
Previous indexing of early Canadian English-language cultural periodicals has been limited to a few checklists and indexes of the contents of selected titles, for example, *An Index to the Literary Garland (Montreal 1838–1851)* and *Canadian Illustrated News, Montreal, 1869–1883: An Index*. Other projects have indexed only those items related to a particular subject in the periodicals examined, as in *The Concordia University Art Index to Nineteenth Century Canadian Periodicals*.

Thomas B. Vincent of the Department of English and Philosophy, Royal Military College, Kingston, has done a great deal to remedy this situation by compiling the valuable *Index to Pre 1900 English Language Canadian Cultural and Literary Magazines* on CD-ROM. He has provided researchers of Canada's cultural, literary and intellectual history with access to a wealth of material in 191 periodicals. Nearly 138,000 entries for prose, poetry, drama, fiction, and miscellaneous items such as letters to the editor, sheet music, illustrations, advertisements and obituaries have now been indexed.

Among the titles included are *The Nova Scotia Magazine* (Halifax, 1789–92), Canada's first literary magazine, longer running titles such as *The Week* (Toronto, 1883–96) and the *Canadian Monthly and National Review* and its successor, *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review* (Toronto, 1872–82), as well as numerous short-lived publications, for example, *Bric-à-Brac: Devoted to Amateur Journalism and Especially Its Extension in Canada* (Montreal, 1885), *Mayflower or Ladies' Acadian Newspaper* (Halifax, 1851–52), and *Owl* (Vancouver, 1893). Not indexed are several well-known magazines including the *Canadian Illustrated News* (Montreal) and *Saturday Night*, possibly because they have already been the subjects of large indexing projects. For periodicals which continued into the twentieth century, only the pre-1900 issues have been indexed.

A number of questions about the general nature and scope of the project will occur to users of this index. How were magazines selected for inclusion? Were the indexers able to examine all extant issues of each periodical? Were any items in the magazines not indexed? Is this very useful project ongoing? Unfortunately,
Professor Vincent has not provided an introduction to the project which could have answered these questions.

Entries for items indexed are composed of twelve searchable fields: author surname, author first name, article title, subject, magazine title, volume, number, month, year, type (i.e. verse, fiction, illustration, letter), origin, and firstline for poetry. Searches are easily initiated by entering words or phrases in one or more fields. Terms can be combined using logical or proximity operators and truncation is possible. Terms used in a particular field can be browsed in a list and one or more easily selected for searching. The response time is fast, even for large or complex search sets.

Movement between fields, records in a set, and brief and full display screens is straightforward. The cross-reference search feature allows the user to conduct a search by highlighting a term within a record currently displayed. If, for example, the user viewing a record for an article on copyright by Goldwin Smith wanted to see what other authors had written about the subject, he or she could highlight the term copyright and use the cross-reference key combination to start a new search.

Help screens clearly explain the search, browse and display functions, provide information about the contents of particular fields and about navigating in the database. A printed quick reference guide in English and French outlines a step-by-step approach to a basic search and briefly describes function and hot keys.

Authors’ names are indexed as they appear in the publications which can prove problematic for more prolific authors. The names S. Moodie, Susanna Moodie, Mrs. Moodie, Mrs. S. Moodie and S. and J.W.D. Moodie which all appear in the database, are variants under which Susanna Moodie may have written or co-authored works. The most effective way to capture a large number of the writings by this author is to search under the surname Moodie without a first name or initials. The resulting set is large (293 entries), and it is necessary to examine each entry in order to eliminate titles by other authors named Moodie. A browsable index which combined surnames and first names (at present the database has separate indexes for these fields) would assist searchers by allowing them to view the surname Moodie with potentially relevant first names, initials or titles.

Entries for pseudonymous works are indexed under the pseudonym. Twenty-nine entries were found under the name Agnes Maule Machar, for example, and 209 under her pseudonym, Fidelis. Happily, Vincent has produced a printed guide, *A Directory of Known Pseudonyms, Initial Sets and Maiden Names Found in Selected English-Canadian Magazines, Newspapers and Books of the Nineteenth Century* [Kingston, Ont.: Loyal Colonies Press, 1993], which is a useful companion volume to the CD-ROM. The directory is organized into two parts, listing pseudonyms, initial sets and maiden names, and surnames. The user can determine that Machar used the pseudonym Fidelis as well as the initial set A.M.M. and that Susanna Moodie wrote under the initial sets S.M. and W.H.H. Perhaps a future version of the CD-ROM will incorporate the information included in the directory.

Vincent has assigned subject descriptors to all items, including creative works such as poems, a particularly useful undertaking not always attempted in other
projects. A pair of subject descriptors has generally been assigned to each item, usually consisting of a broader and a narrower term as in biography — Byron or humour — women writers. Some inconsistencies in the choice of descriptors are apparent. Writings about Archibald Lampman are indexed under Lampman, A. Lampman, and Archibald Lampman. A search for articles on women authors reveals pairs of subjects such as authors — female and women — writers. Like other indexes in the CD-ROM, the subject index is browsable and works as a kind of thesaurus. However, browsing is made somewhat difficult by the ordering of terms, for example Archibald and A. Lampman are entered in direct order under the letter ‘A,’ while Lampman is filed under the letter ‘L.’ Titles used as subjects are sometimes filed under a leading article.

Output from the index can be handled in a variety of ways. Printing and downloading of formatted citations are both possible. A standard citation includes the author’s name, the article and magazine titles, the issue designation and the pagination. An annotated citation also includes the subject descriptors. Records can be exported as ASCII text or formatted to be compatible with various word processing or database management software packages including WordPerfect, Wordstar or dBase III+. The text of a search result can be copied to a clipboard or buffer, edited and saved to another file or printed. For example, a contents summary for a particular periodical could be copied from the short display screen or a full record, including the fields origin, type and firstline, could be copied to the clipboard and edited.

This index should satisfy the needs of the researcher who wishes to locate a particular piece of writing in a given periodical. The information provided combined with the searching flexibility offered by the CD-ROM format will permit others to explore a range of topics and ideas. Authors, subjects and/or genres can be examined within the context of a periodical or group of periodicals. Canadian versus foreign content can be analysed in terms of quantity, subject matter, etc. The bibliographic control of the writings of some well-known authors will be improved and perhaps the periodical contributions of certain lesser-known authors will be examined for the first time. Clearly this unique tool will be of great use to researchers of English Canada’s literary and intellectual development.

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