


Sixteen years have passed since the 1986 launching of the Canadian Archival Inventory Series of Literary Papers (reviewed in the Papers / Cahiers XXVI [1987]: 191-94). With the publication of The Christie Harris Papers in 2000, as many as 19 volumes had been published – a remarkable and commendable achievement for a small number of staff working under the guidance and direction of Apollonia Steele of the Special Collections Division of the University of Calgary Libraries.

Each volume opens with a “Biocritical Essay” by a recognized scholar. In addition to providing an overview of the author’s work and accomplishments along with critical comments on major works, the essays occasionally comment on unpublished manuscripts brought to light for the first time. We learn, for example, from Malcolm Page’s essay on Newfoundland writer Michael Cook – a prolific playwright (with over 50 plays for stage and radio) and essayist (with hundreds of columns for the St. John’s Evening Telegram) – that Cook is also the author of an unpublished autobiographical novel, a children’s story, and at least four unperformed plays.

As Jean Tener points out in the “Archival Introduction” to each volume, the inventories are arranged according to standard archival methodology, by series, sub-series, and file, with an attempt to maintain original order wherever possible: “only the most blatant misfiles being corrected.” As all bibliographers, textual scholars, and
book historians well know, original order is essential for anyone attempting to date undated manuscripts and develop insights into the literary context in which any particular work was produced. Besides describing organizational issues relating to a particular archive, the typical "Archival Introduction" highlights important manuscripts and potential areas for research. For example, the introduction to John Metcalf's *Papers* mentions his laudable efforts to promote the careers of young writers in "the same way that Earle Toppings, an editor at Ryerson Press in the 1960s, encouraged Metcalf in his early writing career," comments on the number of publishers represented (reflecting Metcalf's tendency to move "from publisher to publisher, always seeking a company who would not only publish his work but also publicize it"), and draws attention to his interest in collecting books and art, as shown in letters to dealers.

For the researcher, the inventories' great value lies in the high level of description and the excellent indexing. The different genres in which authors worked and the formats they acquired and collected have led to variation, from volume to volume, in the specific series categories described. The two that appear consistently are for correspondence and manuscripts (in some cases sub-divided by genre). Some inventories include series of notebooks, audio-visual materials, photographs, scrapbooks, published works, secondary materials, and creative works by other authors. The following represents an attempt to illustrate examples of the treasures to be found in a selection of the series categories.

Using the "Correspondence Series" one is able to identify individual outgoing and incoming letters (their authors and recipients, dates [with varying levels of specificity] and, in some cases, topics). In the volume on Alden Nowlan, for example, we are able to identify correspondence with such writers as Milton Acorn, Robert Bly, Elizabeth Brewster, John Newlove, and Alice Munro; with such publishers as Anansi, ECW, and Clarke, Irwin; with such journalists as Robert Weaver and Donald Cameron, with such booksellers as Hugh Anson-Cartwright, and with a wide range of societies and associations, including the Flat Earth Society, of which Nowlan was a founding member. Of the volumes published after 1986, only *The Aritha van Herk Papers* has the added benefit of separate chronological and alphabetical listings of outgoing letters (with specific dates and recipients' names included)—the discontinuation of which, in other volumes, is a loss to the researcher working at a distance, trying to identify potentially useful letters to be photocopied.
In each chronologically arranged “Manuscript Series,” the descriptions indicate length (with reference to fragments, chapters, and the number of pages), form (in holograph, typescript, carbon, photocopy), draft stage (outline, 1st, 2nd, final), and in the case of galley proofs, correction stage (uncorrected, corrected, final). Reproductions of at least one or two sample pages from an early manuscript, showing the author’s holograph revisions, illustrate each volume (often on the flyleaves or inside covers). Looking at The Aritha Van Herkt Papers, for example, the researcher will be fascinated with the range of manuscripts for Judith, which can be traced from its origin as a short story entitled “Pigs” submitted in 1976 to Rudy Wiebe’s English 584 course at the University of Alberta, through the novel’s outline and research material, early drafts in holograph and typescript, followed by dated drafts submitted to Wiebe’s Creative Writing course (with one draft commented on by Wiebe, and yet another commented on by “unknown students”), and later drafts submitted to the Seal Books contest (with editorial comments by Lily Poritz Miller), leading to the typesetting copy and, finally, the corrected galley proofs. Files on dust jacket designs, publicity materials, and reviews from American, British, Canadian, Dutch, Swedish, and Finnish sources complement the wealth of material in the manuscript series relating to Judith.

The “Notebook Series” of a typical inventory of Papers might feature an author’s personal diaries, appointment books, travel journals, and various other notebooks (containing ideas and notes about specific writing projects, people and places visited, family life, and important events). In the volume on Christie Harris, for example, we find her notes on children’s sayings and doings, speech patterns, characters studies, and the occasional direct quote, such as: “Right elbow badly smashed in San Francisco on December 31, 1981.”

It is interesting to look back at the list of 43 projected titles included at the end of the Gwen Pharis Ringwood Papers (1987). Besides the 19 that have appeared to date, there were plans for new volumes on such important writers as Earle Birney, Hugh Hood, Andre Langevin, Claude Peloquin and Leon Rooke, as well as for later accessions of the papers of Hugh MacLennan, Alice Munro, and others. Clearly the University of Calgary has amassed an outstanding collection of the literary papers of Canada’s major twentieth-century writers, and I hope that it will continue in its laudable efforts to make them as accessible as possible to researchers anywhere and everywhere. Some of the inventories can now be
searched, for free, on the World Wide Web at <www.ucalgary.ca/library/Speccoll/litarch.htm>. Having grown accustomed to the exceptional quality of access provided by both the printed and electronic versions available for several authors’ archives, we now wait with eager anticipation to see more.

SHEILA LATHAM


Most publications about Canadian women writers are about writers of fiction. Here, for the first time, is a bio-bibliography of Canadian Anglophone women writers of non-fiction: 476 women writers who produced over 677 non-fiction titles. Dagg includes writers of books published between 1836 and 1945, who lived in what is now Canada. They wrote about their own lives or other mainly Canadian interests, and about Canada or its inhabitants. The writers are from all walks of life; among them are a Governor-General’s wife, Lady Aberdeen, and Grey Owl’s companion, Anahareo.

In her informative introduction, Dagg comments from today’s perspective on some writers’ observations, and summarizes their backgrounds and motivations. The writers include professional women (usually scholars); religious women; well-known women, such as feminists/activists; and professional writers. Wide-ranging in subject matter and scope, their non-fiction books in the fields of history, autobiography, travel and description, biography, social issues, religion, science and medicine, arts, and education are important sources for the study of women’s interpretations of many aspects of Canadian life during the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries.

Dagg describes her difficulty unearthing information about some writers because they are women; for example, they change their names when they marry and are often reluctant to reveal their birth dates. Hence, the author entries themselves vary in length according to the amount of information that Dagg was able to uncover. However, even the shorter entries provide an informative look at the author’s relationship with her particular surroundings.