, and managerial responsibility for the national photographic heritage, as Director, National Photography Collection, and its predecessor, the Historical Photographs Section, Public Archives of Canada. Fourteen years of managerial and operational involvement in the intellectual and physical control of the records, in the judgement of their relative value within the national heritage and within the context of the institution's objectives, policies, priorities, and resources.

Archival, curatorial, and managerial responsibility for the national visual record heritage of documentary paintings, drawings, prints, still photographs, heraldic devices, as Acting Director, Picture Division, Public Archives of Canada. A year and a half of managerial and operational involvement in the intellectual and physical control of the records, in the judgement of their relative value to our national heritage and their management within the context of the institution's objectives, policies, priorities, and resources.

Archival, curatorial, and managerial responsibility for the planning, development, and initiation of programs for the preservation of the national audio-visual records heritage, as founder of the Historical Sound Recordings Unit and of the National Film Collection Project within the National Archives of Canada. These were new areas of archival endeavour requiring the unprecedented and innovative development of concepts, goals, and technique for the management of such records.

National and international recognition as an expert in the areas of the history of Photography and in the archival management of photographic records.

National and international professional experience as a lecturer and speaker on the history of photography, on archival management, and on the operations and policies of the National Archives of Canada. Among the groups addressed have been the Third European Congress on Archives, Vienna 1993; Recontres internationales de la photographie, Arles France; Canadian Perspectives, National Conference on Canadian Photography, 1979; The Professional Photographers of Canada Inc; the Canadian War Museums Association; the Pan American Institute of History and Geography; the Canadian Historical Association Archival Administration Course, the Manitoba Historical Association, the Canadian Museums Association, the Nova Scotia School of Fine Arts, the Rochester Institute of Technology, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, University of Ottawa, Concordia University, and various other professional and cultural organisations.

Television and film production involvement in the preparation and transmission of four short programs on the History of Canadian Photography CBC-CBOT, and in consulting on numerous productions using historical records for the CBC, CTV, NFB and others.

Publishing involvement as an author, as an advisor and consultant to publishers, and as executive manager of the National Archives publications program . Publications have included:

- Monographs
- *Camera in the Interior 1859: H.L. Hime, Photographer* (Coach House Press, 1975);
- *Photography in the Queen Charlotte Islands; A Perspective*, as a chapter in *Haida Monumental Art* (UBC Press, 1980);
- Articles

- “*The Public Archives of Canada Protect the Future of Photographs*” in *Professional Photography (USA)* Sept 1972
- “*Joseph Langevin Photographed Louis Riel*”, in *Canadian Photography* June 1976
- “*H. L. Hime: Exploration Photographer of 1858*”, in *Canadian Photography*, July 1973
- “*Exploration Photographer: Humphrey Lloyd Hime... 1858*” in *Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society Proceedings*, #30, 1973-74
- “*Photographs and Archives*”, in *Archivaria* 5 1977-78.
-
- Book reviews
- “*Collection, Use and Care of Historical Photographs*” in *Archivaria* #5 1977-78
- “*Macdonald’s World*” in *Archivaria*, 2 1976
- “*Theodore Roosevelt, J. Pierpont Morgan, The Auditor General , The Dominion Archivist and the Twillingate NFLd Museum*” in PAC Newsletter, July 1973
- “*Alberta at the Turn of the Century*” in *PAC Newsletter* #1, 1975-76
- “*An Illustrated History of Western Canada* in *PAC Newsletter* August 1973
- “*2001: The Museum and the Canadian Public: A Conference on the Future*” in *PAC Newsletter* Dec 1976
- “*Picture for People and Pundits*” in *Archivaria* 9 1979-80
- “*Canadian Portfolios and Albums: 19th Century Records and Curiosities in Canadian Perspectives. Transcript: A National Conference on Canadian Photography, 1979*”
- “*Hime, Humphrey*” in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2 1985
- “*McLaughlin, Samuel* in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2 1985
- “*Photography and the Choice of Canada’s Capital*” in *History of Photography*, (Summer 1996)
- Served as consulting editor for *Archivaria 5: The Photograph as Archival Record* .
-
- Illustration research and selection for:
 - H.H.Herstien , *Challenge and Survival: The History of Canada*, Prentice Hall 1970
 - E. Herie, *Journey to Independence: Blindness – The Canadian Story*, Dundurn 2005
 - S. Durflinger, *Veterans With a Vision*, UBC Press 2010
 - various other authors and publishers
- Exhibition involvement as executive manager of the National Archives exhibition program, as exhibition policy developer, as an exhibition project co-ordinator and research officer. Responsibilities range from concept stage to official opening ceremonies, from individual small displays, to multi-year national and international exhibition programs,

involving museums, galleries, exhibition centres, and other academic and commercial venues.

- Cultural policy development and implementation, in addition to that related directly to the National Archives of Canada and to the National Library of Canada, includes involvement in an expert advisory and consultative capacity with the National Museums Corporation, the Canadian Museums Association, the Canada Council, the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute Advisory Committee on Applied Arts, and with various archives, museums, and corporations.
- Conference and committee involvement in the public and private sectors, both national and international including:
 - Chairperson, Finance Committee, and member of the Organising Committee of the International Council of Archives 1992 Congress;
 - Chairman, Eyes of Time, A National Conference on Photography and History; co-chairman of Recontres internationales de la photographie, Arles, France;
 - Co-chairman of the Canadian Museums Association Seminar on Photo Collection Care and Maintenance;
 - member, Treasury Board Advisory Committee on Still Photo Processing;
 - member, Planning and Priorities Committee, Canadian Council of Archives;
 - member, Treasury Board Senior Management Category Classification Committees ;
 - member National Advisory Committee, Jean Talon Project;
 - member, various interdepartmental and departmental committees addressing management , operational, and professional issues including personnel, facilities, administrative policies, information management, copyright, convict employment, national celebrations, exhibition policies, conservation issues.
- Advisory and consultant activities include the preparation of reports, the submission of recommendations, assessment reviews and on-going communication with various bodies and individuals including the Canadian Government Conference Secretariat, the National Museums, the Canadian Museums association, the Canada Council, the Canadian Cultural Property Export review Board, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute Advisory Committee on Applied Arts, various archives and museums, film and television producers, book and periodical publishers, and educators.
 - Such advice and consultation is either related to archival matters, to the application of archival records in exhibitions, publications film/TV production, in education, or to matters concerning the support of cultural projects or the acquisition of heritage collections.

COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

DEPARTMENTAL

Senior Management Committee
 Senior Management Accommodation Committee
 Internal Audit
 Program Evaluation
 Informatics Steering Committee
 Advisory Committee on Conservation
 Departmental Administrative Policy Committee
 Senior Management Category Classification
 Branch Management Committee

INTERDEPARTMENTAL

Treasury Board Senior Management Category Classification Committee
 Treasury Board Advisory Committee on Still Photo Processing
 Treasury Board Collective Bargaining Negotiating Committee
 Secretary of State: Jean Talon Optical Disc Project Steering Committee
 National Film Board: Visual Encyclopedia of the Twentieth Century Committee
 National Capital Commission: Towards 1992 Initiative Federal Working Group

NATIONAL

Canadian Council of Archives Executive
 Canadian Archives Foundation Board of Directors
 Planning and Priorities Committee, Canadian Council of Archives
 Organising Committee, Eyes of Time, A National Conference on Photography
 Ryerson Polytechnical Institute Advisory Committee on Applied Arts
 Canadian Museums Association

INTERNATIONAL

Organising Committee, International Council of Archives 1992 Congress
 Finance Committee, International Council of Archives 1992 Congress
 Co-ordinating Committee, Workshop on the History of Photography, Rencontres internationales de la photographie, Arles, France

MEMBERSHIPS

National Press Club of Canada
 Association of Canadian Archivists
 Canadian Archive Foundation
 Canadian Museums Association
 Carleton Heights Curling Club

9) What remains to be accomplished in photo-archival work at the Archives?

It has been 36 years since I left NPC and 22 years since I left PAC. It would be presumptuous of me to judge what remains to be done there.

10) What remains to be accomplished in photo-archival work beyond the Archives in other places where photographs are archived?

See previous answer.

11) What directions in the study of the history of photography in Canada should be pursued now?

See previous answer.

12) Please feel free to add any further comments.



Faculty of Arts

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Principal Researcher: Nicole Courier (umcourrn@myumanitoba.ca)

Research Advisor: Dr. Tom Nesmith (Thomas.Nesmith@umanitoba.ca)

Please answer the questions below. Feel free to use as much space as necessary.

Please provide the following:

Name: Lilly Koltun¹

Birthplace and date: Toronto, January 14, 1951

Education (Degrees, Subject Areas, and Year of Graduation): BA (Hons), Art History, U of Toronto, 1973; MA, Art History, Courtauld Institute of Art, London U,

¹ Answers for questions 1-6 were provided in written form by Lilly Koltun while the answers from questions 7- 12 were provided verbally on the phone to the author. The author then transcribed the answers for questions 7-12 and they were approved by Koltun. The transcribed interview is based on the audio-recorded phone conversation. Punctuation in the transcriptions is based on the recording and proofreading.

England, 1974; PhD, Art History, St. Andrews U, Scotland, 1997. BFA (*summa cum laude*), Visual Art, University of Ottawa, 2014.

1) What sparked your interest in photographs?

I loved all forms of imagery; enjoyed historical photos when working as an artifact researcher at National Museum of Man (now Canadian Museum of History)

2) What led you to become an archivist?

I was interested in a position advertised in the National Photography Collection at the Public Archives of Canada because their collection was impressive, even in 1975. I had become acquainted with the staff and managers, whom I admired.

3) When did you begin employment at the Public Archives of Canada/National Archives of Canada and where in the Archives were you first employed?

January 1976, and was first employed in the National Photography Collection.

4) What positions did you hold (and when did you hold them) during your time at the Archives?

See my CV (either 2-pager or “all the details”) on my “consultant” website: lillykoltun.com. But please note, I have not maintained that CV up-to-date since I began a career as an artist after retiring from LAC in January 2010. For additional CV info, see my “artist” website: lkoltun.com

5) What were your aspirations for photo-archival work when you worked with photographs at the Archives?

To expand the interest in Canadian photography to include more contemporary, challenging photography and unexpected sources like newspapers and government, scientific, amateur or commercial photography; to make acquisitions with greater breadth to reflect these and other interests; to support Canadians making photographs through acquisitions, research, exhibitions, symposia; to research and write the largely unknown and undervalued history of photography in Canada; to exhibit and open the collections widely nationally; to re-define the role of the National Photography Collection to address the issues of meaning and documentation and how they intersect with both history and aesthetics in Canadian photography, whether historical or contemporary; to connect Canadian photography as documentary and expressive medium to trends, issues and challenges internationally, both historically and contemporaneously.

- 6) What do you think was accomplished by photo-archival work during your time on the staff of the archives? Please include in your response an assessment of the impact of the photo-archival work done by the Archives on the archival community and its contribution to the wider scholarly community.**

I was on the staff of the archives from January 1976 through January 2010, and held several different positions during that time, some directly involved with photography and others indirectly influential on the photo collections, as also other collections, and on archival activity of every type (acquisition, research, description, conservation, outreach, etc). During that time, I saw photo-archives mature into a much larger, wide-ranging collection (from about 7 million items to about 20 million) and its value among a limited audience in the archival community and Canada become more recognized, though still significantly undervalued in the wider archival world. There, it was still marginalized and its early openness to new ideas about how meaning can be understood to be both actively imbued and unconsciously ensconced in so-called documentary media went unacknowledged, even derided. This was evident, for example, in the glancing value given to visual media in the early rules for description which was focused heavily on serving textual media. It was only in my later years that I saw this valuation begin to change grudgingly. Ultimately, the work done by the national archives (and here I think of leaders such as Andy Birrell and Richard Huyda, as well as the teams on which I worked or which I led) in acquiring and preserving such a wide range of Canadian photography became a point of pride. It also became a way to enter new audiences, such as the program to involve aboriginal peoples in the identification of people in historical photographs, and the acquisition of new photography made by aboriginal peoples themselves. The openness of the photo-archival area to digitization and new means of communication also placed that area at the forefront of contemporary archival possibilities. Ultimately, however, the archival world remains unexcited by the role, value and relevance of photography to its future; hence, great collectors and collections, including major Canadian ones, are now escaping it and gravitating, for example, to the Ryerson Image Institute or to the new Photography Institute at the National Gallery of Canada, which has just hired a world-leading librarian and archivist to guide its future.

- 7) What noteworthy contribution did others make to photo-archival work in places other than the Archives? What contribution did they make to the study of the history of photography in Canada or elsewhere? Please be sure to identify the people who made these contributions.**

Back to the period when it was just the NPC, talking from the time that I joined in 1976, it was founded a few years before then as a separate entity. But from 1976 until the time when it was amalgamated with the picture collection and I started heading up the amalgamated group, which would be about in 1989, that would be the period of ten or twelve years or so where it was a separate entity in the archives and it was one that I was involved with. There was not actually an enormous amount of activity, I would suggest that the Ryerson Institute of Technology they had a photography program where they were interested in understanding previous technologies. They subsequently began to develop a very good interesting collection, it started very small but it subsequently become much more healthy. They attended the symposium that Richard Huyda gave, called "Eyes of Time." They attended that, and were interested in that.

There was also activity in the area of art collecting, of art photography, and that would be at the National Gallery with Jim Borcoman and Ann Thomas. There was also a lot of activity at the National Film Board because of Lorraine Monk. She was a decade or so before then, but it was continuing to the point where this was the period when the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography was established. The Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography subsequently got put under the wing under the National Gallery, but lost its space and became housed inside the gallery building. Just this past week, in the public announcement of the Canadian Photography Institute launch which seems to have absorbed the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography which hung onto its name after it shifted its space to the National Gallery. Whether it's holding onto its name I'm not sure, it was not clear to me at the launch the other week whether they were somehow supposed to maintain some kind of identity, or whether they were genuinely becoming part of this larger group called the Canadian Photography Institute. That is something to certainly look into.

Certainly in the 70s and 80s there was this significant development at the time that it was going to be a photography art gallery. It was very orientated to the exhibition and even some collecting of contemporary photography that it judged to be art. It did start with an initial collection, which was a selection from the National Film Board archives, which of course were much more documentary. They did, the Museum of Photography, did try to exhibit some of the documents, but they didn't feel comfortable really moving too far into documentary, despite having taken so much of the National Film Board collection, because they really wanted to orientated themselves towards art photography. In Canada in the 1970s, photography as art was really taking off. There were even dealers, finally, dealers who were dealing in photography. There was a real different vibe to photography, it was moving away from being the kind of thing that you used to illustrate magazine stories and to tell narratives of different kinds, and to be formal records and documents, and moving into this idea that even something which was

documentary in nature, like a photograph, could have these artistic components to it, could be seen aesthetically.

So that was a direction that a lot of new activity in Canada was tending to move there, and certainly Jim Borcoman at the National Gallery who had started his collection in '66 was actively in the 70s and 80s collecting large bodies of the work of artist photographers internationally. In fact, and Ann Thomas wrote her MA on Canadian photography. So maybe it's worth looking her up. As soon as she got her MA she started working with Jim Borcoman or actually even before. She was a quite active part of this thrust of the National Gallery to move into photography as an art form and that's what she maintained as a direction even after Jim retired she became the senior curator of, that's the direction she's been maintaining. You can see the interesting scope that that gives to the new Photography Institute because when you go the National Gallery now the shows that they opened in honour of the Photography Institute, one of them is about the *Globe and Mail's* archives, and the other one is Joseph Sudek, who was a photographer that Ann Thomas was very interested in and respected and he was producing work that would consider art photography from the early part of the twentieth century up through the wars and into the 50s and 60s. His show is up there, although curated by other curators, Ann was certainly involved. It reflects the kind of work she would be most oriented to.

What I'm trying to answer is your question about, what was photography doing in the 1970s and 80s? The biggest thrust was toward seeing it as an art form, but documentary work was starting also to be respected a bit more. Certainly, Andy Birrell and Richard Huyda they introduced this idea of collecting newspaper files, photographic files of newspapers. These were things that had absolutely no value in the minds of that time, in fact they were thrown out, negatives were thrown out. It really was significant, because of the interest in work of Andy and Richard that some of those newspaper files of photographs were preserved and indeed subsequently much greater interest shown in them by other archives across Canada, so you begin to see other archives interested in collecting them. That was sort of the beginning of a recognition that even though photographs were a little regarded quantity in archives, that nevertheless when you acquired them: A. you should acquire them, and B. you should acquire them in bulk, that was a new idea too; and yet that's crucial to photography, because they are created in bulk and they are created in series and as part of a grouping trying to tell a story. Even though only one picture might make it to a newspaper or magazine, or maybe five out of fifty rolls, it was crucial to keep all fifty, that's where the real documentation was.

For a while there, archivists were simply accepting the editing process as a given, and if it had been discarded by the editor of the newspaper, then they wouldn't pay attention to it either, and I think it was Andy and Richard who helped to shift

that ground and basically say no we want to collect more, there is a story there. And the selection process itself is one that we need to question, and I think it's wonderful that they actually helped inculcate that into the people they hired, like me, and Joan Schwartz, and I think they hired Andrew Rodger and Guy Tessier was hired before I came. They definitely were much more interested in looking at what was considered marginal and uninteresting and useless, I remember actually one question that they posed back when they interviewed me back in 1975, they showed me some photos that had commercial photos in them, these were not even documentary, they were art photos, advertising photos. And they said, do you think these are documentary? And that was fascinating to me. I was an art historian as I was trained. And I thought, I want to work with these people. They recognized that there is documentation here, and they know that it is not necessarily just documentation of the package of soap or whatever it is they are selling, it is documentation of the value system and the society and the way in which something was presented in order to be convincing. They were the place I wanted to work, so I was delighted when I got offered that job. Of course from my perspective, the answer was yes of course these are documents, and I went through it, and I think I may have thrown in a word that there was an art component as well.

At the time, the Public Archives as it was called was open minded enough to create a photography group specifically to look at photography as an archival interest, as a documentary historical interest, that was so forward looking. I'm sure Richard and Andy will tell you the same thing, their bosses were equally, they had some very open minded people that they worked for, it just goes to show you in my opinion that individuals can make a huge difference to a bureaucracy. You don't in fact have to feel as though you are constrained constantly by rules. I think maybe it's not the same today, there seems to be a great interest in trying to distinguish and create boundaries and create rules, and I don't recall we found ourselves particularly limited. We thought that we could make acquisitions of things that we thought were documentary; nobody questioned it, there wasn't anybody up the line to say "well justify that this is something we should acquire." Archivists really had the authority, that in fact if it was a donation, if it was a purchase, the only person they had to talk to was their boss, who usually had to sign off on it and that was sort of it. It didn't go through RAD committees or be approved at multiple levels, just the one, because it was assumed that your boss who had signing authority on whatever dollar figures that they had been given as a budget, that they knew their stuff, that they knew enough about it, and that they were the experts. There was this delegation of trust that's not there anymore. Even before I left, certainly when I was working later on at the Archives when the Portrait Gallery was making acquisitions we definitely had a lot of rumblings about having to create an acquisition committee, of course by that time I had an acquisition committee for portraiture inside my own group, so we were well prepared, but it was a different environment completely.

Back in the 70s and 80s we were able to make those decisions, and I think therefore the collection is much richer, we started trends and we started directions that I think archives and certainly art galleries and art museums are still following. Take a look at the fact that this Institute has just been established based on an archival model. The head of it was a newly hired Luce Lebart, who is an librarian and archivist, so I'm not sure whether Ann Thomas the senior curator for photography, reports to her or not, if she does - that is a major shift to a recognition that photography as a medium has this scope in society that is not limited to aesthetics. What is particularly interesting to me, is that if they go in that direction then they are changing the definition indeed of the National Gallery, and they are making it into something which is more like a library and archives. You'll notice that their own library and archives has expanded over the years as well, which is interesting. Many galleries during that period 80s and 90s particularly started archives because they began to realize they were missing out. The highly selective process to put art into the collection tended to set aside and leave aside some very important contextual material that was indeed appropriate for an archives and library. They started their own archives, you now see a proliferation of archives in art galleries. So that's one of the other directions that is interesting as well. I think the changes that occurred in the 70s and 80s, how you look at photography, I think that's where the root is for that. I think you're studying a very interesting period, and if you can contextualize the National Photography Collection in the 1970s and 80s in Canada, with respect to this question of what is the visual education that was happening in photography, you are going to have an amazing thesis.

There was the National Film Board activity as well. The activity that came out of the National Film Board, Lorraine founded a gallery, one of the very first art galleries for photography in Canada, here in Ottawa when she was still at the National Film Board in Ottawa, this was before she moved to Toronto in total disappointment and disgust with the National Film Board. She was quite a strong advocate of photography and she did not make these distinctions between art and documents and journalism and so on. She thought if it was a good photograph according to her light and her definition and opinion of course, she was going to darn well show it. And she didn't care whether it was considered appropriate for a film board photo or not. She gave a start to many photographers in Canada who wouldn't indeed have had their careers, or as fruitful careers, without her. I don't know if you've heard of someone of the photographers: you might want to talk to Michael Torosian and John Reeves.

The galleries and the work that Lorraine started, became the seed and kernel of the Museum of Photography which has now shifted to the National Gallery. There was a lot that was happening in the 70s- the dealers, the art market, the history market, the archives, the photographers themselves, a lot of very art oriented

photographers who were doing recognizable representational photography, but they were not seeing it solely through the lens of document. A lot of art got started then, that an archives would be happy to collect now. We collected Michael Semak at the time. I'm sure that very few people know that there is this body of work by Michael Semak in the archives, they would probably be shocked. Because Michael Semak was without doubt, a strongly artistic photographer. He didn't shy away from what today I think would be called pornographic. At the time we had no trouble either acquiring or showing the work to researchers, but I bet you anything that now the world has gotten so uptight that you would probably have trouble accessing Semak's work. But it's one of the very few photographers who actually did peruse the nude, not just because in a classical way but he perused it because it had a lot to say about abusive women. And we were able to acquire that, I bet you anything if we were still working for Library and Archives there is not a way that anyone would have acquired that for an archive. I'm just convinced of it. I think we had a freedom and breadth of consideration of what was appropriate for an archive that is maybe more than what you can find today.

If you were to look at some photographs that were acquired in the 70s and 80s that would tell you a huge amount of how the archives worked, the independence of the archivists, the ideas of the archivists. I would do that. If I were you I would try to see if I could get a list of the kinds of acquisitions that were made in the photography collection at that time and take a look at some of those names and match them up on Wikipedia with known photographers today, you will be shocked at the acquired photographs, the useful first earliest photographs of some photographers who are today iconic in Canada. That's a way at looking at the way in which the archive functioned, and I don't think it functions that way anymore. It's an art historian's perspective, I have to warn you. I always was an art historian, to a degree I was a little shocked that they hired me but that again was Andy and Richard showing that they had a different attitude. I had a wonderful career at the archives in the end, I went and did a whole bunch of things. In my CV you can see the variety of the things that I ended up doing.

8) What contribution do you think you personally made to the activities mentioned in question six?

I think I exploited the situation like crazy. It was wonderful. I was fairly headstrong and like Andy would say to me, "look we have this collection of newspaper imagery from the Montreal Star," and he said "I would like you to, we are not sure how accurately the negative sleeves are with respect to identification, and we want you to check them against the newspapers." So I said fine. As soon as I started doing it I realized the archives is so enormous, there are hundreds of thousands of sleeves which would mean like twenty or thirty years of newspaper

reading and I thought I would never get done, my whole career will be doing this whole thing, so I did a time and motion study for a month. I kept track of how long it took me to check one assignment, one set of negatives against a newspaper, so I knew how many assignments I could do in a day or a week, and then I checked how many errors I found, and then I wrote a report at the end of the month for Andy, a short one, a few pages which basically said, Andy this is the pace I'm going at, my location of error is 0.5% that means 99.5% is accurate. So do you really want me to spend the next twenty years, then he said, so what should you do? Then he put it back to me. I was a new hire, and he said what should we do here? And I said, well I've been thinking about that, as I was ready for that too, being so headstrong. I said, I will spend a year on this, partly because I want to spend time on this other project. But what I will do is, I will do the work for this number of years to this level, and I will do an overarching report about how the actual photo section in the newspaper worked and I want to go and interview the photographers I can still find. And I found them, including one was a woman, one of the very few women ever hired as a photographer in the 1950s and 60s. So I went and found them all and interviewed them, and I said that was much more interesting, and I wrote a report, and I said I would finish this in one year, but meanwhile I want to do this other work, and he was totally okay with that and that is what I meant by how open they were to adjusting what you wanted to do. Because there was so much work to do, if you wanted to present something different they were willing to do it.

And I presented, the four years I worked for him as an archivist until about 1980, I presented the idea of doing an exhibition, and I did one called *City Blocks City Spaces*, which was on architectural photography from the nineteenth century, and of course I got involved in *Private Realms of Light*. But doing these things - exhibitions, writing out things that were going to be published, the archives had done some of that. They had a magazine they tried to publish a catalogue every once in a while, related to whatever they were trying to show, but it was quite a low-key effort. And with Andy and Richard being so open, we started to really ramp it up, and I have to say I definitely had an impact in that area, I did want to do exhibitions, I did want to do the research for collections and for exhibitions and for catalogues and so forth, and I think that's something I was able to do and after I was able to be a supervisor which was 1980/81 I took over the management of the Acquisition and Research section when Andy Birrell was promoted to a director level and Richard was promoted to a director general or something, we all kind of moved up.

At that point, I had more managerial work to do, and I also got the supervisory oversight as well as authoring the *Private Realms of Light* work, that was a shift in my own career. The first four years were basically my learning to be a photo archivist and apply the things I knew about art, or had learned about art, and the ideas I had learned about how art reflects the nature of society - being able to

apply that to the documentary work in the archives. I think that was very interesting and I think that was a component of what I was able to bring to the group. Subsequently I was manager in 1980 and what that meant, I think was that I perused, I behaved I guess, in the same way that I had really appreciated, with my own bosses, and with my mentors, who were Andy and Richard; and basically tried to be as open and welcoming and interested in new ideas as I could be and tried to hire people who could be challenging in that way. Melissa Rombout for example, was a wonderfully challenging person, and a fantastic person to have on staff. Totally took you in different directions. Some of the staff members had, felt themselves I hope comfortable, to express their own unique personalities. Like Andy Rodger was quite a unique person and still is. He would take a perspective on things that was slightly off the wall and we all appreciated that. It was creating an atmosphere where people felt safe and free and trusted and wanted to do this kind of thing, that was one of the accomplishments I think I was able to help with in the photography collection, and also, just that, I'm a huge gobble up of imagery.

I love images and I looked at everything and had the best time I ever had was just sitting looking at one photograph after another or one image after another, and it was so rewarding that it was the kind of thing I wanted the staff to do as well. So we did analysis of collections to acquire basically by looking at them, both jointly and separately, and making sure that we all had an opportunity to examine some things by looking at them in depth. It wasn't just a question of just doing some research and writing a report or something that was more test oriented, it was very much learning to train your eye.

I remember meetings we would have, where we would kind of give ourselves mini challenges or mini tests. I did start with an acquisitions committee, even within my little section, we would have acquisitions meetings. We would say, "alright, here is a portfolio that has been handed in by a photographer," which happened more frequently than you would believe, once it became known in the photo community that we were willing to look at work - new work, emerging work, different work, art work - we started having photographers come to us. It was wonderful. So we would have portfolios to look at during acquisition meetings, and there would be this challenge "okay, which ones are good." "Who thinks this one is good, who thinks that one is good." And it was fascinating to see who thought what was good and why. It was also a wonderful way of training your eye to recognize what you were looking at, and to examine it, and to question it. And that I think was something that, having someone like me, and also others too, Joan and the others were very willing to present their own ideas and do their own challenges. But that was something that, wanting that to happen, having meetings so that could happen, creating an atmosphere that was welcome. That was something that I did.

One of the other things that I was very interested in as well, something that Andy started in a way, was an interest in the technology and understanding how the technology made a difference to what could actually be shown in a photograph, and how a photograph came to be the way it was. He was interested in looking at commercial work, and he was actually one of the first people in the National Archives to take on board the importance of digitalization and the computer revolution. He actually started a desktop and was doing programming on his own little mini desktop. He was really at the cutting edge in the 80s, brought it in when other people in the Public Archives poo-pooed it. And said it was not going to happen, and it was far too hard, and it was all just a bunch of punch cards. It was really quite astonishing that he was that forward thinking and he brought those kinds of things into our thinking. I think that I was able to continue the idea that we have to connect with understanding the breadths of photography and the technologies of photography, the multiple technologies; or if we don't understand how it's made, we won't understand why it was made, who made it, for what purpose, what was it used for, how could it be used in future, what would be a resource, what nature of resources it would be, how would you actually describe it or catalogue it so it's open to those kind of people. Not buried in an archives, we all hated the word buried, and cemeteries, and dust, and so on. We were not the kinds of people or personalities that were retiring at all; we were kind of a different breed of archivists. Then we hired each other. Because he hired me, I hired the same kind of people I would honestly say they were some very outgoing people. Non-archival, not classic archivists, stereotypical people, and the result was some fresh thinking, some really fresh thinking. So I think that I helped to make that happen.

9) What remains to be accomplished in photo-archival work at the Archives?

Oh my gosh, I don't think it's finished. The first thing I have to say is something that sounds a little bit depressing - which is I think they have to recuperate some things. It's not remains to be done, they've dropped some critical things, and they've lost opportunities. There are gaps and holes now in the way in which they present and understand photography and I think they kind of have to roll back a bit and recognize that to be really good photo archivists they have to acknowledge the importance of breadths - breadths of scholarship, and breadths of interest in society. Right now, photography is in a completely different spot from where it was in the 70s and 80s when we were collecting it. In the 70s and 80s in archives, photography was considered an exception, not sure if you should really even collect it. If you did, well maybe you would collect a few shots of a person's face or some family photos, or something like that. It was the same or even worse for film, and for sound, and all of the other media.

And now today 2016, the vast bulk of communications media are based in the technology we would've consider photographic. It's not chemistry but it's

defiantly dependent on light, its electrical imagery. The photographs are made in ways similar to film, similar to text, the way in which you can manipulate materials on a screen. Everything is seen on a screen now. It used to be that film and photos were seen in slides and on screens and it was consider marginal. It's not marginal now, it's 90% of how you understand the world comes through the kind of technology that ultimately traces itself back to photographs and photography. And that alone means that you have to kind of reorient your own thinking to get a grip on where is the important thing as an archivist for you to understand when you acquire something. How are you going to recognize the decision making that went into the first creation of it, and how are you going to preserve the record of that decision making, not just the end product, not just the image that pops up on the screen, but all of that decision making that went into creating the technology, the ambition for the technology, subsequently the ways technology was used, altered, moved into different directions by different people, and then over layered and over layered and the capacity of the technology to have multiple versions and keep them all, which is totally new.

People do not have to destroy anymore, they might, they might even think that would be useful with respect to - we used to always say in the archives that you have to select, because we can't keep everything because it's all, you know. I remember one of the criticisms of the photography collection made by I think mostly textual archivists, is why do you want to keep collecting everything, it is just so much garbage. That was the business of collecting large newspaper files and so on. We used to say "look they aren't actually taking up a lot of space, you're talking about 35mm negatives here". But quite apart from that, they are crucial to understanding the selection process and the thinking process that goes into creation. It took ages for us to feel confident that that message had reached the rest of the archival world, it took ages for that to happen, and I'm not even convinced that its truly there yet, but mind you I haven't been involved in years, so I may be quite wrong there.

The issue of being able to recognize that you have to know something about the software, and the hardware, and the technology, and the people, and the context, and the reasons behind even the creation of the technology, never mind the creation of the imagery. This is something that archivists certainly in the 70s and 80s, even 90s they shied away from, and the idea that you might indeed collect a lot more if not everything, but a lot more that they shied away from. What is fascinating to me is how it has come true something we used to say in photography which is "don't worry about it as far as volume goes." You know at that time it was IBM - APPLE was going through some growing pains, at one point almost disappeared off the landscape. Certainly the IBM, I said those computer people they know where their future is, they know they have to improve memory. You know when the general public asks for, and when more and more

people want computers, and want this capacity, they will respond they will make the memory.

I remember I had a conversation with someone in my own head of cataloging, and he said “oh don’t, we have to create a cataloging descriptive system that only allows you to use a certain number of characters in a particular field we only have a certain number of characters or it’ll get to be so many kilobits or megabits we can’t possibly manage that file, there isn’t enough memory there would never be enough you would have to have gigabits of memory.” Well now you can get a 64GB on a \$5 stick. Even then I said to him “you know don’t worry about it, if the market wants it IBM will create it, they will do it for us we don’t have to do it. “ And then he said “do you really want to record every single word on this” I said “yeah, what’s wrong with that?” I mean there are optimal character readers out there well be able to search that very soon. It was really hard to break this idea that was common in archives at the time. That somehow you have to be overly selective. And it’s funny because we were accused, and at the same time the general public would accuse us of trying to keep everything. At the very moment when we were talking about being extremely selective. And I would say “no no, let’s just collect more, and it’ll be okay” and in fact it was.

I was so delighted as I watched the technology happen because of course what happened was that memory became incredibly powerful and incredibly cheap and now I hear the memory is like being kept between microns, it’s really quite amazing. What you can get in the way of microscopic advances in technology, sorry that’s a bad way of phrasing it. What I mean to say is the advances in technology have allowed us to reduce quantities and quantities of information and materials to microscopic form. So that quantity is no longer an issue, you actually can collect everything. My personal home computer, that I bought when I retired when I was going to go to school again in 2009 I bought it I still use it, I have never deleted a single email. I have thousands and thousands and thousands of emails which is fine, you can put them up in the iCloud. You can have extraordinary amounts of information. In fact, that’s the downside, that’s what Snowden really exposed that the American system of electronic oversight had resulted in their having electronic oversight of everybody in the world all the time every day. Billions, and billions and billions of megabytes, gigabytes, terabytes and they could still handle it.

It’s a completely different kind of world, the archivists should now recognize that if they’re going to go into the photography world what they are fundamentally doing is looking at the scope and range of everything. There isn’t a distinction to be made in the area of what is the expertise that the archivist should have between things like textual and image. There is still a great interest in having expertise in the resolve if you’re going to go back and start with the pictures or start with the texts and work back from there, then it’d be best if you could recognize when a

picture was going to lead you in an interesting direction, or if it's just a repetition of something you've seen fifty thousand times before. Or when a text will say something that is different or is formatted in a way that suggests different minded work, so if you go from the results and backwards, individual medium expertise or an in-depth expertise is great. But if you go from the point and this is probably, every archivist should be able to do just as much as maybe develop an expertise area, if you go from the point where you try and understand how we are generating knowledge, and generating information in our society then you have to have that breadth, you have to be as interested in the way in which its moving to a output that is graph or a text or a picture. You have to have that, and its way more demanding than it would've been in the past.

So the result for archives it seems to me in the future for archives, is to understand that the convergence is at the technical front and the convergence is in the way in which a society understands itself and finds itself and creates its own knowledge. The convergence is not actually at the output end where you can distinguish between an image of a supermodel on the cover of a magazine, and the first page of a medical journal. You can distinguish between words and text and pictures but that's not where the importance lies anymore, the importance lies back behind all that where those people are all using tools which are intended to, which say they're there to be flexible, and allow people to do what they want. But in fact, offer a new set of paradigms and limitations and that then defines how you can use those tools, whether you're a doctor creating a medical article or whether you're a photographer trying to do a piece of commercial photography. They share a certain basis of social attitude and social knowledge and at that front end, where so much real new experimentation takes place that's where Tesla is taking his stuff, he goes way off the charts with new thinking because he thinks of new tools. He doesn't think of how to use the tools or to develop the tools. I don't think he thinks much of the end product, he just thinks of new ways, if he could grow five arms he would. That's the kind of thing I think that archives will need to grasp, it means that it's much more demanding to be an archivist than it used to be. You used to be an archivist or could be one if you collected magazines in your basement, or if you were a hoarder, that was being an archivist. Not being an archivist anymore. You have to be a bit of a futurologist as well as someone who understands the past.

Archivists are trapped in the stereotype. The perception is still full of people who went into it because they thought it would be a quiet life. In fact, I remember when I was a young archivist, many archivists really didn't like to do the front desk work, like the reference room work. it's fascinating to see what people have mind, they would just thought it as an interruption and an annoyance and I'm like you, I was very outgoing, and I remember thinking - good lord how could people tolerate a life where they're just sort of hidden. One of the things that I also thought now that we just mentioned this before we finish our conversation I do

want to say this. One of the things that did make the National Photography Collection unique was that it was full of these outgoing people who really wanted to be, we saw archives as stimulating and who wanted to stimulate. They proselytized like crazy about how fun it was and actually we would make cold calls, when we did our research we would make cold calls to people we'd never heard of and the result is we got some wonderful collections; and yet many many archivists, even today are afraid of making a cold call, they hesitate; and yet that's where you can find your most interesting connections and I think the capacity to have an outgoing personality and then to express what you're up to and get people excited about it, and passionate about it. That's what we had in the 70s and 80s. Joan has it in spades you absolutely have to talk to her. And you can see this is one of the things we also incorporated, helped to propagate in the photography collection; in fact we were known for, people used to think of us as mavericks cause we were like that, we were not the stereotype.

10) What remains to be accomplished in photo-archival work beyond the Archives in other places where photographs are archived?

You know what would be kind of fun, is if archives were able to connect with people at a very personal level - people have become very interested in family records. And certainly that what the bases of ancestry.com being quite popular, people do want to have some way of connecting with their own history. So if there were a way for a vast quantity of people who have an instinctive interest in their own personal or family history - be able to keep that, to be able to understand what's involved in keeping it, that would be extraordinarily helpful to the future because it is true that most archives are not well funded. And what you want to do is try and distribute a sense of responsibility for keeping the archive of your culture among the members of that culture. It's a little bit like Wikipedia, in fact it is created because thousands of people with a certain knowledge are adding bits to it. Or it's like distributed use of computers, or even hackers who take over a distributed set of computers in order to deny service. Because they know how to harness the distributed network and I think if it were possible to recognize and get people on board a distributed network of archival maintenance. All they have to do is try and preserve their or their family's archives. And the terrible possibility is that there will be no future because it's all digital and we can't as archivists collect it all. That would be avoided if you had in effect some way of kind of interesting people all sorts of people in what their machine does for them as far as keeping their own history. So that it doesn't have to be just an archive that keeps it, but everybody. It's the same way that everybody has a camera and makes their own videos with their cellphones. That has totally changed the way in which we look at cellphones and the way in which we look at authority, because people are constantly taking photos that they think is an infringement of their rights. The fact that they do that, and they do capture these telling moments, those are important. And I think that if there were some way to get them to feel like that that's

something that they should feel a certain personal responsibility for, that maybe the records that they have kept should be something that they mention in their will; where does it go, who should keep it.

The archives is still not being well funded, it's the same problem that was there forty years ago, when I started. People are more sensitive to it. It's because of social media, like Facebook and so forth. They realize, they generate communication among each other, they generate emails, they generate photos, and they generate things. They never did before, they never cared about it before it was so hard. Some people, you know in a family there would always be a family photographer or the one person who would go around a take a photo at every family gathering. Now everybody does it and they're very sensitive to the fact that their doing it. And that is a complete paradigm shift, that's why Apple is worth billions. I think that's a huge shift in the way that photography is treated in the culture and it implies a huge shift in the way archives have to be looked at.

11) What directions in the study of the history of photography in Canada should be pursued now?

I still think that there is a lot which has not in fact been recognized. Well first of all you'll notice that there is not very much actually written in a very traditional way on the history of photography in Canada. There are very few books compared to, or publications online compared to other subject matters - even Canadian art. But the problems with photography is much broader then people who paint, draw or sketch, and sculpture. The history of photography per say: who did it, when, what were their names, what kind of photos did they produce. That alone has not been done. And one of the things I had thought that I would do when I retired was that, which is clearly not what I'm going to do - was I had in mind to write a book on the history of portrait photography in the twentieth century and I even had it outlined, all the names and I knew exactly what I wanted. But you know my life I turned it in another direction, and became an artist instead. And so really that's not going to happen. The fact that there isn't something as basic as that, means that it's like there's a whole basic groundwork yet to be done. I know Joan is still trying to write that book on Fredrick Dally a BC photographer that she's been trying to write for years. It's like we have paid no real attention even to the most foundational fundamentals of history of this particular medium in our country. So in a sense there's kind of a role there for people who do want to be academic producing books if they wish. Absolutely it's there, and that's one side of it.

The other side, I think that is yet to be done with the respect to the history of photography is kind of an understanding of how we connect internationally. The thing about photography is that it is very much an international art. From the first day it was created it spread throughout the world very rapidly, within a month or so, a couple of months the daguerreotype was everywhere. As far as

understanding what it was and how it could be done people were trying it out and the photo magazines were always international as much as they could be, they crossed boundaries and they exchanged articles and so on. So it has been a very international medium and yet I forget his name... his name never appears among the history of photography. One of the ironies is that for example; in the 1950s and 60s the best known artist in Canada was Yousuf Karsh the photographer, portrait photographer yet, a documentary type of photographer. He was known all around the world, yet if you look at the histories of international photography his name hardly ever appears. He's not the only one, I only mention him because he is the most obvious initial example. Canadian photographers have made a difference and have been a part of international movements. At the very least they have been receptive themselves to those movements, and that has changed their photography, which means if we want to understand Canada through their photographs we should understand how they have felt the influence of international currents in photography. That connection between Canada and the rest of the world has not been made. Despite the fact that Canada constantly congratulates itself on being a land of immigrants and being so international and having such a breadth of openness to the rest of the world. Well maybe, but we basically do not write our own history in the world. That's something in which the history of photography in Canada could well do and should do, it's a direction that it could do as well.

Terry Cook had a lot to say about the photography collection even though he was in text and government records. Well he and Andy Birrell got into a published disagreement. He was one of those who thought we were down the wrong path, doing all this photography specialization, and understanding the technology. He thought we should behave more like textual archivists. Andy wrote something, I can't remember what it was, it was definitely a foundational article. Cook responded and basically demolished Andy. But Andy was right. Years later, Terry and I were having supper, we always kept a very collegial relationship going, and nobody held any grudges. He admitted, that he had been wrong. And he said he was sorry that his article had now become so iconic, it was being constantly quoted among archivists and archival students. He said he was going to have to write and reset the record straight.

12) Please feel free to add any further comments.

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