avoided an accurate working definition of private printing two decades ago, and his
imprecise, all-inclusive approach has been compounded in the present catalogue.
The producers of books are variously described as a ‘publisher of finely-printed
books,’ a ‘commercial press,’ a ‘publishing enterprise,’ a ‘fine-printing’ Canadian
private press and — the ultimate non-sequitur — a ‘private publisher,’ as if these terms
were interchangeable. These descriptions need concise clarification if the reader is to
understand the essential nature of the presses.

Included in the listings are items supposedly produced ‘in the private press spirit’
by commercial printers like Morriss Printing, McGill University Press, and the
Ronalds Company, some of which is definitely vanity publishing on an above average
level. Limited editions published by art galleries appear, as well as a number of livres
d’artiste and portfolios of prints; I feel the latter items have a questionable place in
such a listing. Excluded are Christmas keepsakes and non-commercial ephemera by
printers and typesetters like Rous and Mann and Cooper and Beatty. The Cape and
Company productions are rather incomplete; no mention is made of the Christmas
cards designed for Cape by Frank Davies. With such a liberal allowance made for
commercial printers and limited editions, it is a pity that the rules could not have
been bent to include the four experimental books (including Leonard Cohen’s The
Spice Box of Earth) brilliantly designed by Frank Newfeld and lovingly produced in
very limited editions by McClelland and Stewart between 1960 and 1964. These
books represent the finest results of a commercial Canadian publisher working ‘in
the private press spirit.’

Bradbury’s bibliographic descriptions are so good that one hates to mention her
frequent irritating attempts at aesthetic criticism, which are inappropriate to objec-
tive bibliography. Both books are models of inexpensive, modest bookmaking,
cleanly reproduced from typescript and generously illustrated; though the broadside
photos are unhappily placed and the extreme enlargements of pressmarks emphasize
primitive presswork more than image. But Bradbury’s research makes these books
important records of the development of the art and craft of printing in Canada.

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Guide to Literary Manuscripts in the Huntington Library. Compiled and
edited by Sue Hodson. San Marino, California: The Huntington Library,
1979. 539 p., cloth, $35.00 ISBN 0-87328-102-0

This ably produced guide, supervised by Mary L. Robertson, Curator of Manuscripts,
with special help from J.F. Preston, former Curator, and input from several other
Huntington staff members, lists over 125,000 manuscripts by more than 1,000
authors and covers the years from 1600 to the present. The emphasis of the listing is
on British and American literature, with a few European and Canadian authors
included. The Guide forms one of a series of four volumes describing the entire
manuscript holdings of the Huntington Library. This six-year project began in 1975,
with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and at present
includes a Guide to American Historical Manuscripts in the Huntington Library. Two
final parts, on British historical manuscripts and on mediaeval and renaissance manuscripts, will complete the description of the magnificent research resources held by the Huntington.

Inclusion of authors in the Guide was based on perception of these individuals as literary figures and by their inclusion in at least one standard biographical dictionary. Material in the Guide is listed alphabetically by author. Each author entry may include descriptions under subdivisions of verse, prose, letters, documents, such as bills, receipts, and wills; and other items, such as annotations, corrections, drawings, marginal notes, etc. Verse and prose are listed alphabetically by title, with square brackets indicating supplied titles or portions of titles. Untitled poems are described by their first lines. The number of pages or leaves is given in some, but not all cases, and the Huntington Manuscript call number is given whenever possible.

From an archival viewpoint, the difficulties in this Guide arise in the description of letters under authors' names. The total number of letters written by the author is given with inclusive dates. Frequent addressees are noted. However, it appears that archival principles of provenance and respect des fonds have been ignored, as when, for example, letters by Bliss Carman are filed in the Guide under his name rather than under the name of the recipient. As well, it is not possible to tell from the Carman entry whether the separate reference to Carman in the California Poetry File is listed in the Carman entry, although the preface to the Guide indicates that correspondents, when listed in detailed descriptions of the larger literary collections, are also listed in the alphabetical sequence of the Guide. The inclusion of a comprehensive index rather than repetition of information in two parts of the main body of the work would solve this kind of problem.

The majority of entries are limited in extent, but detailed descriptions of such collections as the Jack London Papers indicate that archival principles have been adhered to in these instances at least: the London Papers contain 3,000 outgoing letters, but over 14,000 incoming letters. Aside from Carman — referred to as 'American Poet, 1861-1929' — students of Canadian Studies will be interested in entries related to Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, Thomas B. Costain, Sir Gilbert Parker, and Ernest Thompson Seton.

The Guide is generally understandable and certainly readable. It will stand researchers in good stead and will remain a testament to both the quality of the Huntington's literary collections and the perseverance of their staff in preparing a comprehensive description of the holdings.

ANNE MACDERMAID
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‘The fun of book hunting is in the chase, and the pursuit of items not universally known and valued gives a maximum chase, with, at the end, a minimum of investment.’ — p. 115 [author unknown].

There's hardly a member of the Bibliographical Society of Canada who wouldn’t