CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE
ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE ARCHIVES

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides an examination of a number of issues relating to private archives within the context of their acquisition. The investigation begins with an historical inquiry into the creation, use and acquisition of private archives in western society. The study then expands to examine issues concerning heritage and culture in twentieth century society with particular note of Canadian society. These larger cultural issues are then investigated specifically as they pertain to private archives and archival institutions. These investigations reveal the significance of communities in the formation and fostering of cultural identity, and the need to acknowledge this in archival practice.

The thesis argues that when examining the provenance of private archives, the larger community within which the records were created is of crucial importance. The investigation determines that the community provides a cultural framework which influences its members and which in turn is reflected in the archives. That the symbolic significance and cultural relevance of these archives to other members of the community is enormous is a central argument of the thesis and leads to the conclusion that the removal of these archives from the community of creation results in a form of cultural appropriation. The thesis concludes by positing certain principles designed to facilitate private archives acquisition that aims to maintain the cultural integrity of specific communities.
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INTRODUCTION

In 1994 the Archival Association of British Columbia Newsletter published two short articles examining current trends in the acquisition of private archives, essentially discussing to whom belonged the responsibility of acquiring these archives. The first article was written by Robert McDonald, a professor of history at the University of British Columbia, who was lamenting the changes in the archival landscape that were causing large, publicly funded institutions to direct fewer and fewer resources towards the acquisition of private archives.\(^1\) Christopher Hives, University Archivist at the University of British Columbia, responded to McDonald’s article in the following newsletter, urging that the responsibility of private archives acquisition belonged more appropriately to smaller local institutions and organizations.\(^2\) These articles sum up the essence of the emerging debate surrounding the acquisition of private archives and offer a valuable starting point to examine a number of issues related to private archives.

Private archives acquisition is one facet of the overarching archival goal to preserve and make accessible the records of society, both to current and future generations. The records that are preserved comprise the documentary heritage of society which is one means of preserving and passing on cultural knowledge. Of course records can be preserved for a number of reasons that have little to do with

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the concept of heritage. Public records are typically preserved for administrative and accountability purposes, but they also provide a great deal of information about the culture and society which created them. By acquiring private archives which complement public records it is possible to provide a more diverse documentary heritage and one in which a number of different viewpoints are expressed.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine issues related to private archives acquisition in order to develop principles and guidelines for their acquisition by bodies other than the creator. Specifically, the discussion throughout will concentrate on the cultural significance of private archives as opposed to their other uses.³ Although archives are generally considered to have a cultural role in society this is usually an implicit assumption that has not been deeply investigated. Most archival literature focuses on the significance of private archives for research use, and while this is an important purpose this thesis argues that it is not the only cultural role of private archives. Instead the thesis examines the cultural significance of archives for the specific group in which they were generated, and how to strengthen the connections and relationship within this group as well as with the society at large.

Returning to the McDonald/Hives debate it can be seen that private archives which remain in the hands of the creator, are not usually considered culturally

³ Archives have multiple uses, accountability, legal purposes, scholarly etc., all of which can be considered as cultural since they result from the actions and interactions of members and groups within a society. However, in this thesis the terms culture and cultural will refer specifically to those activities and objects which are not explicitly intended for economic or political purposes, the focus instead will be on the symbolic significance and meaning of artifacts.
significant for the larger society. However the same archives acquired by a public institution and made publicly available, take on a new significance and importance within society, particularly if this acquisition is carried out under the auspices of the state. By acquiring certain private archives instead of others, a value is attached to those acquired, they are considered worthy of preservation while others are less important, in a sense those acquired have received official sanction. Once acquired by a public institution and made available, archives become part of the public culture, sponsored and supported by the state. As Donald Horne points out

The public culture of a modern industrial society is not a representation of that society. A public culture is simply a limited set of representations of a society in the more general setting of what existence might be. Or ... a public culture is a dominating or perhaps monopolizing assertion, in representations and enactments, of a limited number of ‘realities’ over all others.4

Horne’s statement illustrates a fundamental problem with state acquisition of private archives, the material selected for preservation is often chosen because of its concordance with the dominant viewpoint. Rather than expanding the views and cultures represented in documentary heritage, archives acquired by the state can contribute to the creation of hegemony. Although this distortion is also possible in a private institution, the modern democratic state by its nature is required to represent and treat all groups equally, and thus, has a greater responsibility to remain unbiased in its cultural institutions. The difficulty faced by all cultural institutions, state and otherwise; is how to acquire and preserve a representative, evenhanded view of all the distinct groups within society, not just

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those groups that are dominant or those that, at any given time, may be considered worthy of scholarly study. Every cultural group has the right to preserve its cultural heritage and have it presented to the larger society in a manner it considers appropriate.

One means of avoiding the dilemma is to not acquire private archives. If archival institutions only preserve the records of their sponsoring organization they do not become embroiled in this cultural debate. By not acquiring private material the archival institution cannot be accused of appropriating or offering biased interpretations of different cultural groups. However, as McDonald argues,

most individuals, groups and organizations who generate records do not have the administrative stability, the financial resources, or the long term commitment to manage their own papers.5

Thus, an enormous segment of the documentary heritage would disappear if archival institutions did not attempt to acquire the material. The loss of this heritage effects both the cultural groups that created it and the larger society. The difficulty is in finding the balance that allows for the widest range of archival preservation with the least amount of cultural distortion.

In order to determine a balance this thesis examines a variety of aspects of the question: their creation, past and present acquisitional practices, purposes for acquisition, cultural institutions, cultural property, collective memory, cultural identity, cultural representation, cultural heritage, and finally the role of the state in the acquisition and preservation of private archives. Debates concerning many

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of these concepts and activities are prevalent in other institutions such as museums and art galleries while few archival articles touch upon these themes. Therefore, whenever possible this thesis attempts to draw comparisons between archives and other, related areas of cultural heritage. While archives, museums, and galleries are all cultural institutions they have different roles within society, and different ways of interacting with society. Museums and galleries have always acknowledged their active involvement in the dissemination of culture, while archives tend to be considered passive custodians of an objective documentary heritage which will be interpreted by others, particularly scholars. The validity of this approach and the potential for archival institutions to serve other cultural roles is also discussed. Although the issues discussed and the suggestions offered are applicable in any culturally diverse nation, the thesis has been informed primarily by an understanding of the society and archival landscape of Canada.

The first chapter attempts to identify and explain the reasons that private archives have been created, preserved and acquired over time in western civilization up until the present day. This investigation provides a background to current practices and emphasizes the role of societal beliefs in determining the significance of private archives which are worthy of preservation in archival institutions. The second chapter investigates and assesses the importance of cultural heritage in the twentieth century. Cultural ownership and identity are becoming topics of heated debate as minority groups throughout the world seek recognition of their distinct culture. This chapter concentrates in general on cultural property and the various implications of its acquisition by groups other than the creator. The third chapter
discusses the role of archival repository as a cultural institution, and private archives as cultural heritage. The focus of current practices and archival literature on the research significance of private archives is examined in some depth. The final portion of the chapter looks at acquisition by the state, examining in greater detail issues raised in Chapter Two. The fourth chapter examines the traditional archival institution and the growing importance of communities in our society and offers suggestions on developing archival repositories designed to serve a wide variety of communities.

The discourse between McDonald and Hives is a facet of a larger societal awareness about diverse cultures and their representation in society. The focus of their discussion may be on the practical concern of who should be acquiring and preserving private archives, but the underlying issue is one of concern for maintenance of a diverse cultural heritage. People are growing more sensitive to cultural differences and the rights of distinct groups, and this is manifested in almost all aspects of our society, including the archival profession. Given changing perceptions about cultural property and representation it is logical that archival institutions re-evaluate their conceptions and methods of acquiring private archives. This is particularly important for state institutions that are often seen as being less aware of minority cultures and more inclined to acquire material that bolsters the status quo. The problem presented to archivists is how best to acquire an unbiased and representative documentary heritage while still recognizing the rights of all the distinct groups to control their own representation.
CHAPTER ONE

Historical Overview of Private Archives

Almost every individual in his or her lifetime will accumulate documents and preserve them for a variety of reasons, and the same is true, on a larger scale, for groups and organizations. However, the acquisition of these accumulations by an individual or institution other than the creator is a relatively modern phenomenon.¹ For what reasons do humans create documents, for what purposes are these documents preserved as archives by the creator, and why are these private archives acquired by archival institutions? This chapter attempts to answer these questions, by examining these activities and their purposes throughout the course of western European and North American history up until the present day. It is often troublesome to determine the state of private archives in many eras since there is little remaining evidence and almost no secondary sources devoted to this topic, but by examining the general practices of document creation and use, certain things can be inferred.

Private Archives Defined

The first step is to clearly define what is meant by private archives. The term archives has different meanings within different societal contexts, and the definition also alters over time within particular societies as they develop and change. Thus, within a given temporal frame and social structure, a specific definition is valid, but

¹ Throughout this thesis, the term acquisition will refer specifically to the transfer of custody from the creator, or legitimate successor, to an archival institution.
this cannot be accurately transferred to another time and society. Essentially however, there have been two primary definitions associated with the term, the first stresses the physical location of records preservation and the second concentrates on the record accumulations themselves. The former definition was the first to be used and was linked to Roman legal concepts which remained integral to the concept of archives up until the end of the Middle Ages. The second definition is commonly accepted today, so that, currently in western society, the term archives is used to designate a natural accumulation of records created and received in the course of practical activity by a physical or juridical person and preserved thereafter for reference, while archival institution is used to refer to the designated repository of these record accumulations.²

Within this larger designation, a distinction is made between public and private archives, with the former referring to those “documents made or received and preserved by the sovereign or its agents in the legitimate conduct of governance.”³ Private archives are then most simply defined in the negative, as those record accumulations that are not the result of the exercise of sovereign

² The American publication, A Glossary for Archivists, manuscript Curators, and Records Managers, (Chicago: Society of American Archivists 1992), defines archives as “The documents created or received and accumulated by a person or organization in the course of the conduct of affairs, and preserved because of their continuing value.” The School of Library Archival and Information Studies, University of British Columbia offers the following definition in its Select List of Archival Terminology, “The whole of the documents made and received by a juridical or physical person or organization in the conduct of affairs, and preserved...” Both definitions include the same elements, and obviously encompass the concept of private archives.

power. This negative definition means that an understanding of private archives is always contingent upon an understanding of the particular type of sovereign authority that creates the public records of the specific society. Therefore, private archives vary according to the type of sovereign authority; in certain totalitarian states all records produced are ultimately the product of the state, and hence are considered as public archives, while in most representative democracies, the state is more limited and thus there are more private creators and therefore more private archives.\(^4\)

This definition works well in modern western society where there is a clear demarcation between private and sovereign persona, but the issue is less clear in societies where this distinction is not recognized. Since the definition of archives relates to natural record accumulations it is particularly difficult to determine if an archives is private if the individual or organization exercised sovereign power, and maintained records relating to the exercise of this power alongside of purely private documents. In the modern world it is common practice for those individuals who are involved in the administration of the government to keep those records together, and to preserve personal material in a physically distinct location, but this is a relatively recent phenomenon and the existence of mixed private and public record accumulations used to be far more common. Whether the archives are public or private depends upon the nature of the creator, an individual or group

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\(^4\) In the former Soviet Union, all records produced belonged to the universal state fonds. For an introduction into the components of this fonds see "International Archival Legislation," Archivum 29: 338-347.
who holds public office or performed public services, creates public records and therefore the archives, even if they contain private documents, are considered public by the society in which they were created. Public in this sense does not mean that these archives are publicly accessible or that the general populace has any right to them, it simply refers to the nature of the creator at the time of creation, and this definition remains the same even if the individual or group no longer exercises sovereign power. The period of creation, not that of preservation or acquisition, is the crucial point for determining if archives are private or public.

Within the designation private archives, there are two main types, those of individuals and families, and those produced by any private group or organization which includes the archives of voluntary associations, businesses, professional associations and unions. For many centuries in western civilization, families were an important economic and social unit and as such it was often necessary to maintain records in order to ensure the successful continuation of the group. With the rise of the modern state and the beginnings of industrialization, there was a corresponding growth of new social, political and economic groups, which also kept records to facilitate activities and to safeguard the future of the organization. Both types of private archives creators will be considered in this thesis.

Throughout, the term private archives will be used to refer to record accumulations of all types that were not created as the direct result of the exercise of sovereign power. Consequently, archives created and preserved by a sovereign individual or group, even if they contain personal material will be considered as public, since this is how they would be designated by the society of creation.
Record accumulations created and originally preserved in a private capacity by a non-sovereign individual or group, are always considered private even if they eventually come to reside in public archival institutions. This definition is valid even if only a few documents remain from the original accumulation, whatever is left of a natural accumulation in these instances comprises an archives.⁵

Creation of Archives

For a society to evolve and flourish it must develop some form of recording and passing on memory which can facilitate daily transactions and also provide cultural continuity. Recorded memories give the society a certain amount of stability and also enable it to develop some form of administrative structure. In non-literate societies the transmission of memories is accomplished essentially through memorization and oral communication. Both social and administrative acts are carried out through oral communication and preserved through oral conveyance of memory, often aided by an object acting as a reminder of what has transpired.⁶

In ancient times, a specific individual, the rembrancer, was usually entrusted by the community to mentally record all the important acts and then transmit them orally when required. The rembrancer then held both an administrative role, as the rememberer of the events of practical activity, as well as a cultural role as transmitter of heritage and tradition.

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Oral forms of memory are not precise: each time an event is retold it is not an identical word-for-word recitation of previous tellings. Instead "memory seems to function in (oral) societies in accordance with a generative reconstruction rather than with a mechanical memorization."\(^7\) The narrative element and important events remain constant, but within this framework there is scope for a great deal of creativity and interpretation. Consequently, one of the advantages of oral communication of memory is that it allows for a flexible interpretation of events and acts. Each retelling could be presented in a manner that would have more meaning and significance for the specific audience.\(^8\) In this way, oral communication of memories often provides a greater sense of continuity with the past, since the memory is continually being reshaped to suit current situations, the present can then always be seen as a natural continuation of the past, rather than frozen in time.

However, as social interactions and administrations become more complex, it becomes necessary to have a more exact means of recording events. Thus, many civilizations develop some form of written documentation in order to replace a strictly oral transmission of mental recording. Of course writing does not entirely replace oral communication, or oral transmission of memory, but as societies come to rely more on written records this form of memory is often given precedence and valued as more significant.

Written documents are created for a number of reasons: to express ideas, thoughts understanding or knowledge, to transmit information, to preserve memory of facts, or to inform posterity. Records form a specific subset of written documents: they are created as the unselfconscious by-products of practical activities and preserved thereafter as evidence of these activities. When the literacy level is still low in a society, the majority of documents created are likely to be records produced in the course of administrative activity, since other activities are presumably still conducted via oral communication. The sovereign authority in society frequently has the most developed administration and thus it produces and preserves a large number of records, which we term public archives. William Harris argues that the written word was far less vital to the individual in ancient societies, since “most people could live out their lives, if they were content to do so, without the use of reading and writing.” But even in societies where writing is not common, certain private individuals with business and property concerns are also likely to maintain personal archives in order to facilitate their own activities. However, whether or not a creator can be considered ‘private’, depends upon the nature of sovereign authority in the society and so it is better at this point to turn to specific eras in western history.

Clay Tablet Civilizations

In studying private archives, the examination is often hampered by a lack of physical evidence since private creators are in general less likely to ensure that their records are preserved beyond their immediate lifetime, and of course in ancient civilizations the relatively low level of literacy increases the problem. Although literacy was not universal in the Ancient World, it was prevalent enough that writing was recognized as a viable means of communication and as an aid to the conduct of certain business. Archaeological research has discovered the existence of archives in many ancient civilizations. Clay tablet archives have been found from Assyrian, Mesopotamian and Sumerian civilizations. The majority of these archives were generated by the exercise of sovereign power, and thus are public.\textsuperscript{11} Government, religious and business functions however, were not clearly differentiated in many of these civilizations and hence records relating to religious or business concerns of the sovereign were frequently all stored together, but as the creator was public, these archives, regardless of content, were also public. These archives were not the repositories of carefully selected historical records, but the administrative site of both active and inactive documents.

Administrative activity of course was not limited to governments. As economic activity increased, many merchants also transacted business with the aid of written documents and thus, established private archives. Ernst Posner cites\textsuperscript{11} Ernst Posner, Archives in the Ancient World, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1972), lists the major types of records created during this period, almost all of which are the result of sovereign authority (3-4).
numerous examples of private individuals who made and preserved records of their activities, ranging from an Assyrian family to an Egyptian prostitute. The prostitutes' archives may have consisted of only one document, but she valued it enough to preserve it since it granted her permission to ply her trade. The archives of the wealthy Tehiptilla family, three generations of record creators, amounting to almost a thousand tablets relating to business and property concerns were all stored within the family residence. In Nimrud the moneylender Shamash-shar-usur, maintained offices which included an archives for his business records. In general then, private archives primarily contained records relating to business activities since most other activities continued to be carried out through oral communication.

Other private records creators of importance were the various temples. These temples "were major centres of economic activity (thus) they had to use an elaborate system of recordmaking and bookkeeping if they were to function effectively." Of course in many cases, the temples also acted as representatives of the sovereign authority and thus many of these archives are public and not private. Hence,

"In Sumer-where the moon god Nanna was the king of Ur, (he) had his ministers and his court, and owned most of the land, administering it through his Directors of Livestock, Dairy Work, Fishing, and Donkey Transport- the god's abode was at once temple

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12 Ibid., 47, 159.
13 Ibid., 48.
14 Ibid., 42.
15 Ibid., 44.
and palace ... and his archival establishment consequently combined the features of a state, an institutional and a business archives."

Clay tablet archives in general, including those of private creators, tended to be limited to documents relating to economic activity. This must be due in part to the limited uses of writing and presumably the types of documents and private creators will become more varied as literacy became more common as a means of communication and recording memory.

Classical Greece

That literacy was employed in Greece for other than economic and administrative purposes is clear, but how far literacy replaced other forms of communication and how much of the population this affected is less easily discernible. Although much physical evidence of archives has been lost over the centuries, scholars investigating literacy have been able to draw upon literary and epigraphical sources to reconstruct some idea of how and by whom writing was employed and the types of documents preserved.

In Greece for the first time, central archival institutions were developed that served as repositories for both private and public records. The Metroon in Athens was in use by 405 BC and it housed the records of the Assembly as well as certain private documents. Private business contracts between citizens rested alongside official decrees and minutes of the Assembly. The establishment of the Metroon indicates that the production of documents had increased to the point where their orderly preservation was necessary. The increase in records and their

16 Ibid., 93.
preservation does not necessarily mean that records had completely supplanted oral forms of memory or that literacy was predominant. Some scholars have argued that because literacy was still restricted to a few elites, the preservation of records was symbolic rather than practical and that the important record was not the document in the Metron but the copy inscribed on the stele, which served as physical and visual reminder of the event. 17

To a certain extent, the preservation of the records can be attributed to the democratic nature of the Greek city states. The government was composed of the citizens of the state, with duly elected officials, therefore, the records created by either the state or the citizens would be seen as common public property. Consequently, the plays of the tragedians, although created by individuals, were in a grander sense products of the state, and therefore its property and preserved in the Metron. Likewise the official minutes of the Assembly were considered to be the common property of all Athenians and as such were made publicly available.

Another important aspect of the Metron was that it came to house the various contracts and private legal agreements of the Athenian citizens. 18 Although there are some private records in certain government archives of the near east, these records were not acquired in a consistent manner whereas in the Greek city states it came to be compulsory for citizens to record their business transactions in

18 Ibid., 40-45.
the archives. Eventually the recording of the transaction became an essential component of its validity, giving the archives a notarial responsibility. 19

Can these legal contracts and records however, truly be termed private archives? They were created by private citizens in pursuit of their own activities but their compulsory authentication by the city archives alters their nature. These records were not kept with the other records of their creator and hence their context is lost. They are then private records preserved within the public archival institution, but not private archives. 20 The copy remaining in the possession of the individual and preserved with his or her other papers, is part of a private archives, while the record in the Metroon is really part of a series within the state fonds, since the records were created in a specific juridical system which required their presence in the state repository.

The records of the Metroon indicate that in Athens at least, writing was becoming relatively common for the conduct of political and legal business and it is possible then to assume that

"written lists, inventories, and accounts were commonly used by well-to-do Greeks in the fifth and fourth centuries, especially if they were engaged in banking trade, or manufacturing. At lower social levels, however, the evidence is slight." 21

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19 Posner, Ancient Archives, 93.
20 This distinction between archives and records is not made because of the process of authentication or the type of documents being preserved, rather because, archives are natural accumulations while records are discrete items. The contracts entered into the Metroon are individual documents not natural accumulations and thus are not the private archives of any specific individual although they are private records of individuals.
21 Harris, Ancient Literacy, 68
Thus, even when literacy is limited, the creation of written documents was valued for the transactions of certain business, which in turn led to the creation of private archives. Written documents solely for the sake of correspondence appear to have been rare according to the surviving evidence. Archives presumably were limited to those elites whose activities required the precision and order of written documents, for others archives were non-essential. Unfortunately, the evidence of these private archives is fragmentary since frequently documents were written on wood which was susceptible to destruction.

In addition to the city archives, temples of various Hellenistic religions also had recordkeeping responsibilities. In part the documents were maintained in order to ensure consistency in the religion and to facilitate the dissemination of the beliefs and the consistency of the rituals. These objectives could obviously be achieved much more readily by the use of written memory rather than relying on a strictly oral form of communication. For example there is evidence that the Delphic oracle often provided written answers, which were sometimes gathered into oracle books. Many temples also acted as bankers and these activities were also carefully documented and the records kept in the temple.

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22 Ibid., 88.
23 Posner, Ancient Archives, 115.
24 Harris, Ancient Literacy, 55, 83.
25 Duranti, "Odyssey" (Part I), 6.
Republican and Imperial Rome

In Republican Rome "private archives keeping preceded concern about the preservation of public records."26 Daily transactions were recorded and summarized monthly so that the information was available for the compilation of the census. These records remained in the custody of the creator and were not transferred into any general repository. Frequently even the records of magistrates and other public officials remained with the individual rather than being passed on to the successor, unless of course the successor was a member of the same family, as often occurred. Despite being in private hands, these records for the most part should be considered public since they were created as a result of the exercise of sovereign power.

By the Late Republic, literacy was spreading and we can assume that this meant an increase in private archives. Certainly there is evidence of household archives which contain accounts of the property, reports on the running of the household, contracts, wills, and some correspondence.27 These documents would have been stored directly in the home, to allow for easy access and use by the creator. Although economic purposes are still paramount in the creation of archives, other types of documents are more common. Cato the Elder maintained copies of his speeches, to which he referred, and the letters of Cicero and Pliny indicate that written correspondence, at least by the important and wealthy, was

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26 Posner, Ancient Archives, 165.
27 Harris, Ancient Literacy, 197.
preserved. Evidence from Pompeii indicates that, as in Greece, the private creation and preservation of documents was still limited to a few individuals with large business concerns.

Once a public archives, the Tabularium, was established, more government records were deposited there, but many officials continued to retain their public documents instead of depositing them. However, the Tabularium did not register or validate private business or legal records as the Metroon had done. Private records in the early Republic received their validity not from location but through authentication by a tabellarius. Some important documents, such as the will of Julius Caesar, were deposited for safekeeping in temples, but this was done in order to preserve the record, not to make it legal. In general the personal house archives of individuals continued to hold most of the important individual and family documents during the Republican era.

By the end of the Roman Republic, private and public archives came to be differentiated not on the basis of the type of material, but rather on the location of preservation. Archives were defined in law as the location where the records were deposited (locus publicus in quo instrumenta deponuntur, or, locus in quo acta asservantur) not by any internal characteristics. Thus, archives referred not

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28 Ibid., 229-230.
29 Ibid., 201.
30 This is particularly true for the governors of the provinces, see Harris Ancient Literacy, 211.
31 Posner, Ancient Archives, 184.
merely to accumulations of documents but specifically to the designated places where documents were stored. In Roman law then, archives only existed if they were established by someone with the *jus archivii*, and this right was only granted to those who held a public position, effectively making all archives public.

In 27 AD, when Octavian was granted *imperium maius* and the title Augustus, the nature of the Roman state was changed irrevocably. From this point on the authority of the state became increasingly centralized, with the Emperors of Rome as the highest sovereign authority. Therefore, the records of other officials became less central to the functioning of the administration, while the records produced and preserved in the name of the Emperor became the essential government records. The Tabularium continued to maintain the records of the senate but eventually the functions of this body, and hence its records, were superseded by the Emperor, who maintained his own imperial archives, the *tabularium Caesaris*.\(^3^3\) The new tabularium was not in fact a distinct physical entity: the term ‘*tabularium Caesaris*’ was applied to all the records in the departments which were attached to the imperial chancery, and these offices were spread throughout the city.

Within the Imperial palace there was a separate secret archives that contained the Emperor’s personal records. Although this might seem to indicate that the Emperors and their staff were fully aware of the difference between the state functions and the private persona of the Emperor, this is dubious. It is more plausible to assume that the secret archives contained records that the Emperor was

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\(^{33}\) Duranti, “Odyssey” (Part I) 9.
unwilling to have exposed to many people. The records in the secret archives most probably dealt with state business and politics but had been placed there in order to ensure that only the Emperor and his secretary had access to them.

At the lowest level of administration, the various municipalities of the Empire were charged with the creation and maintenance of records pertaining to their actions. By insisting that municipal magistrates maintain adequate documentation of their actions, the central government could ensure some form of accountability. In this sense, the accountability is to the Emperor, not to the citizens of the state. The municipal officials who made and preserved these records had the *jus archivii*, which enabled the official to establish an archives that was endowed with public faith. Thus, the records created by public authorities while carrying out official duties, and preserved in a specific location, were considered trustworthy as to the events to which they pertained. Originally the concept of public faith related only to those official records created in the pursuit of public duty; eventually, however, it was applied to private documents kept in public custody.

Thus, in the fourth century the magistrate’s duty to create records of his official actions extended to include the right to confer the status of public record on certain private acts. The minutes of private acts or the private document

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34 Ibid., 217.
36 Ibid., 332.
themselves were stored in the archives and termed the *gesta municipalia*. Authorized copies of these proceedings were available for a fee. This process could be applied to any number of private acts but eventually it was prescribed for certain types of documents. Wills and donations had to be recorded in the *gesta* to be valid, and by insisting on the registration of wills and donations the state could then ensure that it was receiving the appropriate taxes.

Although responsible for many public and private records, the *gesta municipalia* usually received only individual documents of private persons, rather than the entire accumulation. Most individuals continued to maintain their own records in their residence, but this was still a relatively small percentage of the population who had the need of written documents. Private organizations, uninvolved in sovereign authority, were almost non-existent, and most of those that did exist, such as certain religious groups, often had little need for written records.

The Christian Church of course is a notable exception, since it actively created and maintained its own records. However, throughout much of its history, the Catholic Church has held sovereign power, so it is difficult to speak of it as a strictly private creator. Except for rare examples of churches or monasteries under secular rule, the archives of the Church must be considered public. Once Christianity became the accepted religion of the Empire, the Church adopted much

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38 Ibid., 219.  
39 Harris Ancient Literacy, (218-219) discusses the existence of written prophecies and temple accounts but suggests that writing was not usually a large part of Roman religious observances.
of the Empire's administrative structure, including its record keeping practices. In order to facilitate a diffuse administration and the consistency of practice, and to oversee diverse property concerns, the Church required excellent recordkeeping practices. As a significant property owner it was preferable not to have donations to the Church registered in the *gesta* since these donations would be subject to taxation, and therefore the Church established its own facilities for recordkeeping and registration of documents and frequently it held the archives of private individuals who had deposited them there for safety. The Church maintained its administrative structure and recordkeeping practices into the Middle Ages.

**The Middle Ages**

After the Roman Empire in the west dissolved into innumerable small states, organized government and record keeping became much scarcer and literacy in general declined so that fewer written documents were being created by other sectors of society. Communication across distances, usually performed by written documents, became less reliable and less necessary since there was no centralized government cutting across linguistic and cultural groups. The fusion of Roman and barbarian traditions caused both linguistic and legal problems. A large gap developed in most parts of Europe between the vernacular spoken language and the use of Latin for written documents. Written communication between individuals or organizations was carried out in Latin since this was the common heritage, while the romance languages developed as the means for oral communications. In the

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legal and business realm, communications and transactions were carried out by a system of oaths and witnesses rather than by trusting to a written document which was unintelligible to most.\textsuperscript{41}

Another element is added to the discussion of private archives during this era, since archives continued to be defined as the location of deposit and only those with \textit{jus archivii}, were entitled to establish an archives. This ‘archives right’ was only granted to those persons or bodies holding sovereignty within a region. Consequently throughout much of the Middle Ages, the only archives that existed were those of the sovereign, and thus, according to the designation of the society, there were no private archives as such. It was common practice for private individuals, or organizations such as universities, to deposit their archives with those of the sovereign, to ensure their authenticity and authority.\textsuperscript{42} This does not mean private archives were not being created or maintained in this period, rather it means that the society at the time did not usually recognize private document accumulations as archives, that designation was reserved for those documents in designated locations. With that understanding we can now examine the various types of creators within this period.

Although the individual and state creation of records declined in this period, an enormous body of records was created and stored by an important organization. During the middle Ages, the Church, including the monasteries, maintained and

\textsuperscript{42} Luciana Duranti, “Medieval Universities,” 42.
expanded upon the administrative structure developed under the Roman Empire. Naturally a facet of this administration was the creation and preservation of records. The texts and symbols of Christianity are integral to its message and thus it was necessary that the texts continued to be copied and that its clergy were instructed in how to read and write these documents. By ensuring the relative literacy of the clergy, Christian doctrine could be disseminated in a consistent manner, and the reading and production of these texts came to be viewed as a devotional exercise. It was partially for these reasons that the Church remained a relatively literate organization while most other social entities reverted to a more oral culture.

Of course literacy was not only valuable as a spiritual tool, as it had definite secular benefits as well. Written documents facilitated communication between clergy and papal administration which helped to strengthen the hierarchical structure and authority of the Church. Deeds, wills and charters all protected the property and privileges of the Church and governed relations with the secular world. Most of these records were preserved in the individual monasteries and churches, but since the papacy claimed to be the preeminent Christian authority, its records were likely to have pertained to much of the Church in general.

The records produced and preserved by the Church are not unequivocally private. The papacy was hardly an entity removed from sovereign concerns; indeed, many of its records must have dealt with secular concerns and political issues, ranging from the succession of kings to the appointment of bishops. In many instances monasteries held feudal rights in a particular area, and so these archives should in general be considered public.
Secular administrations in the early Middle Ages generally lacked the strong record making and keeping practices of the Church. In part this was due to the fragmented nature of political authority. Europe had become a patchwork of cities and small territories with individual lords, all of whom nominally owed fealty to a higher authority. Each individual or city with sovereignty maintained its own records, which also served to prove its rights and responsibilities. Many transactions at the individual level however, particularly in the early middle ages, occurred with no written residue produced. For example, Germanic tradition emphasized the ritual symbolic nature of transactions rather than requiring a written document to attest to the facts, as in the case of the feudal bond. 43

The issue of private archives is blurred with sovereign individuals who maintained personal records, and records relating to their sovereign authority together. For noble families with sovereignty in certain regions, the records related to their authority would be passed down through the generations and would be added to over time. The family archives would also include some personal material, which would likely increase as literacy and written communication became more common. According to the definition of private archives, these archives are considered public, as they are result of the exercise of sovereign power. Of course

43 McKitterick asserts that in the Carolingian kingdoms Roman law and administration continued and that the development in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries were in fact continuances of practices that existed on a smaller scale in the eighth and ninth centuries (1-22). Many other scholars, notably Brian Stock, contend that written forms of communication were secondary to oral at most levels of society until the twelfth century.
there were certain families that were not involved in the exercise of sovereign power, but who did maintain archives.\textsuperscript{44}

The documentary remains of these lords and vassals consist of documents primarily related to property and privileges, rather than records produced in the normal process of administration. As well, these deeds and charters changed ownership and location according to the spoils of war, succession or marriage.\textsuperscript{45}

Thus, depending on the political events of the time, certain individual documents traded hands frequently; however, the archival accumulation as a whole tended to remain relatively intact. The type of records and their frequent movement has caused some archivists to argue that these records did not constitute archives but merely collections of discrete documents.\textsuperscript{46} But as Luciana Duranti has pointed out medieval creators

"saw in their documentary output a fundamental dichotomy between 'archives treasure' and 'archives sediment'. The archives treasure consisted of documents endowed with public faith—that is those attesting to the rights and privileges ... as received from the superior authority and accumulated through the centuries ... the archives sediment consisted of the documents generated in the daily routine of the conduct of affairs, and left to accumulate ... until time and carelessness made them disappear."\textsuperscript{47}

Consequently only the 'archives treasure' of most private creators has survived, which gives the false impression that these documents were not part of an

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{44} Clanchy, "Memory to Written Record," 55-57.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{47} Duranti "Medieval Universities," 42
\end{footnotes}
interrelated organic accumulation. These documents do in fact constitute an archives, and are evidence of private creation of archives.

Another major type of secular authority during the middle ages was provided by the various cities, and these often maintained the administration developed under the Empire. City states in Italy and France inherited many of the Roman municipal administrative structures, including municipal archives. Unlike other sovereign authorities who in this period were peripatetic, the cities had a stable seat which facilitated the preservation of records. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the cities became legally autonomous and most had organized chanceries with established personnel.\(^\text{48}\) It is fairly clear that these chancery offices constituted the official public archives, although it was common for private individuals or organizations, such as guilds to deposit their archives. These deposited documents were then considered public records, although they were of private provenance.

Merchants, particularly in Italy, involved in trade and commerce often had meticulous recordkeeping practices, and of course many of their contracts would come to deposited in public archives for legal purposes.\(^\text{49}\) However to carry out their daily business it was essential to have private archives and these records would usually pass to the successor in business who was frequently the family heir. Many of these private records would have been dispersed or lost over time but a few passed into more permanent custodianship. Most of the private records in

\(^{48}\) ICA "Les Archives Dans la Vie Internationale," 5.

official archives were discrete deeds, contracts or charters rather than a complete archive. In one instance however, the crown acquired the property and papers in entirety of a Jewish moneylender whose business and wealth was forfeited when he was expelled from England.50

Towards the end of the medieval era there was an increase in government administration and more clearly defined sovereign authorities. This meant that there were fewer individuals or groups with sovereignty, and therefore more private creators. More emphasis was placed on the proper forms of documents to guarantee authenticity and less on location. Individuals could now maintain their own records and still have them considered legally valid and authentic.

Early Modern Era

From the central Middle Ages through until the nineteenth century Europe was slowly transforming from a primarily oral to an essentially literate society. Written texts became familiar even to those who lacked the skills to decipher them and this was enhanced by the invention of printing, which dramatically altered the modes of communication for the society.51 Writing became commonplace for both state administration and individual communication. As well, during this period

50 Clanchy, Memory to Written Record, 65. The expulsion of the Jews from England resulted in the crown receiving not only large sums of money but also the property and archives of many families and businessmen, but this wholesale type of acquisition was unusual. The normal procedure was for property, including archives, to pass on to family heirs and rarely was the state in a position to acquire this material.

modern bureaucratic states began to develop, which naturally lead to an increase in administrative recordmaking and keeping, and a clearer distinction between private and public creators.

The greatest archival development of this period was the growth of national archives. With the increase in the production and preservation of records, there was a corresponding change in the development of archival repositories. In the previous centuries archival repositories had been the concern of the specific archival creator, thus there were royal, municipal, ecclesiastical, family and personal archives all preserved separately as distinct entities; for example, each monastery held their own records as did each government organ. In most cases the archives of the state were divided amongst regional and central offices with little centralized control. As royal power increased and became more centralized, the concept of a concentrated archive began to develop. In Spain between 1542 and 1547 all the archives of the Castillian crown were centralized in Simanca, and in the following two centuries this model was adopted by other European countries. This new type of repository continued to deal with both active and non-active records, but for the first time all the various charters, deeds, decrees, letters and grants of the crown were gathered in one place. The concentration of state archives was a step towards modern public archives that contain all records of the state and frequently many private archives.

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As government administration developed and expanded its authority, more social activities came to be regulated by the state. Thus, hospitals, universities, banks and other institutions were subject to state regulation, which led to the imposition of recordmaking and keeping practices.\textsuperscript{53} These institutions, although regulated and supported by the state, were essentially private. Even though they performed a public service, they exercised no sovereign authority. Institutional recordkeeping practices were influenced by those of the state, but the archives themselves were the property of the individual institutions who maintained responsibility for their preservation. The state had no desire at this time to acquire these archives and preserve them with other records of the government.

With the increase in state administration and the growth of private institutional recordkeeping, personal and family archives declined somewhat. Although many individuals and families continued to create and preserve their records, many documents that in the past would have been included in these private archives were now kept by the state or an established institution. This tendency for recordkeeping to become the responsibility of institutions and organizations has carried on into the twentieth century so that even private archives tend to be associated with structured entities rather than individuals or loosely affiliated groups.

\textsuperscript{53} Duranti "Odyssey" (Part II), 6.
Modern European Archives

The beginning of modern archival institutions and practices is often traced to the French Revolution. At the end of the eighteenth century, the French Convention decreed that the documents produced by the state were public property, and thus the records created prior to the Revolution were to be housed in the National and Departmental archives and made available to the public.\(^{54}\) This proclamation had two important effects: firstly it distinguished between administrative and historical records, which was an entirely new approach; and secondly it included in the state archives certain records that were of non-public origin but related to the history of the nation. Consequently the national archives came to hold archives of the ecclesiastical bodies and nobility along with the administrative records of the state.

The French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars destroyed much of the older traditional administrative structures and made the records produced under these regimes superfluous since they dealt with a system that was now defunct. The archives of defunct bodies had lost their practical relevance to the new government administrations and hence the historical significance of the records became preeminent. Thus, during the first half of the nineteenth century administrative records were preserved in their offices of creation while archival repositories preserved ‘historical’ records.\(^{55}\) Eventually of course archival institutions had to

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 6.
deal with transfers of records from the government offices and this is really the first time that we can see an archival institution acquiring material. Prior to this time the records in archives were usually created and maintained in the same place, but now there is a movement of records from their office of creation and administrative use to an archival repository where their use is primarily seen as historical. This perceived dichotomy between administrative and historical records has persisted into the twentieth century in many countries, and has to a large extent determined archival practices.

The new historical significance of archives in part caused the records to be considered as part of the larger cultural heritage of a nation, and this cultural purpose of archives is the focus of the remainder of the thesis. With the rise of the nation state in the nineteenth century there was a concurrent interest in the culture and traditions of the people of the nation. Archives, particularly private, can be seen as tangible expressions of the culture, and as such can serve scholars who create histories of the glorious past of the nation. Archives, public and private were indispensable to historians, and their pamphlets, monographs and articles, were often valued by the state for providing a historical rationale and justification for the status quo.

The concept of archives of the nation meant that records from all different types of creators were considered to be a national asset and to belong to the citizens of the state rather than individual creators. Archives came to be regarded as part of the patrimony of the nation rather than just as each creator’s legal and administrative records, and private archives were seen as an essential component
of the nation’s heritage. Consequently, for the first time private archives were acquired by many national repositories. In France, the records of the ecclesiastical bodies and various noble families were all appropriated by the National Archives as part of the national heritage to symbolize a break with the past regime and to emphasize the democracy of the present rule. The archives can then be seen as serving a political role in the creation of national heritage and identity.

Some nations, notably the Romance countries of Europe, considered private archives to be an essential facet of their cultural heritage, and thus instituted laws to guarantee their protection and preservation. In the first half of this century the legislation tended to establish a system to identify significant private archives and to monitor their export or sale outside of the country, giving the country of origin the first chance of purchase. In Italy this system functioned under the Superintendents of Archives and in France directly through the national and departmental archives. Until the 1970s, Spain did not have legislation that explicitly required the preservation of private archives; however, in 1938 the Patronatos provinciales de Archivos y Bibliotecas was founded and it encouraged citizens and institutions to deposit archives of historical significance in the provincial historical archives, while still retaining their ownership of the material.

56 For an understanding of archival legislation in a number of countries see Archivum, Volumes 18, 19 and 28. For a more in-depth analysis of the French legislation as it pertains to private archives see Ariane Ducrot “Archives Personelles et Familiales: Statut Legal et Problemes Juridiques,” La Gazette des Archives 157 (July 1992): 134-171.
58 Ibid., 46.
France, many of these private archives have been taken into the custody of the Archives Nationale, while in Italy a large number of archives remain in the trust of private individuals or organizations but under the supervision of the Superintendent having jurisdiction on the related territory. Regardless of who has physical custody, the archives themselves are considered a public good and part of the nation's patrimony which must be inventoried and made available to the public. This of course raises a number of issues regarding the rights of individual creators and those of the society.  

In the second half of the twentieth century many countries have placed archives under much wider cultural property legislation, which usually includes private archives. This trend is particularly noticeable in newly independent countries, where the documentary heritage may have been physically removed from the country at the time of independence. The repatriation of this material can often be viewed as an assertion of political independence, and a reclamation of the past. Frequently the protection of private archives is administered under a Ministry of Culture which is concerned with monuments, artifacts, documents, art, architecture and the environment. Thus, the term culture is used primarily to refer to past rather than present cultural activities. Italy, France, Spain and Portugal all developed or reorganized state organizations along these lines in the 1970s. 

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59 See Ducrot, “Archives Personelles”
Through this administration, private archives of importance are identified and inventoried so that they can be made available for research and in order to ensure that they remain intact in the country. In all cases, export or sale outside the country are prohibited.

This comprehensive and protective approach to private archives is not as evident in the English speaking world. In Great Britain, the definition of public archives is extremely narrow, applying only to those records produced directly by the national government. Hence, while private archives comprise the largest part of the archives created on British territory, there is little state control over them. The Master of the Rolls has a certain amount of authority over regional government records, which according to the British tradition are considered private records, but otherwise most private archives preservation is in the hands of private associations. In 1980, the National Heritage Act was passed which made available funds for the preservation of land, buildings, objects, and groups of objects (including archives). These are publicly administered funds but there is no government agency that actually supervises and safeguards this heritage. Likewise, there are few laws against the export of private material, nor is there any central archival institution that is designed to accommodate private archives.\(^62\) In general, the British tradition is for libraries to acquire manuscripts and private archives of national significance, but this activity is conducted in a relatively haphazard manner.

\(^62\) See the legislation for British archives, *Archivum* 28, 387.
The common theme in all these countries is the recognition that archives, along with other cultural property are valid concerns of the state, and that society should be making concerted efforts to preserve material that is part of the heritage of the nation. This awareness combined with an increase in literacy and the growth of the historical profession meant much greater attention to private archives than had previously been shown. The western European world then exhibits two basic approaches to private archives, one supporting active state involvement in the preservation of private material, and the other with little or no, direct state support. The concern for cultural property is also seen in North America, but it is manifested differently.

North American Tradition

Canada and the United States developed two different means of dealing with private archives, but in both cases these materials were seen as essential to the new society. In a sense the significance of archives in these countries can be attributed to the need for the new nations to gain legitimation in the eyes of the rest of the world. Archives provided tangible evidence of a cultured and literate population in the supposed wild barrens of the new countries. As well, archives in the New World were established just as the profession of history was developing, giving a particular slant to North American institutions. In a Canadian national publication on archives, the authors point out that

the emerging scientific approach to historical writing was closely allied with the potent forces of nationalism and liberalism, and the
establishment of accessible state-run public archives followed these forces.\textsuperscript{63}

Archival repositories in North America were recognized from their foundation as having an essential cultural role to play, and in many cases this was asserted over the administrative role of the institution.

In the United States, archival legislation concentrates almost exclusively on public records. The National Archives deals exclusively with public records, and private archives remain in the domain of librarians and manuscript curators. The papers of certain important government officials are however acquired by the National Archives, while the papers of the presidents are housed in the ‘presidential libraries’.\textsuperscript{64} This strict division between public and private material has meant that the initiative for private archive preservation has fallen into the hands of historical societies and other similar organizations. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, various historical societies throughout the United States began to recognize the importance of records for documenting the past and thus many organizations developed archival institutions to preserve historical records.\textsuperscript{65}

The historical focus of these organizations meant that the archival repository was seen essentially as a cultural institution rather than an administrative organ. Archives contributed, to the sense of a ‘new nation’, and fostered pride in the past.

\textsuperscript{63} Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, Canadian Archives: Report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, (Ottawa: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council 1980), 19.
\textsuperscript{65} For a history of archives in the United States see Richard Berner, Archival Theory and Practice
Thus, private records were actively sought as sources for the study of American history and culture, and a split developed in the archival profession and its practices between those who work with public records and those who dealt with private archives. Private archives, and the archivists who deal with them, continue to this day to serve academic research, historical and otherwise, and this has greatly effected the manner in which the archives are acquired and the types of institutions that acquire them.

Canada has also recognized the significance of archives as sources for history and for the development of national heritage, but the government has taken a more active role in preserving private material. In Canada, public authorities have almost always been involved in the preservation of heritage through "heritage institutions sponsored by all levels of government." Archival repositories are included under this designation of heritage institution, and thus, from the beginning archival institutions in Canada had a clearly stated cultural role. In most instances this cultural role involved aiding and encouraging historical research.

In 1824 the Quebec Literary and Historical Society advocated the importance of historical research on the grounds that:

it will raise us in the moral and intellectual scale of nations. It will cherish our noblest feelings of honour and patriotism, by showing that the more men become acquainted with the history of their country, the more they prize and respect both their country and themselves.

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66 Ibid., 15.
68 Literary and Historical Society of Quebec "Address to the Public" quoted in Ian Wilson, "'A Noble Dream': The Origins of the Public Archives of Canada,"
From these idealistic aims, the Public Archives, now National Archives, of Canada emerged, originally collecting pre-Confederation papers and eventually acquiring the records of Canadian government. The National Archives of Canada continues to try and “document all aspects of Canadian society, rejecting any emphasis on political life.” To achieve this, private archives are actively sought as representations of a multitude of different Canadian experiences. To an extent these aims are related to the continuing struggle to develop a “Canadian” identity. In a brief to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee the preservation of archives was advocated because:

If the archives of a nation, a government or an organization are not preserved, then the history of that nation, government, or organization will be forgotten, and the price which a people pay for the loss of their history is a misunderstanding of their roots, a confusion in their identity and the misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the nature of their country.

In the Canadian realm then, archives are seen as representations of society and as tools to facilitate further investigation into the issues of the nation.

Archival legislation mandates that the National Archives acquire both public and private material regardless of media. This approach has come to be termed “total archives” and is a concept particularly associated with Canadian archival practice. Although this is a more encompassing approach, the legislation only

70 Ibid., 21.
72 Wilfred Smith, “Total Archives: The Canadian Experience” Archives et Bibliothèque de Belgique 57 (1986): 323-346
pertains to the National Archives of Canada, and it offers no support for preserving private archives that are not acquired by the National Archives. Many provinces also have archival legislation, some of which deal with private archives, but difficulties arise when determining what is of national significance and what is more appropriately provincial material. The legislation does not give any guidance on how to determine what is “nationally significant” or any authority to require archives so designated to be deposited in the National Archives. In 1977 however, the *Cultural Property Export and Import Act* was passed which regulated the sale and export of various types of cultural property including archives.

In North America, the cultural uses of archives often seem to predominate administrative. Clearly both the United States and Canadian archival traditions are closely tied to the concept of archives as cultural heritage, but each nation approaches the preservation of material in different ways. The extent of government involvement in the preservation of private archives presumably reflects the societal conception of the state’s cultural responsibility.

**Summary**

Private archives, like their public counterparts, were originally valued for their practical use and ability to facilitate transactions and were preserved in the place of creation with no distinction made between records of current activities and those documenting acts long past. Over the centuries as society changed so too did the manner in which archives were perceived. In the nineteenth century public records came to be viewed as sources for history, and, as the property of the nation, private archives were likewise thought to belong to the larger patrimony of
the nation. This is a crucial change in the development of archives since it heralds a new type of archival endeavour. Rather than merely preserving archives for administrative purposes, archival institutions develop a sense of social responsibility that aims at preserving a broad representative documentary heritage. While the types of creators represented in archival institutions varies over the generations, the focus remains constant: archivists typically feel a responsibility to provide an unbiased and representative portrait of society.

This is clearly illustrated in the Canadian approach of "total archives," that aims at documenting all subjects of human endeavour. Although less clearly articulated in the United States, it seems that most private archival institutions feel a responsibility to provide a broad range of documentary sources. Although these aims are laudatory, in practice they are almost impossible to implement, and in fact often lead to difficult problems. This broad representative approach to private archives acquisition raises some important questions about the ownership and representation of heritage especially in societies that are becoming increasingly heterogeneous and culturally diverse. What purposes lie behind the acquisition and preservation of cultural property in general and private archives in particular, and to what extent is the state involved? The next chapter examines these questions within the larger cultural heritage context, with a focus on North America.
CHAPTER TWO
Culture and Heritage in the Twentieth Century

The responsibility of archivists to acquire and preserve a representative documentary heritage is usually an implicit assumption, and thus, the rationale behind the acquisition of private archives has rarely been articulated explicitly. That archives have cultural significance is recognized, but what exactly it consists of and to whom it is of most importance is not often examined in great detail. The fact that many countries in the twentieth century have developed laws to protect archives would seem to indicate their perceived value by the society--at least in democratic nations where legislation is supposed to represent the will of the people. Frequently archives come under the aegis of general legislation pertaining to the larger cultural heritage of the nation. This legislative trend can be seen as part of many governments' attempts to define and control the nation's culture, for a variety of purposes, through laws and state supported institutions. The control of cultural heritage is often related to the creation or fostering of a national heritage and identity which aims to create a cohesive social unit out of any number of disparate traditions. Through objects, rituals, or representations of the shared past, a collective identity can be created which ideally, every individual of the nation can

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1 Archival literature in the twentieth century often focuses on government or corporate records, presumably because these are the records that are inundating the archives on a daily basis. When attention is paid to private archives it is usually on a specific category such as labour, ethnic or women’s archives. Valuable as these works are, they are usually case studies of particular activities and do not address many of the larger social issues involved in acquiring private material.
participate in and identify with. Eric Hobsbawm calls these "invented traditions" which are:

a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.²

To achieve this continuity, governments acquire, preserve and protect artifacts, monuments, art, and archives created by individuals or organizations throughout the country which will contribute to the understanding of heritage. Thus, legislation is often concerned with cultural property, including archives, rather than other less tangible forms of cultural expression, and this property is typically the responsibility of cultural institutions.

Cultural Institutions

The term cultural institutions can encompass an enormous number of social entities ranging from the family to a national theatre company, but this general definition is too wide to be practicable in this discussion. First the meaning of cultural institution must be limited to a purposefully organized entity, rather than one that organically develops such as the family. Next a distinction must be drawn between institutions of civil and political society. Keith Tester has stated that "to

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²Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," The Invention of Tradition, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1. Hobsbawm argues that many traditions in the twentieth century are of very recent origin, such as Christmas carols or the British monarchy's pageantry, and are deliberately created to foster social cohesiveness. Although Hobsbawm concentrates on the activities themselves, it is clear that cultural objects can play a significant role in these rituals.
talk of civil society has conventionally meant to distinguish the milieu of free humanity from the milieu of reification produced either by nature or by the state.”

In this sense, civil society is comprised of those activities, relations and organizations that are either 1) not natural and organic, such as the family, or 2) not imposed by the state, such as police forces. Of course, since many cultural institutions are founded and supported by the state, it is necessary to draw a clearer distinction by claiming that cultural institutions are not “agencies specifically charged with social control.”

Ivan Karp discusses the concept of civil society with particular reference to museums:

Museums and communities make up only a portion of civil society, the complex of social entities in which we act out our lives and through which we fashion our identity. Civil society is a perennial topic in the social sciences and political theory .... The best recent discussions of civil society have been inspired by the way Antonio Gramsci defines the functional differences between civil society and political society. For Gramsci the institutions of political society exercise coercion and control, while civil society creates hegemony through the production of cultural and moral systems that legitimize the existing social order. From this point of view, the cultural parallel to coercion and control is hegemonic relations. If Gramsci were writing in the 1990s, I believe that he would think of civil society both as the site for the production of hegemony, that is, as an intellectual and moral commitment to the way society is ordered and governed, and as a site for contesting assertions about who has the right to rule and to define the different identities in society.

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5 Ibid., 4.
Using Karp's discussion of museums and civil society we can say that, cultural institutions, such as archives and museums, have traditionally been the institutions within civil society that allow for the preservation and representation of culture, rather than its production. Thus, cultural institutions in this sense can be distinguished from the so-called 'cultural industries' which are concerned with the active production and not just dissemination of culture. This distinction enables us to differentiate between cultural institutions such as museums and cultural industries such as broadcasting. Cultural institutions then define identities through cultural objects, such as art, archives and artifacts, and their interpretation, but are not involved in the creation of the objects themselves. Of course this definition is being challenged in many new cultural institutions which do have live displays and exhibits which purposely intend to create, or recreate, cultural objects and cultural activities. Despite these innovations, it is relatively safe to claim that cultural institutions are not the primary place for the production of cultural products and activities, but do have a responsibility for the preservation and display of these cultural objects.

It is the element of preservation that is particularly noteworthy, since the objects to be preserved are selected from among all others as having cultural significance and meaning. However, "the process and underlying principles of

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selection for display and collection are rarely discussed and shared with the public" and thus, the other objects, documents or buildings that are not consciously preserved, and that therefore disappear from the cultural heritage of society, are generally considered as insignificant. Cultural institutions then are responsible for the preservation of society's cultural heritage, and in most cases this is achieved through physical preservation of cultural property.

**Cultural Property**

The definition and nature of cultural property is problematic and raises many issues that professionals in the museum and art world have been wrestling with for the past twenty years. At its broadest conception cultural property refers to both the tangible remains of the past; monuments, artifacts, art and documents, as well as to the perceptions of the past as represented in information, myths and stories used to transmit the past. Thus, the past and its relationship to the present is central to the concept of cultural property, and inherent within the term cultural property is the assumption that it is possible to own or possess 'the past' in all its many forms. This means not only physical custody but also the control of representations of the past and the 'use' of the past in research and other pursuits. In the twentieth century, cultural property has become a topic of great debate.

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Whether it is material appropriated by a colonial power, a biased museum exhibit, or control over access to objects, cultural property has become the subject of international concern. At the centre of the maelstrom surrounding cultural property is the concept of ownership, and much discussion is devoted to the question: who owns the past? Karen Warren has stated that there are three answers to this question:

(1) everyone owns the past since the past is the common heritage of all; it is ‘humanity’s past; (2) Some specific group (e.g., indigenous people, scholars, collectors, museums, nations) owns the past since that group speaks for or represents the important values that are at stake in the debate over cultural properties; and (3) No one owns the past since the past is not really the sort of thing that is ownable.  

People who believe that human beings possess a common heritage shared by all regardless of race, culture, or society are proponents of the first view. In this sense, all remains and perceptions of the past have meaning and importance for all members of humanity. In national legislation this is the view that is most commonly adopted; that is, the cultural heritage of distinct groups within the nation is, in fact, the common heritage of all citizens of the state, as in Australia, where aboriginal artifacts and sacred sites are viewed by the government as belonging to all citizens of the nation. From an international perspective however, claims to universal heritage outweigh purely national interests, so that the same distinct group in a nation shares its cultural property not only with the rest of its country

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9 Ibid., 3.
of origin but also with the entire world. This belief is often used to support the claims of foreign ownership of cultural property; such as preservation of the Elgin Marbles which were removed from the Acropolis in the British Museum. If the property belongs to all of humanity the location of preservation is not essential. As long as the past is preserved and made accessible to all, the country of ownership is irrelevant. This argument presupposes that the fact of belonging to the human race is greater than any more fleeting circumstances such as nationality, race, religion, gender or class.\textsuperscript{11} At heart this view accepts the larger notion of the global village and undervalues the particular social, political and economic context of creation and use. In most cases cultural property, when viewed as part of the universal human heritage, is preserved and displayed in a cultural institution, and, therefore, not only has it been decontextualized by removal from its culture of origin, it has also been removed from active cultural use and interaction and placed as an inactive representative of a given time and place.

The second answer, that the past belongs to specific groups, places greater emphasis on the specific contextuality of the remains or perceptions of the past. Thus, the creator of the objects or the successor is the rightful owner of this part of the past. In this view, the society of origin has both a legal claim to the property, as the society in which the property was created, and a moral claim, in which the

\textsuperscript{11} As Warren points out many scholars of today believe that individuals can only be understood in light of their particular gender, race, class, marital status, sexual preference etc., and they “argue against ‘abstract individualism,’ that is, the view that humans can meaningfully be said to exist independent of and abstracted from any social, historical circumstances.”(5-6).
property represents a part of the patrimony of the nation and the absence of it from the country, deprives citizens of access to their cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{12} For proponents of this view tangible evidence of the past can be understood better, by scholars and citizens, in its context of creation and will have more meaning and significance for certain groups than for others. This argument is made for the restitution of cultural properties to countries of origin, for example, the return of the Elgin marbles to Greece. One interesting facet of this view is that in this argument it is possible to conceive of the cultural property being returned to the society of origin where it will continue to play an active part in the cultural life of that society. Thus, sacred objects returned to North American natives, would not be placed on display as examples of the "past," but incorporated into the rituals for which they were originally created, which of course may include the eventual deterioration of the object.\textsuperscript{13}

The last answer, that the past belongs to no one, is the simplest to articulate, but also the most difficult to implement in the current conceptual and legal framework of cultural institutions. The past is intangible and as such cannot be possessed or owned, and cannot be successfully recreated or captured in any way. While this answer is true in terms of the "past" as represented by past events, activities, and ways of life, the objects of the past can quite clearly be owned, and this creates a dichotomy between the past as part of a cultural continuum, and the

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 8-9.
past as it is represented in tangible remains.¹⁴ Cultures evolve and change over time, and yet through the preservation of objects and perceptions of the past, these cultures are seemingly frozen in time. Of course in western society, it is common even at the individual level to preserve souvenirs or mementos of the past, for practical or sentimental reasons, but certain societies do not place emphasis on the preservation of objects or exact records of the past. Adrienne Kaeppler in her discussion of Pacific rim museums notes:

Objects are created from memory and exist as processes in the minds of artists. Objects are a part of a socially constructed reality. They are forms that arise from oral traditions and artistic memory that are the most basic part of culture. In many areas, objects are made, used and destroyed, and that destruction is part of their function and life cycle.¹⁵

Should cultural institutions then attempt to preserve cultural property against the natural tendency of the creators? The answer of course depends upon who is seen to possess or own, that culture: all of humanity, scholars, the larger nation, or the specific group.

It becomes necessary to rethink the debate surrounding cultural property, focusing more on “custodianship” or “guardianship” rather than ownership of cultural property. These terms are more flexible than ownership and accommodate concepts of cultural property that cannot be physically “owned,” such as oral transmission of memory. As well, guardianship implies the watchful preservation

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of the past rather than an active manipulation of it, and recognizes that there are a multiplicity of interests in the past all of which should be considered in trying to resolve cultural property issues. Warren has suggested that cultural property issues must be approached from "a nonhierarchical, nonadversarial perspective" that would allow participants to employ a "compromise or consensus model of conflict resolution" rather than insisting on strict win-lose model that focuses essentially on the ownership and control of objects by one party in the dispute.¹⁶

In the acquisition of private archives the concept of ownership is still much used, since the archival institution may acquire custody of material but the creator may continue to have certain proprietary rights over the material, such as intellectual copyright or control over access. Depending on the legislation of the country, ownership and physical custody may still reside with the creator but the ability to control access, sell, rearrange or destroy the archives is prohibited, and thus the state in fact has true ownership and control.¹⁷ In this way archivists have examined the issue of ownership and made a concerted effort to balance the rights of the creator with those of the larger state, but they have not challenged the conceptual framework that considers ownership of the "past" as a possibility.

¹⁷ Italy is a good example of state involvement in private archives. If an archives considered to have national importance remains in private custody, the owner is required to have the material inventoried by a state archivist, make the material accessible to researchers, and can in no way rearrange, destroy or sell any of the documents, (Decreto n. 1409, 30 settembre 1963, Titolo IV, Capo II). For an excellent discussion of the legal problems of private archives see Ducrot, "Archives Personelles."
Private archives, as cultural property, can be viewed both as a corporeal object and as a perception of the past. Because archives are composed of physically recorded information, they have the ability to communicate both the informational content recorded by the creator and information conveyed by the form of the material. This means that every document has two sources of interpretation for the events that it bears witness to; the one offered by the creator as it is embodied in the content of the document, and the interpretation of anyone else viewing the document as evidence of actions. Unlike other cultural property objects, a document has the ability to speak for itself. A missionary’s report to a Church official on an Amazonian tribe, is both a physical object and relic of the past, as well as providing one interpretation of the past activities of the tribe and the Church. In private archives the creator is speaking directly for his or herself and is not initially subject to outside interpretation. Thus, the archives of the missionary represents his own thoughts, beliefs and activities as he sees them, rather than as the state or a biographer or historian in a hundred years would interpret them. Archives are then articulate cultural property, but not objective interpretations of the past, since the creator’s own conceptual framework informs his views and this is faithfully recorded by the archives. However, like all cultural property, archives are understood differently in different contexts and have different meanings for different people and thus, as physical custody of private

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18 In recent years, with the advent of new information technology, archivists have begun to discuss the “post-custodial” age, in which archivists manage information systems rather than physical records. In this case, the importance of the physical object is decreased, but is still a component of the archive.
archives moves, the perception of the past that they represent is likewise altered. The missionary report signifies different things depending on whether it is held in the Brazilian or Portuguese national archives, a missionary archives or in the hands of the tribe itself. The location of preservation of cultural property indicates a great deal about power relations and the ideologies of the groups involved.

Location and presentation, although integral to the meaning of cultural property, does not exclude the possibility of other interpretations since each individual employs his or her own conceptual framework in the interpretative process. Each object, document or monument is then interpreted by every individual differently depending upon “their prior experiences ... culturally learned beliefs, values and perceptions.” Edwina Taborsky discusses these discursive meanings of cultural property:

First, the meaning of an object, which becomes a sign when we assign meaning to it, appears only within a discursive interaction of the observer with the object. Second, the observer is always ‘grounded’ in a specific society, which provides him with a conceptual base which he uses for developing meaning. There is no such thing as a ‘free’ or cognitively unattached observer. Therefore, we are always dealing with two societies in the creation of meaning, the original society and the museum society.

To this must be added the culture of the observer which may well differ from that of either the society of creation or of the museum where the object resides. Although the object acquires new meanings and significance in different contexts, it is always dependent upon the audience to interpret it. Even in cases where

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interpretation is provided by the cultural institution, individual members of the audience will interpret the objects and the exhibition dialogue according to their own conceptual framework. Thus, it is possible to see cultural institutions as both sites for the creation of, and resistance to, hegemony, with cultural property acting as the foci of alternate interpretations. Hegemony here refers to the "exercise of indirect power as exemplified in ... civil institutions," thus concentrating on the role of consent in the creation of dominant ideology and power relations. 21

While archivists have always been very aware of the importance of context, this has usually been a guiding principle primarily for dealing with fonds once they have been acquired, the focus is on the context of creation not of preservation. 22

What emerges from an investigation into the broader realm of cultural property, is a recognition of the importance of where fonds reside and how they are presented. As some museum professionals point out, context of representation is vital:


22 Of course archivists have recognized the importance of respecting mandates and collecting practices of other institutions but rarely have they analyzed what it means for archival institutions to appropriate the cultural property of foreign or minority cultures. This practice is acceptable as long as the material acquired corresponds to the institutional collecting policy and does not infringe on any other institutional mandate. Timothy Ericson ("At the 'rim of creative dissatisfaction': Archivists and Acquisition Development," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-92): 66-77) has eloquently addressed the problems of archival acquisition from the perspective of efficiency but has not delved into the underlying problems of perception and recontextualization that occur when archives are removed from their context of creation. In recent years more attention has been paid to representation through the appraisal process and the language employed in descriptive aids, and this indicates a growing awareness that archivists do more than acquire and preserve; they also present the past, see Brien Brothman "Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice," *Archivaria* 32 (Fall 1991): 78-100.
Authenticity is not about factuality or reality. It is about authority. Objects have no authority; people do. It is the people on the exhibition team who must make a judgment about how to tell about the past. Authenticity-authority-enforces the social contract between the audience and the museum, a socially agreed-upon reality.\(^{23}\)

Authenticity as it used in this sense does not refer to the legal validity of the object or its genuineness, that is, being what it purports to be. Instead authenticity in this case refers to the value and creditability of the object as a representative of the past. This is cultural authenticity, that the object speaks for the culture with a legitimate and recognizable voice.

Although the authors are concerned with museum exhibits, a similar contract exists between archival institutions and their public. As discussed in the previous chapter, location of preservation was the deciding factor in designating documents as archival. The mere fact of material being held within an archival repository imbues it with a sense of importance, it has been selected from all other documents to be preserved as part of our heritage. Likewise, popular perceptions of archival institutions usually include the view that they are bastions of fact and reality.\(^{24}\) Thus, authority is given to archives and this is extended to the perceptions of the past that they offer, and this authority in turn causes the past presented by the archives to be considered as authentic, or a believable representation, and other versions less so. The manner in which fonds are described and made accessible to the public also have important effects on the presentation of the past. Thus, it can

\(^{23}\) Spencer Crew and James E. Sims “Locating Authenticity: Fragments of a Dialogue,” Exhibiting Cultures, 163.

be argued that acquisition, as well as arrangement and description, are all practices which contribute to the creation of a specific presentation of the past, and this can function to alter the raw material of a collective societal memory.

**Memory**

Memory can be described as: "a faculty constituting our consciousness and our self-awareness, (and) as the means by which the coherence of our identity and our history is constructed and sustained." This definition is equally applicable to the collective entity and its identity as it is represented by any national or other group. Collective memory then refers to those common beliefs and ideas held by many individuals that produces a sense of social cohesiveness and community.

It is through memory, framed within a narrative structure, that we reconstruct the past and sustain the present. However, memory is not an exact or consistent force, it is subject both to human forgetfulness, and to external manipulation. Consequently the past can be reconstructed in different ways according to different ideologies.

Richard Terdiman claims that cultural property, because of its relationship to the past, frequently acts as a mnemonic trigger, prompting the individual to begin the process of remembering. A photograph provides visual stimuli which incites the mental process of remembering the event depicted. This process is equally true at a collective level, where an object can trigger memory in a large number of

people, such as the film of the Kennedy assassination. Although each individual may have his or her own distinct memory, some sort of consensus is reached within the group and a particular version of the past is accepted as the "real" memory.28 Indeed, because of symbolic associations, objects, documents, or places can trigger memories of events which have not actually been experienced by the individual, but which are part of the larger cultural memory. Jack Kugelmass describes these as Sites of memory—museums, archives, festivals (which) because they are no longer milieux de memoire, or real environments of memory ... are not subtle: indeed, their popular appeal is based on the fact that narrative tropes replaced the nuanced realness of social and cultural life.29

To an extent this shaping of collective memory occurs through the control of cultural property. If the objects and perceptions of the past are controlled by a specific group, they effectively control the presentation of the past, other versions may exist but they are not supported. Maurice Halbwachs writing about collective memory points out that

past events read about in books and taught and learned in schools are selected, combined and evaluated in accord with necessities and rules not imposed on the groups that had through time guarded them as a living trust. General history starts only when tradition ends and the social memory is fading or breaking up.30

Of course memory can act in the reverse way as a challenge to hegemony, by remembering other discourses and possibilities which offer alternatives to the

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28 LeGoff, "History and Memory," 9.
29 Jack Kugelmass, "The Rites of the Tribe: American Jewish Tourism in Poland," Museums and Communities, 413.
current order. To a large extent the potential of alternate memories depends upon how effectively memory is controlled.

In most cases this control of memory is exerted by the dominant group within society and "dominance, of course, is itself sustained by memory-- but a selective highly ideologized form of recollection that brackets fully as much as it restores." Through selective acquisition and presentation of cultural property, cultural institutions contribute to this process of public memory-making. Public memory is usually the dominant/state version, which is given authority through preservation and presentation in cultural institutions. Terry Eastwood has discussed archivists' role in memory making, and concluded that the appraisal of "archival documents aims to bring values other than administrative ones to bear in the determination of what will exist to stimulate memory." Certainly, in recent years archivists have attempted to include underrepresented groups in the documentary heritage, however this is frequently carried out under the auspices of the state, by state archivists. This does not mean that the memory created in this manner is automatically biased, or that the archivists are necessarily representatives of the dominant group. However, the archives which are acquired are probably chosen to complement the public records in the institution and thus, are unlikely to challenge the status quo. Even those archives which offer challenges to the

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32 Ibid. 20.
dominant memory may seem to be marginalized since they are only one small variation on a much larger canvas.

If the status quo can be sustained though memory, it is equally possible for memory to act as a tool of resistance to the dominant ideology. Memory can offer other alternatives and discourses to the hegemony and challenge any authority that is based upon a particular version of the past. By the control of cultural property, cultural institutions, including archives, can become sites of resistance rather than repression. To achieve an effective alternative to dominant memory, not only the inclusion of other memories, but also involvement in how they are presented is required. The appropriation of private archives by state institutions often makes this type of involvement impossible. Cultural property has the potential to be interpreted in a number of different ways, all of which may offer different visions of the past, but if is held within state institutions its meaning may be altered and its significance marginalized. Rather than offering alternative memories, cultural property in state institutions can reinforce the authority of the state by allowing the state to seem inclusive of all versions of the past, without requiring any change to current practices, and through the selective acquisition of cultural property which provides collusion with state ideology.

**State Control and National Identity**

Benedict Anderson has defined the nation as

34 For example the National Archives of Canada divides private archives acquisition into categories such as ethnic, labour or women, which arguably separates these groups from mainstream Canadian culture.
"an imagined political community-- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion .... The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations .... it is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which the Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm .... it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship."

If we accept Anderson's definition then we see nation not as an organic entity derived from natural connections, but rather as a somewhat artificial construct that has been consciously developed. By what means is this sense of nation developed and what role does cultural property play in its creation and continuance?

At the heart of many national identities is the sense of common heritage or a shared understanding of the past. The state may use the past to create a cohesive social unit out of any number of disparate traditions. Thus, whatever is the common ground in the past, such as religion, revolution, economics, immigration, and so on, becomes a central part of the national identity. The past is usually seen as an heroic time for the nation and the pride instilled because of this view is supposed to inform the present and to provide a sense of continuity. Each society "extract(s) from the past what gives the present the possibility of lasting and of operating creatively in the future." The past as reality is unattainable, but

through tradition, artifacts and information about the past, aspects of the past can be recovered and used to give meaning to the present. For the state, focus on the past is one means of validating the status quo, and Jacques LeGoff has argued that the "cult of the past accompanies social conservatism." By creating a macro-national identity focused primarily on the past, the culture and society can become stagnant and unwilling to accept change or adapt to a new environment; this is in contrast to the process whereby a society retains only what it needs of the past to survive. National identity in this way can be frozen at the time of creation and become exclusionary, since it will not include new social or cultural elements in its makeup.

National identities can grow and change. Raymond Williams has noted that over time the dominant culture/identity will eventually absorb fringe and minority elements to contain them within its ideologically acceptable limits. Thus, over time Canada has established an official policy of multiculturalism that promotes a national identity which embraces a wide range of histories and cultures, this identity is a change from an earlier one based upon ties to Britain and France. Cultural property, because of its symbolic significance, and association with the past is involved in the creation of national identity, particularly as this identity is displayed in public culture.

Association of British Columbia 1990), 4.
37 LeGoff, History and Memory, 16.
In his discussion of Quebec's *patrimoine*, Richard Handler draws a link between "things," that is, cultural property, and the collective identity of the people of a nation.\(^3^9\) What Handler is suggesting, is that identity, in this case a collective one, can be objectified and therefore possessed. If the "past," which unites the people of a country, cannot be frozen or recaptured in its entirety, it is at least possible to possess and preserve the artifacts of that common past. This view suggests that possessions have come to replace "way of life" as a cultural differentiator. The possession of a cultural artifact is more closely linked to identity than the activity that produced the object, or the purpose for which the object was created. This view is probably related to our increasingly litigious and consumer oriented society in which it is easier to control and regulate objects than lifestyle. Governments have difficulty in compelling citizens to continue to live in a specific cultural manner, but they can preserve and protect the artifact that represents that passing way of life.\(^4^0\) As cultures change, increasingly rapidly with the advent of


\(^{4^0}\) The amount of state involvement in lifestyle is highly debatable. The state does regulate behaviour through laws prohibiting the use of narcotics, curtailing homosexual activity, requiring minimum education and providing financial incentives for marriage and children, and this legislation does result in a specific type of culture. However, the state does not require that all women continue to work at home, or that plains natives continue to live in tipis, or forbid French citizens to buy bread at the supermarket instead of the bakery. Although the state can, to an extent, regulate cultural activity it cannot insist upon keeping the society in stasis, cultural changes will occur and these must be incorporated by the government or it will likely be replaced. In this sense, Hobsbawm's "invented traditions" are secular initiatives by the state that affirms its authority at the same time that they attempt to establish a sense of continuity with the past.
new technologies, older traditions and cultural objects are replaced with new ones and the traditional connections between members of a society break down. Hobsbawm has suggested that invented traditions will "occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed," and the aim of these invented traditions is to establish continuity with the past and a sense of community in the present.41

Another means of fostering social cohesion and preserving the past is to establish cultural institutions in which cultural continuity is displayed and the 'national identity' is developed.

In France after the Revolution, a "French" culture was actively fostered and equated with national identity. The new Archives Nationale was not just an administrative agency but a cultural institution that included the records of private and public creators of the ancien regime, and these materials were made available to the citizens as part of their patrimony.42 Likewise the Louvre was conceived as a national museum, which illustrated the artistic development of western civilization throughout the ages, culminating in nineteenth century France. Its design was intended to convey the sense of a ceremonial monument, in which secular rituals, that is, the appreciation of art, would bind together the community.43 Like the

41 Hobsbawn, "Inventing Traditions," 4.
42 Duranti ( "Ideology of Appraisal") points out that public archival repositories were not a creation of the French republic, but had always been a facet of representative governments, starting in ancient Greece (7-8). The distinction of the Archives Nationales was its focus on non-current records, which were the tangible remains of the past, i.e. cultural property.
Archives Nationales, the Louvre was also a public institution available to all citizens regardless of class or education, and in this sense it also dramatized the fall of the ancien regime and the creation of the new republican state. Thus, both the Louvre and the archives acted as strong political statements, seemingly creating a classless society based on equality, but giving “citizenship and civic virtue a content without having to redistribute real power.”

National identity is fostered in cultural institutions in a variety of ways; through presentations of a homogeneous culture, recreation of a glorious past, celebration of a multicultural state, pride in current or predicted accomplishments (usually technological), or a focus on traditional heritage and activities. Sometimes national identity can be created in isolation but frequently it involves reference to other nations and international interactions. For example, implicit in the Louvre presentation was the belief that the French people were the heirs of the great cultural traditions of the Greeks and Romans, Christianity and Renaissance civilizations. The acquisition and exhibition of cultural property from other nations had been subsumed into a larger cultural milieu and displayed as though it were naturally part of France’s patrimony. This appropriation of other cultures and inclusion into a foreign nation’s cultural heritage is relatively common, particularly during the nineteenth century in the period of imperial expansion. It is equally common to establish identity in contrast to another collective entity. In nineteenth-century British exhibitions and museum collections, this was accomplished “by

44 Ibid., 93-94.
emphasizing the relative difference of the black colonized subject ... (which) reinforced the illusion of a homogeneous British culture.\textsuperscript{45}

In multicultural societies, the issue of national identity is even more volatile since dominant cultures may be presented as the only national heritage, or cultural property of a specific minority group may be acquired and identified as 'national.' An example of the first case occurs in the national museum of Fiji, where ninety-nine percent of the displays are related to the cultural property of native Fijians although they form less than half of the total population.\textsuperscript{46} Canada offers some interesting examples of the second phenomenon, cultural appropriation. The artifacts and art of North West Coast indigenous people has often been removed from its original context and placed in national institutions as examples of "Canadian" culture. In actuality only a minute percentage of the population has any natural cultural connection with these objects, so although it is a facet of Canadian culture it can hardly be said to represent all Canadians.\textsuperscript{47}

All these views presuppose that a national identity, linked to culture, actually exists, and that it is a valuable concept that should be nurtured and encouraged. In twentieth century society, can a national identity, common to all members of country be said to exist, and if so, is it a useful construct? It is equally difficult to

\textsuperscript{46} Kaeppler, "Paradise Regained," 30-33.
\textsuperscript{47} In fact a recent promotional campaign based on Canadian history offers brief segments of important events or personages (Laura Secord, Marshall McLuhan) and refers to them as 'part of our heritage' (emphasis mine). It is becomingly clear that these distinctions are necessary in a multicultural society with a diverse heritage.
conceive of a national identity that adequately encompasses all groups within the multicultural and pluralistic societies of the modern world. Many nations of today, notably African countries, are based on geographical boundaries that have little relation to the cultural groups that they encompass and this is equally important for nations like Canada that have a diverse culture due to high rates of immigration. Consequently a national cultural identity based on geo-political state is often troublesome.

Geography, physical and human, is indeed a potent force in our world and one that has traditionally had much significance for the concept of identity, both at the individual and collective level. The existence of regional and local cultures within a larger geographic state is common, and the imposition of a geographic national identity is often at the expense of these smaller more cultural identities. With increasing globalization of the economy there is a concurrent transformation of human geography along economic rather than cultural or linguistic lines. Thus, manufacturing or financial centres in disparate continents may be bound to each other by economic ties much more closely than to their own neighbouring regions. Kevin Robbins has remarked that:

This process of international restructuration is bringing change not only to the space economy, but to imaginary spaces as well. As territories are transformed, so too are the spaces of identity.48

As supranational blocs, such as the European Community, develop, national boundaries may have less significance, and regional or local community identities may come to replace the unwieldy national concept.\(^{49}\) In light of these changes in political and economic boundaries, the concept of national identity, as it is linked to a particular political and geographic state as well as its nostalgic focus on the past, competes with other smaller limited identities for recognition.

Public cultural institutions are established and supported by the state, and though they are not directly administered by the state they are inevitably connected to the government. To begin with, it is politicians who create the legislation that will govern these institutions, even if they are advised by professionals in the private sector. Naturally the legislation will reflect the dominant viewpoint and ideology of society, and this will in turn affect the practices of the cultural institutions. Ideally of course the archivist or museum curator will attempt appraisal and acquisition of material based on the "complex realities of actual society, rather than conform to some overarching ideology."\(^{50}\) The important point is that the archivist must attempt to capture more than one "reality." Within modern society the challenge it to capture as many diverse viewpoints of society as

\(^{49}\) Ibid., Robbins terms this ‘cultural localism’ and claims that “there is a growing interest in the embeddedness of life histories within the boundaries of place, and with the continuities of identity and community through local memory and history,” 34. Presumably it is easier to identify and perpetuate traditions, continuity with the past, at a local level where, even if not culturally homogeneous, there is common geography and more manageable shared past to work with.

\(^{50}\) Terry Cook, “Mind Over Matter,” The Archival Imagination; Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor, ed. by Barbara Craig (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists 1992), 49.
possible, rather than simply focussing on the dominant. Perhaps this aim is not inconceivable for a private institution, but those that are specifically established as national institutions and have mandates to represent “national” culture are far more likely to be involved in perpetrating state ideology. Hans Booms has remarked on this tendency in East German archives, where a theory of appraisal was developed based on the principles of dialectic materialism and the belief that the GDR represented the highest stage of socialism. 51

It can also be argued that the state controls cultural appreciation and interpretation both by designating certain institutions and their holdings as worthy of being visited and through the curriculum of a state-run education system. 52 Thus, public cultural institutions implicitly endorse the views and ideology of the state and frequently take an active role in creating the state approved national heritage.

Archival institutions, since they are less involved in the presentation of cultural property through exhibits, often avoid some of these overt ideological interpretations. Although archival institutions lend authority to the archives preserved, the balance of interpretation lies greatly with the individual user, who is left to interpret the material with little guidance from the archivist. In fact the main way in which archival repositories can contribute to the formation of national

identity or support state ideologies is through their acquisition policies. By determining who is depicted in the documentary heritage and where their archives will be preserved archivists are involved in interpretative representation of society.

**Representation**

It is generally accepted that cultural institutions are involved in the representation of society, both through the acquisition and the presentation of cultural property. However, what is meant by the term representation? The easiest definition is to assume that representation in this case means examples or depictions of society. Thus, the acquisition of a variety of different types of cultural property is intended to recreate on a small scale a model of society and its interactions. The aim is an accurate replica, or at least a “representative” sample of society. In another sense cultural property can be seen as the symbolic embodiment of the society. Instead of offering a literal representation, cultural property can evoke a sense of the nature of the society, in other words the flag can stand in for the nation. Cultural institutions are involved in both types of representation.

The first goal, a representative portrait of society, is essentially unachievable since it would be impossible to capture all facets of a society and then to present them and their interrelationships accurately. By their nature cultural institutions, because of their focus on cultural property, tend to look to the past rather than capture current society. As Gaby Potter states

The curatorial approach is centered on the object, from which curators extrapolate a more general historical statement. They rarely reverse the process, to look at the whole material culture and to choose
representative artefacts from it, relying instead on social process and material degradation to make selections. This is evident in the absence of a coherent approach to contemporary life, and a strategy for collecting artefacts for the period in which we live.\textsuperscript{53} Few cultural institutions actively acquire the cultural products or texts of late twentieth century culture, frequently because these objects are still in active use and therefore do not yet need to be preserved. As Douglas Newton points out “the culture of the past, which is generally what ‘preservation’ is aimed at, contains a great deal that is not necessarily acceptable as behaviour today.”\textsuperscript{54} Traditionally curators and archivists have also only acquired objects that are clearly of importance to society and this is thought to be discernible only after sufficient time has passed to achieve a certain perspective. Of course once time passes, any decision to acquire cultural property is going to involve an interpretation of the past based on current principles and values.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{53} Potter, “Putting Your House in Order,” 104
\textsuperscript{54} Newton, “Old Wine,” 274.
\textsuperscript{55} Hans Booms has addressed this problem in “Überlieferungsbildung.” There are two courses of action to rectify this situation: attempt to base acquisition decisions on the values and attitudes of the society which created the object; wait and see what survives of the culture and hope that this is an adequate representation of the social and cultural beliefs and attitudes. The first option is useful but probably impracticable since it would be virtually impossible for anyone to leave behind their own social and cultural conceptual framework and adopt one that might be radically different. The wait and see attitude means that the decision of what is valuable is left up to the society of creation, which ensure adequate representation of the dominant group but does not guarantee adequate representation for all. This method is obviously biased in favour of those groups which produce and place value on the preservation of cultural property. Although the gaps in documentation or cultural products may tell us something about underrepresented groups and existing power relations it does not offer any detailed understanding of these groups, and this is not always because evidence did not exist.
Even if cultural institutions limit their focus to a particular time and place it will still be extremely difficult to claim adequate documentation for all segments of society. Those institutions that focus solely on a specific group within society have a somewhat easier task, but even they will never achieve perfect representation. Karp states that cultural institutions "that claim to present true and authentic pictures of people and their cultures ... are hegemonic practices that reproduce the values and privileges of the center." Consequently by attempting to capture even a small subgroup within a nation, only certain voices will be heard and only some views represented. The result of the practice is often to canonize what is preserved in cultural institutions and limit acceptable and "authentic" cultural practice; only those activities and objects presented in cultural institutions are accurate representations of the past, others are inauthentic deviations.

Many cultural institutions of course do not claim to be actively involved in the representation and documentation of society as a whole, rather, they concentrate on a specific subgroup or aspect of the larger society. However, many national institutions do have the mandate to represent the entire society of the country, a seemingly impossible task. As state institutions however, national archives are naturally going to reflect the dominant groups within society. Thus, we can see in the early part of this century a clear focus in North American archival

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57 Michael Ames has discussed this problem in regards to Museum of Anthropology programs which do not involve "traditional" native behavior or images, see Ames, "Cultural Empowerment and Museums: opening up anthropology through collaboration," Objects of Knowledge, 169-170.
institutions on rich, white, northern European males. As the century progressed there was a greater effort to include previously underrepresented groups, such as blacks, women, and the working class. The archives and material culture of these groups continue to be acquired and interpreted by the dominant class, so representation often remains biased.

Is it even reasonable to expect cultural institutions to preserve a representative view of society? Perhaps no single institution can do it, certainly no institution can claim to hold the history of an entire nation, nor should its mandate state this as an objective. Possibly a representative view of society is unachievable even if the representations are spread throughout a diverse number of institutions. But that does not make it any less admirable or necessary as an objective. Cultural institutions do have a responsibility to attempt to provide a cultural heritage that is representative and one that has meaning and significance for all the diverse groups within society. Understanding of culture is essential to understanding of self, as Will Kymlicka asserts:

Membership in a culture is qualitatively different from membership in other associations, since our language and culture provide the context within which we make choices. Loss of cultural membership, therefore, is a profound harm that reduces one's very ability to make meaningful choices.

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Thus, for cultural institutions to ignore diverse elements of society and different cultures is to deny these groups a sense of belonging, both to their cultural group and to the larger society.

Clearly the acquisition of private archives is an essential component of preserving a representative documentary heritage. It is these private archives that provide widely different viewpoints of society and offer a myriad of different types of cultural heritage. This needs to be a clearly stated objective of all cultural institutions, so that by working cooperatively it might be possible to achieve a more representative heritage. The difficulty is in determining how best to achieve a more representative view, and the answer might lie in allowing these different groups greater control over their own cultural property and representation.

Summary

One clear issue that emerges from the previous discussion is the difficulty involved in the acquisition of cultural property by cultural institutions. By acquiring some material and ignoring other, by presentations and display, and by control of access, cultural institutions are political forces that can either affirm or challenge the status quo and existing cultural perceptions. Cultural property in its context of creation or use, does not raise contentious issues, it is only when it has been acquired by a cultural institution that the cultural property debate begins. If objects remain with their creator, the ownership of cultural property is clear cut, and the display or representation of the culture through the object is not an issue. For

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instance, a sacred object in the custody an Australian aboriginal is both legally and culturally in its appropriate context.

Despite these difficulties, the preservation of cultural heritage is a valid and important enterprise, since it is through these varying pasts that alternate discourses to the present can be imagined. Present and future societies are undeniably shaped by the past and thus, it is imperative that we attempt to preserve more than just the cultural property of the dominant groups. In the archival realm this means attempting to preserve a broad representative view of society. That this can be achieved entirely by state institutions is doubtful, so alternatives need to be developed which include the participation of all institutions as well as non-dominant groups. The solution involves not only collecting the cultural property of minority groups but also involving these groups in the presentation and interpretation of their culture.

Having examined the issues concerning cultural heritage and property in general it is necessary to further investigate how these issues pertain specifically to archives. The following chapter will examine in greater detail the current literature and practices concerning private archives, particularly exploring how the cultural role of private archives is viewed within the archival discipline. As well the Chapter will explore how current practices serve the groups that generate the archives.
CHAPTER THREE
Cultural Significance of Private Archives

The importance of cultural property, including archives, to the creating culture is undeniable but this is often overwhelmed by the desire of the larger society to preserve a broad cultural heritage that is widely accessible. Frequently this means that cultural property, such as archives, are acquired by large cultural institutions in order to fulfill a mandate that is rarely concerned with the specific groups it represents. This chapter attempts to define and expand the role of archival repositories as a cultural institution with the aim of achieving a definition that addresses more directly the creating groups. Likewise the purposes behind private archives acquisition are examined to determine who exactly this process serves; the creating community or others? Current North American practices and literature are considered to determine how they address the cultural role of archives and how they might be improved. The final portion of the chapter looks at the role of the state in private archives acquisition.

Archival Repository as Cultural Institution

The cultural role of archival institutions is a relatively new development. As described earlier, until the nineteenth century archival institutions performed an essentially administrative role to the creator of the archives, and therefore were unlikely to be considered as a cultural institution by the society. With the advent of the historical profession however, archives came to be valued as a cultural resource. Documents came to be appreciated as containing a record of the past, a
written memory containing cultural heritage, which could then be exploited to create new cultural products, usually in the form of history books. As one Canadian publication put it:

History's strong tie with nationalism was commonly perceived by 19th century liberals. Providing access to archival material for the study of the collective past of the nation was one indication of a government’s interest in fostering the evolution of national consciousness. Within the Canadian confederation, writing and teaching of history, optimistically accurate and unbiased has consistently been seen as important to national goals.¹

In a sense this link between archives and history mirrors ethnographic museums which were closely linked to the development of the profession of anthropology, but while museums have developed as cultural institutions that attempt to perform a number of cultural services to a wide segment of the population, archival institutions continue to see their cultural role almost exclusively in terms of serving the research needs of society.

This trend is particularly noticeable in North America, where many archival repositories developed primarily as cultural rather than administrative entities. In Canada, the Quebec Literary and Historical Society advocated the establishment of a national archives solely in order to facilitate historical research, which would in turn benefit the nation at large.² In the United States, the preservation of public records in archival institutions did not start until this century, but as early as 1792 the Historical Society of Massachusetts was involved in the acquisition of archives

¹ Consultative Group, Canadian Archives, 20.
² Wilson, “A Noble Dream,” 16-17.
for historical purposes.\textsuperscript{3} As new research fields opened up in the social sciences during the twentieth century, archives came to be valuable as resources for conducting these new types of research, but the focus of the institution remained the same: serving research needs. Acquisition broadened the scope of records available for research but did not challenge the conception of archival institutions' cultural role as solely research oriented.

Using the definition of cultural institution developed in the previous chapter, three main characteristics of cultural institutions are evident: they are an entity of civil society; they are involved in the display and definition but not production of culture; they are concerned with the preservation of cultural heritage. Archival repositories are institutions of civil society rather than political society, because even repositories established by the state are not institutions of social control. They are also clearly involved in the preservation of cultural heritage in its documentary form. Archival institutions are not actively involved in the production of cultural products, and thus, they do seem to have all the characteristics of a cultural institution. Unlike museums, archival institutions are rarely involved in the display or presentation of cultural objects or activities. Archival repositories may mount exhibits or displays but this is not their primary function. Their focus is essentially on preservation not display of documentary heritage. Archivists acknowledge the need to make archives accessible but this is usually achieved through finding aids rather than an active presentation of material to the public. Thus, unlike material

culture, archives are not typically accessed just for interest or curiosity. While museums have many casual visitors who simply view the displays, archival institutions tend to be visited only by those individuals who are seeking some type of information. Archival institutions typically "relate to and serve the general public, for the most part, through intermediaries: historians, novelists, filmmakers, biographers, political scientists or journalists." 4 In fact, because archivists conceive of their responsibility primarily as preservation rather than display, archival institutions in general often seem to function as a warehouse for cultural heritage rather than as a site for cultural representation or interaction.

Preservation is manifestly important to the archival mission, but certainly not the only role that archival institutions can play. The disregard of presentation of archival material means that the archival holdings are accessible in only one way, and that method is inherently predisposed to serve research needs. Although it is undeniable that archives have an important role in the conduct of research, is this the only possible cultural role of archival institutions? Do archival institutions exist only to serve researchers and indirectly the general public, or is it possible to imagine archival institutions as having a larger cultural responsibility? Certainly in recent years archivists have begun to challenge the elitist view of archives serving scholarly researchers, and public programming and outreach have received attention as ways to involve different segments of the population in archives. 5 Often the

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4 Consultative Group, Canadian Archives, 17.
5 For an example of an outreach program designed for school groups see Ann ten Cate, "Outreach in a Small Archives," Archivaria, 28 (Summer 1989): 28-35.
focus remains on educating these new types of users on how to utilize the institution for their varying research needs, rather than making the archives accessible in new ways which could serve a broader range of the public.

In contrast, museums are designed to serve almost all of society through a diverse range of cultural endeavours from research to casual interest. As Ivan Karp says museums are "places for defining who people are and how they should act and ... places for challenging these definition."6 Since museums are actively involved in the display of culture it is possible for users to simply view the cultural heritage and interpret it personally without attempting to utilize the experience to produce anything. Exposure to the culture through the object is the aim. In archival institutions this has traditionally been seen as merely a step towards the creation of some other cultural product rather than an end in itself. Archival institutions through acquisition and description practices, which often reflect the bias of both the archivist and the institution, define people and culture but provide no effective venue for challenging these definitions. That is left to researchers and their products.

As Theresa Rowat suggests archival institutions avoid active display of culture because they see themselves as objective guardians of the past.7 Thus, archivists avoid presentation and interpretation of archival material in order to remain objective. However, by their selective appraisal and acquisition, archivists

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7 Theresa Rowat, "Record and Repository": 201.
are inherently involved in cultural evaluation, interpretation and representation.

As Brien Brothman claims

Archival appraisal, for example, is not merely a process of value identification, but of value creation or destruction. It entails more than simply identifying archival or historical value that already exists in a document before archivists encounter it. As they make determinations about archival or historical value, archivists in effect create, initiate or perpetuate an axiological commitment which is manifested in the permanence of the order that emerges. 8

What is lacking from the archival institution is an acknowledgment of this. Archival institutions are not just guardians of cultural heritage, they are institutions that are closely entwined to the society that supports them, and as such reflect a great deal about contemporary society as well as about the past. Brothman argues that archival institutions

have been too much regarded as culturally transparent sites rather than as constituents or objects within a larger, historically characterizable structure which both determines and is determined by archival practice through a dynamic of negotiated social and cultural relations. 9

By acknowledging the influence of current society on archival institutions and archivists, it becomes possible to move beyond the image of objective warehouse. These issues deserve more investigation, but are mentioned here in order to challenge the conception that archival institutions can only act as cultural storehouses which need to be exploited by researchers in order to give meaning to the archives they hold.

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9 Ibid., 91
Private Archives as Cultural Heritage

Documentary heritage is composed of both public and private archives, one representing the official account of society as captured in the records of the sovereign or its agents, the other composed of private individual or group chronicles. If archivists perceive their responsibility as the duty to preserve the documentary heritage of all of society, then it is imperative that private as well as public, archives are preserved. On the other hand if archivists visualize their role as primarily administrative the acquisition and preservation of private archives is unnecessary. These responsibilities of course are not mutually exclusive, rather they are two parts of the same goal. As Luciana Duranti says "the archivist must keep whatever is absolutely necessary to protect his society and to allow for its development."¹⁰ This goal obviously includes the preservation of both those records that facilitate administrative activity and continuity, as well as those records which ensure the survival of culture and identity.

Society is the complete interaction of both official and non-official elements, and therefore both elements must be preserved to guarantee the continuation and development of the society. Historian John Bodnar terms these two elements official and vernacular culture where the former:

originates in the concerns of cultural leaders or authorities at all levels of society .... (and) these leaders share a common interest in social unity, the continuity of existing institutions, and loyalty to the status quo. They attempt to advance these concerns by promoting interpretations of the past and present reality that reduce the power of competing interests that threaten the attainment of their goals.

and the latter refers to:

an array of specialized interests that are grounded in parts of the whole. They are diverse and changing and can be reformulated from time to time by the creation of new social units .... Defenders of such cultures are numerous and intent on protecting values and restating views of reality derived from first hand experience in small scale communities rather than in the 'imagined' communities of a large nation.¹¹

In the archival realm, official culture is most often expressed through the public records of society while private archives can be viewed as expressions of vernacular or minority culture. There will of course be exceptions to this, but in general the division is valid. Hence, to attempt to provide a documentary heritage that captures both components of society it is necessary to acquire private as well as public records, since it is the interaction of the two which comprises the culture of society.

Even if the vernacular culture were represented in its interactions with the state, the documentary traces of these interactions in public records will inevitably represent the vernacular through the eyes of the official. Public records will inherently reflect the viewpoints of the dominant, official culture and this is bound to affect the representation of minority groups/vernacular culture in the official record. To achieve an understanding of these various cultures it is necessary for them to be able to represent themselves and a facet of this is preserving their

records. These private archives can then offer the possibility of alternate discourses and a challenge to the official culture.

A final benefit of acquiring private archives is the immediacy of cultural contact provided. The personal letters of an individual, the photographs of a small town in the 1950s, and the records of a local voluntary association, all have a great deal of meaning and significance for an individual user that is often lacking in the official public record. In a sense these private archives can be considered documentary souvenirs. Susan Pearce writing about material culture notes:

Souvenirs are intrinsic parts of past experience ... (and) are samples of events which can be remembered, but not relived. They are an important part of our attempt to make sense of our personal histories.\(^\text{12}\)

The sense of the past evoked in these documents is more immediate and accessible than the one presented in the official documents of the government. These private archives are valued for their symbolic significance or representations of local culture and heritage, rather than their research value to scholars.\(^\text{13}\) By acquiring these records of ordinary human interaction, the archival institution has greater potential to link itself to its community of creation rather than some diverse research community. In general, archivists and archival institutions continue to acquire private archives to bolster their research collections rather than attempt to utilize the cultural heritage to serve those who created it.


Archival Literature Concerning Private Archives

More often than not, archival literature seems to reflect rather than guide archival practice. Thus, in most cases the literature of the profession has accepted the existing conceptions concerning the work of archivist rather than attempting to posit new purposes or challenge conceptual frameworks. Of course the pragmatic problems of trying to preserve a disappearing record of society with a great deal of inter-institutional competition and shrinking resources are overwhelming and therefore, these issues and their practical solutions are naturally important to the discipline, and present a more immediate obstacle than issues concerning cultural appropriation and representation.

Archivists in the first part of this century operated on what can be called a salvage paradigm: on a daily basis culture and society was changing and heritage was being lost through destruction, neglect, or accidental loss. This led most cultural institutions to develop broadly based acquisition policies and to randomly acquire whatever they could that seemed in danger of disappearing. Added to these haphazard practices was the difficulty of donor gifts. Frequently a private creator would offer his or her archives to an institution regardless of mandate, and these gifts would rarely be turned away or even directed to a more appropriate institution.\(^\text{14}\) The result was cultural institutions with no clearly defined acquisition mandate and often fierce inter-institutional competition. This

competition coupled with an expanding interest in different elements of society resulted in a new breed of archival literature in the 1970s and eighties which was aimed at developing cooperative practices for acquisition which would facilitate the preservation of more diverse aspects of society.

In the first part of this century archival literature in North America concerning private archives was often limited to discussions of particular collections and their importance for researchers. In the United States particularly, a distinction was drawn between manuscripts, whose use was primarily for research, and archives which were usually of administrative provenance and thus had administrative, legal and accountability uses. This focus on the research significance of private archives has meant that acquisition plans were designed to serve a research/scholarly clientele, rather than the groups from which the archives originated. Frequently acquisition was discussed in terms of how to approach potential donors or the intricacies of the auction market since these were important concerns for archivists at the time.

In the second half of this century social changes and expanded research interests caused a change in archival literature and practice. During the 1960s and 1970s, various social movements resulted in a changed society where the middle class, white, Christian male was no longer seen as the representative member. The

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15 The American Archivist, and Archivaria are both filled with case studies on various private fonds, and the focus is usually on the significance of these documents for research.

16 See articles on acquisition in A Modern Archives Reader. Despite its relatively recent publication, the articles in the Modern Archives Reader, are extremely dated in their approach to acquisition and really belong to an earlier era of literature.
significance of the black experience in the United States, the importance of immigrants in Canada, and the role of women all became topics both of general social concern and academic interest. Just as in previous eras, changing society resulted in new archival attitudes and practices. Archivists of this time began to feel a sense of social responsibility to these groups that had previously been underrepresented in the documentary heritage, and the responsibility was often fulfilled by making records of these creators available to scholars.

In his 1974 article “The Archival Edge,” the American archivist Gerald Ham, challenged the passive acquisition practices and the subject biases of the archival establishment. Ham advocated an “activist” approach that would develop coordinated acquisition strategies designed to capture a greater scope of records. Not content to remain “tied to the vogue of the academic marketplace,” Ham urged archivists to become involved in the active documentation of society through the creation of oral history and photography programs.17 The focus remained on research but an expansion of acquisition mandates to help develop better research collections. This activist approach has become the focus of much of the literature since that time. For some this has meant the creation of subject based repositories which aim to document specific groups within society such as women, ethnicities, labour or the family.18 In Canada the National Archives initiated various programs under the aegis of the manuscript division, each devoted to these groups, and

17 Ham, “Archival Edge,” 329.
18 For example see the articles in American Archivist 48 (Summer 1985) which is devoted to various ethnic archives programs.
many other institutions followed the national lead. Thus much of the literature in Canada is related to these specific programs.\textsuperscript{19}

In most cases however, these articles merely scratch the surface by pointing out the necessity of documenting minority groups, and then usually providing a description of how this is achieved at the author's institution.\textsuperscript{20} In essence the literature consists of case studies on how to establish programs with little critical analysis on the cultural significance of the programs or the underlying assumptions behind private archives acquisition. When authors do attempt to critique programs it is usually on the basis of efficiency and success, not on biased motivations or societal representation.\textsuperscript{21} This approach of course is understandable since these were new attitudes to archives and their social role which resulted in new programs. Presumably as these programs developed and the profession grew more self-reflective the literature would also develop and become more critical and analytical.

The major difference between the literature of Canada and the United States, is that in Canada the literature attempts to place these programs within the context

\textsuperscript{19} See Archivaria 27 (Winter 1988-89) devoted to labour archives.


\textsuperscript{21} Grigg, “A World of Repositories” analyzes an existing collecting policy as far as its success in acquiring appropriate material for the institution, and then offers ways in which the policy could be improved. However, Grigg does not challenge the basic premise of the policy or analyze the significance of the removal of this material from its context of creation.
of general society while in the United States the aim of the programs is to serve scholars, not all of society. Thus, Walter Neutel in his article "Gesichte Wie Ws Eigentlich Geweswen, or, The Necessity of Having Ethnic Archives Programmes" justifies the programs by saying "If we seek progress toward national and international brotherhood, toward social and economic security, it is not an optional but is an essential endeavour." The emphasis here is clearly on the "national" significance of cultural heritage and the relevance of the archives to general society. In contrast John Grabowski writing about an ethnic archive in Cleveland, despairs over the desire of certain groups to maintain their own records since this causes gaps in his institution devoted to scholarly research. On the surface Canada may seem to pay more attention to the societal significance, but it seems that the aim to preserve ethnic or other minority group archives is to still to serve the scholar or other researcher who will then produce a cultural product that is accessible to all Canadians, not to make the archives themselves directly accessible to the group concerned.

In recent years, acquisition literature in the United States has devolved around a new premise: documentation strategy. Helen Samuels, a proponent of documentation strategy, defines it as "a plan formulated to assure the documentation of an ongoing issue, activity, or geographic area." 

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Documentation strategies are not intended to replace institutional acquisition, instead they are designed specifically to fill gaps in documentation through the acquisition of non-institutional or "delegated" archives. The intent is not only to clearly define an acquisition policy, but to develop strategies for carrying it out, targeting certain records creators, creating documentation and refining the plan in response to changing conditions.

The focus of documentation strategy literature remains on how to carry out acquisition, and how to include new types of records creators. Despite its novel approach, documentation strategy suffers from the same lack of critical analysis as previous archival literature on private archives acquisition. Neither Samuels or Richard Cox attempt to examine the purposes behind the acquisition of private archives or how their decontextualization alters meaning. This of course is an essential topic and one that does need investigation. Articles on practical matters of methodology are an important element of the profession, but they would be complemented by literature that focussed on larger theoretical issues.

Currently the archival literature assumes that acquisition by archival institutions is always good and that all that needs to be done is to develop a careful coordination of policies, mandates and plans that will enable archivists to fully document all aspects of society. This attitude reflects a societal view that it is desireable to represent all cultural groups equally and in Canada that this is a responsibility of the state. It would be useful for archivists to examine the cultural

role of archives, moving beyond a simplistic research purpose, and then to determine the way in which private archives can help fulfill this role. Once these issues have been examined it is possible to develop acquisition plans that will enable these objectives to be achieved. With society changing again and growing more sensitive to issues of cultural representation and ownership, now seems the perfect time to explore these issues.

Current Practices Concerning Private Archives

Traditionally, cultural property of all types represented the dominant groups in society because it was the elites of society who built monuments, preserved objects, and created archives, and thus, other classes in society who left behind fewer tangible traces of their life were not represented in cultural institutions. Archives, as recorded documents, can be of many different media and form, but until this century the emphasis was primarily on written documents which further limited private archives creation to the literate groups of society who were usually the educated elite class. In archival institutions since the nineteenth century the acquisition of the papers of great men has been related to the development of the historical profession. History in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was shaped by the study of momentous events and great men. Consequently the archives of those individuals in power were desirable but the records of the common person were not wanted. Frequently the private archives acquired were

26 Crew and Sims, "Locating Authenticity," 165-166. See also Hugh Taylor "The Collective Memory": 119-120.
those of important personages of the state and thus the official state presentation of the past was bolstered by that of private individuals.

With the rise of social history in the second half of this century, previously underrepresented groups came to be the subject of study and therefore their archives considered worthy of acquisition. In many ways however, the focus continued on the great, the first woman in parliament, an important labour leader, a strong ethnic organization. In the United States the acquisition of the archives of these new groups, like all private archives, continued to be the responsibility of private institutions. These institutions, based in universities or research centres plan archival acquisitions around a specific theme or subject; ethnicity, labour, urban studies. These institutions then typically acquire private archives to bolster this specific research agenda, and thus serve the scholarly community rather than the culture of creation. Gerald Ham urges the archivist to recognize that

the scope, quality and direction of research in an open-ended future depends upon the soundness of his judgment and the keenness of his perceptions about scholarly inquiry.

Although private archives in Canada are preserved in state and private institutions, the same focus on research seems evident from the literature. Even in this

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28 Most American literature dealing with private archives terms them 'historical manuscripts' and addresses their importance for conducting research See Lester Cappon "Historical Manuscripts as Archives: Some Definitions and and their Applications," American Archivist 19 (April 1956): 103-104.
29 Ham, “Archival Edge”: 334.
30 Most articles in the Canadian journal Archivaria, refer to the ‘resources’ for the study of the specific groups documented in the manuscript division. For example, John, Rumm, “Working Through the Records: Using Business Records to Study
century the authors of the Symons report advocated the preservation of archives since

Without the resources of our many archives, original research on the development of our society, institutions or culture would be impossible. In the same manner, the more comprehensive the nation's archival resources may become, the greater will be our opportunities for research into the nature of the Canadian historical experience.  

Currently private archives are usually acquired to fulfill an institutional mandate that is designed to develop collections based on their research value. These collections are designed to facilitate academic scholarship within a particular field. Even those acquisitions that represent a more diverse social spectrum are typically the result of an increased academic awareness of underrepresented groups, such as women or ethnic groups. The actual documents are frequently appraised in light of their research value to scholars, rather than their use or significance to the creating community. As an American manual on appraisal states:

final accountability for appraisal will be to independent scholarship. Scholarly research is a public goal ... (and) successful appraisal is directly related to the archivist's primary role as a representative of the research community.  

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Although it has been suggested that archives should abandon this elitist attitude towards its users, the archives acquired still tend to reflect an attitude that places research concerns at the top of the agenda. Archivists consider it their duty to make available the records of a variety of different creators to their users, who will in turn disseminate knowledge about these groups through lectures and publications. But is this truly the best means of making accessible the records of private creators?

It is true that large institutions geared towards research can reach a large number of users, but often the users of the records will be a homogeneous class devoted to similar activities, for example the production of yet another article on the labour movement. Private archives acquired to suit a research oriented mandate are removed from their context of creation and dependent on outside interpretation to be given meaning. In this way, creators lose control over both their heritage and their representation to the larger society. Traditionally of course private archives were often acquired after the creators were either dead, in the case of physical individuals, or defunct, as with juridical persons or organizations. Consequently archivists assumed that the only remaining cultural use of most of these records was research. But in most cases these archives were not created in isolation, there was a community of some sort that provided a context of creation and which often

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33 This is changing now, and many institutions, such as the Glenbow in Calgary Alberta, have agreements with existing organizations that involves regular accessioning of inactive records. Apart from the theoretical problems this presents, this is often a financial burden on archival institutions that should more appropriately rest with the creator.
had a great deal of influence on the creator and the records in the archive. It is these communities that may indeed provide a better place of preservation for private archives.

Archivists have made concerted efforts to erase the image of the profession as handmaidens of history, but few have ever questioned the exalted place given to research use and focused instead on the creator community.34 Of course archivists are not alone in this view; the preeminence of research potential is related to a larger societal conception that academics and other professionals are best suited to interpreting cultural groups. In the last few years however, society has become more conscious of the rights of different cultural groups to self-determination and a facet of this is the right to control cultural representation.35 An alternative that is beginning to appear in some literature is the concept of community archives that helps foster local heritage and culture and this potential will be examined more closely in the next chapter. Ironically, in Canada it is the state that has often conceived of a non-research role for private archives, viewing these archives as another facet of the public culture, which can help construct a “national” identity.

Private Archives Acquisition by the State

Archival institutions acquire private archives in a variety of ways; donations, bequeaths, loans, purchase and discovery. These methods are equally true for

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34 Gerald Ham in the “Archival Edge” urges archivists to acquire archives actively rather than await changes in historical scholarship but he still sees these records as serving a research clientele. His aim is to make the archivist “the research community’s Rennaisance man” (334).

35 In Canada this has often meant the repatriation of aboriginal artifacts from museums and galleries back to the tribes that created them.
private institutions and those supported by the state, and individual accessions usually follow the plan of an overall acquisition policy or institutional mandate, although this is a relatively recent development. However, the policies and ideals behind the state institutions are subject to far more scrutiny than those of private institutions. A private archival institution only has to justify itself to its trustees, while a state institution is ultimately responsible to the general public. State institutions usually have a general mandate to document society, or at least the specific groups within its geo-political sphere, while a private institution can adopt any facet of human endeavour as its acquisitional focus. In broad terms; state institutions exist to serve the citizens, while private institutions serve the sponsoring institution and scholars. In each instance the private archives are acquired for different purposes and take on different meanings depending upon their new institutional context. In the previous chapter a number of problems were discussed regarding state acquisition and control of cultural property, and these difficulties also arise in regard to private archives.

The first question must be why do public institutions feel compelled to acquire the private archives of citizens, or in some instances of other nations? Essentially there are two primary responses to this question: first, cultural institutions are established by the state as a public good, and second, cultural institutions play an important role in creating and fostering a sense of identity and cohesiveness. The first motive results from the need of the state to be perceived as government for all people of the nation providing services for the welfare of
An archives which performs a cultural as well as administrative role, can be seen as contributing to the education and cultural environment of citizens, thus, the state is seen to provide for a wide variety of societal needs. Frequently the national heritage, as it is represented in cultural property, is transferred from the hands of private owners, into public administration where it is made widely available to all citizens, reinforcing the belief that the state serves the collective rather than the individual. Of course in North America the rights of the individual are firmly entrenched and thus, the state often has little control over acquiring or protecting private archives, and is dependent upon the acquiescence of the creator to acquire the material. By acquiring private material the state is providing access to a broader realm of documentary heritage, and legitimizing many of the minority cultures represented in the archives.

The second motive for acquiring private archives is to enable the state to advance and promote a particular worldview through the acquisition and presentation of carefully selected elements of the cultural heritage of the nation. Raymond Williams calls this:

Selective Tradition: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture is always passed off as 'the tradition', 'the significant past'. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings or practices are neglected and excluded. Even more crucially, some of these meanings and practices are reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms

which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture.\textsuperscript{38}

For the state, acquiring private archives is one method of constructing a cultural heritage that supports existing social structure and dominant culture. The private archives that are acquired by the state will either be actively supporting it, or will be interpreted in its new institutional context as at least non-oppositional. Those private archives not acquired by the state can be seen as marginal, or unimportant to society and over time will likely disappear from the documentary heritage. Thus, public archival institutions by selectively acquiring private archives and incorporating them into the canon of "accepted culture" are contributing to the creation of hegemony.

Once private archives are acquired by the state they become part of the public culture, which Vera Zolberg defines as

representations of history, geography, and the arts consistent with the self-definition and goals of its people (or at least those of its elites in charge of public institutions). But whether this new public culture has a broad base of support or not, it is important because of its role in legitimating the nation to its own citizenry and (perhaps more important) to outsiders.\textsuperscript{39}

The state then can utilize cultural property to create a public culture that supports itself and its values. Private archives are useful in the construction of this public culture, since they can be seen as independent voices which confirm the assertions and validity of the state. Private archives, as part of the public culture acquire a

\textsuperscript{38} Williams, Marxism and Literature, 41.
new meaning and significance. Removed from their context of creation and placed in the public realm, these archives are often re-contextualized into a "national" culture, that may have had little significance in their creation. Often these archives become effectively marginalized, just one more example of women's archives or an ethnic group. Instead of being considered valuable in their own right, these archives are acquired as representations of specific elements of society, and are valued for that rather than their place in the larger societal context.

On the other side of the debate how does the state serve its citizens by acquiring private archives? The preservation of diverse archives in state institutions enables the public to have access to a wide range of different pasts, all of which contributed to the present. This practice exposes citizens to a large number of cultural groups and experiences that may be radically different that their own. Ideally this would promote understanding and tolerance, while acknowledging the role of all groups in the culture of the country. Likewise the acquisition of the archives of minority groups can give legitimation and a sense of belonging to these groups which can help foster a social cohesiveness. The state acquisition of minority archives can be seen as acknowledgment of the rights and importance of this group. By acquiring the records of private individuals and organizations it becomes possible for the archival institution to act as sites of resistance to the status quo. The private archives acquired may provide alternative understandings of the past and open up possible challenges to the present order.

On the other hand, state acquisition of private archives makes it easy to trace changes and developments in society which are reflected in state ideology. The
acquisitional practices of a state archival institution reveal a great deal about what is valued by society and also traces the gradual inclusion of minority or fringe groups into mainstream culture. State attempts to collect more diverse private archives can also be seen as a positive step towards including larger segments of the society in the public culture and an expansion of the collective memory. State acknowledgment of the cultural significance of minority groups can often contribute to the group's sense of empowerment and legitimation.

The primary difficulty in state acquisition of private archives is that the potential exists for manipulation of the past which clearly has ramifications for the present and future. This is not to say that a distortion of the past is the inevitable result of state acquisition, indeed in some cases the state may be less partisan than other institutions. For example state institutions, because of their close ties to the political society, and the nature of the archives they automatically acquire, should be involved in preserving the archives of groups and individuals in political society. However, archivists must be alert to the possibility that the state's representation of society may be to serve its own purposes and that this may not coincide with that of the people it attempts to represent. This presents a dilemma for the archivist, since he or she, must determine whether responsibility lies first to their employer, the state, or to the society which the state is attempting to represent. The significance of custodial location must also be examined, to what extent does the preservation of private material in public places affect its meaning? Above all it is important to recognize that most creators have ties to communities, physical or imagined, that have little to do with a sense of sovereign state.
Summary

Just as political and social changes in the Middle Ages affected archival practices so in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries numerous societal changes have affected how archives were viewed and how the discipline developed. The rise of the historical profession and social science disciplines and their subsequent growth had profound effect on archival practice, particularly as it relates to private archives. The cultural significance of private archives became widely recognized. In many ways archival practice mirrored the concerns and issues of the larger society, which resulted in an expansion of archival acquisition to include a wide variety of creators. Until very recently however, the focus of both acquisitional practices and literature has been on the development of programs designed to meet research needs. The research community and its interests took precedence over the community of creation.

In Canada the tradition of state supported private archives acquisition varies slightly from this general trend. Private archives for the state are a symbol of its commitment to fair and equal multicultural practices. The reality of this practice however, is that the creator or the community that generates the archives has little say in how and if they are represented to the larger society. As well the potential exists for the state to create a public culture that supports the status quo.

It becomes necessary to look for new ways to achieve private archives acquisition that take into account changing societal perceptions concerning cultural property and representation. The growing recognition of, and interest in, communities would be a useful place to start. Archivists and their institutions are
intimately tied to the society and culture that sustains them and thus, recognizing and exploring this connection could lead to new cultural roles for archival repositories. Rather than ignoring the socio-cultural influence on archivists and institutions, it might be valuable to explore these cultural linkages and use them as a base for constructing new models for dealing with private archives.
In 1980, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada published a report on archival institutions in Canada. One of the major considerations of the report was the emergence of community archives and the need to encourage a decentralization of archival services. Examining the archival principle of provenance, the report advocates

that any particular set of records should remain, as far as possible, in the locale or milieu in which it was generated. This may be called the extension of the principle of provenance (which aims at keeping the context of records intact) to a principle of territoriality (which envisages the locale or milieu of records as part of their context).¹

This emphasis on locale or milieu of creation mirrors a growing societal concern in Canada about the importance of regions and territories within the larger national context. As a society we are becoming increasingly more aware of the significance of communities and their rights within the nation. Since archival institutions traditionally reflect the values and opinions of their society it seems logical that the changing perceptions of regionalism and communities should be considered by archivists. Specifically, by using the concept of community it might be possible to develop acquisition guidelines for private archives that concentrate more on the cultural significance of the material to the creator and the community than on its value to research interests or the creation of national identity.

¹ Consultative Group, Canadian Archives, 16.
In Chapter Two, the difficulties arising out state control of cultural heritage were discussed, and these problems were examined more closely in Chapter Three specifically in regards to private archives as cultural heritage. Although it is impossible to claim that private archives should never be acquired by the state, in most cases private archives would have more meaning and significance if they were preserved in an institution that was more closely aligned to the creator and this is usually found in the private realm. Thus, this chapter will propose principles designed for private archives acquisition as carried out by non-state institutions.

**Traditional Research Models of Acquisition**

As discussed in Chapter three, private archives are normally acquired because of their pertinence to certain types of research. This approach inevitably leads archivists to consider these private records to be serving the public better if they are preserved in a large institution designed to facilitate scholarly research where access is guaranteed to all researchers. Although it is true that this ensures accessibility, it is not fair to assume that a private creator maintaining control over the archives will automatically deny access to researchers, or that access will be granted in a selective manner. Even if the latter instance does result, it is both the legal and ethical right of the creator to control his or her representation through

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2 Of course certain creators, notably those involved in the political realm, will be more tied to the state than any other type of institution.

cultural property. Thus, a First Nations band that allows only sympathetic researchers access to records is exercising its right to ensure that it is represented in a manner that it believes is appropriate. This does not mean that only one interpretation of the group is possible, just that those interpretations drawing directly from cultural property should involve the creators or the community of creation. Nor does this imply that the creator needs to own or have physical custody of the material but merely that the creator must have some say, not only in the disposition of the archives but in its continued use. As the Canadian Archives report expresses it:

> records are best understood in their context and the full body of current and future archival material can only be preserved when there is constant interaction between the archives and the offices creating the records. ⁴

If we return to the arguments in the cultural property debate, we see that private archives can be seen as a joint trust between creator and institution, both of which should be involved in the custodianship of the archives.

More and more, museums are attempting to involve cultural groups in the display and representation of their culture, recognizing that these groups have a right to determine the manner in which they will be represented. As Tony Bennet says, traditionally "museums were for the people, they were certainly not of the people" and this approach was first challenged by attempting to offer representations of ordinary people.⁵ Over time this approach was expanded to

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⁴ Consultative Group, Canadian Archives, 62.
include the people being represented into the development of the exhibition. An example is the Anacostia Museum in Washington DC, which actively involves the black community in the creation and design of its exhibits concerning black history. The focus and interpretation of these exhibits is likely to be very different from exhibits on black history, designed and prepared strictly by whites. The participation of those groups being represented is recognized by most museum professionals today as being extremely important in the exhibition process. It seems appropriate then for archivists to also consider these factors when dealing with private material, particularly since it is already common practice for public records archivists to be actively involved with the offices of creation.

Any time that cultural material, documentary or otherwise, is acquired by an institution for the purposes of research it becomes decontextualized since it has been removed from a living cultural milieu to a research or display environment. Unlike public archives which are naturally sent to the archives for preservation as a part of their life-cycle, the preservation of private archives in an archival institution is usually artificial, the result of solicitation by the archivist, and this often occurs after the death of the individual or the dissolution of the organization. Certain corporations or organizations may maintain their own records, but the delegation of this responsibility to an archival institution is unnatural, and alters their use from administrative to research. Although the creator may still utilize the

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\(^7\) Handler, "Having a Culture," 193.
records, the archival institution views them as research tools, not as an intrinsic part of a specific group heritage.

The selection process which causes certain private archives and not others to be preserved in archival institutions may distort the significance of those records saved. The records in an archival institution might be seen as having more legitimacy and importance than those records which remain in the custody of the creator. Likewise, certain groups or individuals in society will be represented more frequently and may then be seen as having more cultural significance, when in fact their archives may have been chosen strictly to suit a specific research interest.

Opposed to research potential, then, is the significance of archives as cultural heritage for the groups which created them. If this latter significance is emphasized, it becomes evident that these groups need to have more control over their archives, and the primary way this can be achieved it to develop archival institutions designed to serve the cultural purposes of specific groups, or communities, rather than the researchers studying these groups. One of these cultural purposes can of course be the use of the archives for research, but this should no longer be seen as the primary significance. Instead, the archives can function within a larger cultural sphere that facilitates the shaping of identity and the fostering of community at a much smaller level than occurs in national institutions.

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8 Rowat, "Record and Repository," 201.
A major problem exists in that these community groups are often only identifiable when they have declared themselves as an existing entity sharing common bonds. This means that these communities are themselves represented by a small percentage who frequently comprise the dominant portion of the community. Unfortunately the difficulties that arise at the national level regarding the representation of dominant views and ideologies are equally likely to occur at the microlevel of the community. Simply because someone is a Japanese Canadian does not guarantee that his or her views will be in perfect accord with other members of the community. Hegemonic practices can occur at all levels of social organization so that the dominant voice of a minority group may presume to speak for all members although in fact there may be great divergences of views.

Despite these drawbacks to a community based cultural heritage the community often does provide the most actionable sphere for developing cultural institutions. At this level it may be possible to represent many different aspects of the same group, rather than focusing simply on the dominant. Community institutions by their nature are more accessible and through their structure are often able to encourage more direct participation of the people they are attempting to represent. Ideally the community based cultural institution allows for a cultural dialogue that includes both statements about identity and the challenges to these conceptions.

The Canadian Archives report addresses the concerns of communities by advocating a decentralized approach to archival service. By establishing a network of large institutions as well as numerous small community repositories it becomes
easier to serve those groups involved in the creation of the archives themselves. It would no longer be necessary to remove records from their communities to ensure their preservation and use, and at the same time it becomes possible to preserve those records which may only have significance for the local community. The report urges that “the formal links ... must be maintained between the older archival records, the continuing creation of records and the organizations or communities generating these records.” This statement clearly indicates the growing concern for communities and the perceived need to keep these groups involved with their own documentary heritage.

Community

Traditionally sociologists have identified three elements of a community “(1) geographical area, (2) social interaction, and (3) common tie or ties.” This sense of community is then largely determined by territoriality; within defined spatial limits certain types of interaction occur which result in common ties. This definition is useful when dealing with a clearly defined geo-political region but it does not address the issue of communities that exist outside of, or in a small scale within these regions. These non-geographic communities can be termed either “moral” or “philosophic,” where community refers to “a sense of identity and unity with one’s group and a feeling of involvement and wholeness on the part of the

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9 Consultative Group, Canadian Archives, 65.
10 Ibid., 65.
individual." Daniel Bell has termed this last group "communities of memory, or groups of strangers who share a morally significant history." Both geographical and philosophic communities are elements of civil society and both are environments in which identity is shaped and conceptions about the world developed. Neither type of community exists entirely separated from others, and therefore society is the sum of all these distinct communities and their interactions.

In general, "community" can be opposed to "nation," since it is a social entity that typically evolves in an organic way, rather than being constructed out of disparate elements. Consequently, archival institutions designed to serve a community can foster a sense of identity and heritage that has more meaning for individuals than the one constructed at a national institution. This also enables the community ideology to offer alternatives or opposition to state/dominant ideology. Community archives allow the community to represent itself to others rather than allow an outsider to offer interpretation and representation. As the Danish archivists Inge Bundsgaard and Michael Gelting remark,

local historical collections were and are to do more than just collect and preserve local archival heritage. They are to supply the local community with a distinct historical identity.

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12 Ibid., 5.
14 This sense of community then excludes the notion of Benedict Andersen's "imagined communities," which refers to constructed nations. Instead the focus in this discussion is on self-determined communities, rather than communities which have identity imposed from the outside.
15 Inge Bundsgaard and Michael Gelting "What to Be or Not to Be? Evolving Identities for State and Grassroots Archives in Denmark," *American Archivist*, 55
Social cohesion and a sense of belonging can also be fostered at community archives more readily than state institutions. Although both geographic and philosophic communities are essential components of society and shapers of identity only the physical community has received much attention from archivists.

Municipal community archives in Canada have in recent years become an important element of the archival landscape, often for the practical reason that the government at higher levels can no longer care for the records of the municipal governments. Thus, many community archives start out as the depository for municipal public records and from there develop an interest in acquiring related private archives. Of course in the nineteenth century, historical societies began at the opposite end of the spectrum by acquiring private archives, but few of these societies were concerned exclusively with a small community, the focus was usually on a large region or state. Community archives today, are usually defined by a geopolitical region and their private archives acquisition is usually focused on local history.

Until very recently archives of individuals or groups within a philosophic community were rarely viewed as belonging to a community and instead were evaluated in isolation. Typically archives of non-geographic communities are acquired by archivists as representatives of certain themes or subjects. Hence, archivists acquire the records of an ethnic group in order to document the theme


of immigration.\textsuperscript{17} Removed from an active cultural sphere where their uses may be manifold, the records lose a certain amount of their significance and become simply one more example of ethnic immigration. Since no individual or group acts in isolation, no archives can be truly understood outside of its community of creation since essential relationships are lost. By acquiring private archives according to theme based acquisition mandates, archivists also denigrate the community by refusing to recognize it as an existing social entity, it is instead perceived merely as a subject for study.

If we examine the philosophical definition of community we can see that in civil society there are a broad range of possible communities to which any individual can belong simultaneously. There is the physical community of neighbourhood or town, the extended family, ethnic community, gender or sexual preference communities, professional community, communities based on leisure activities, political membership and voluntary associations among others. These communities can be “actual,” where each individual knows the other members, or “imagined,” where individuals are unlikely to meet or know all other members. In each case however, these communities are bound together by a sense of commonality and shared interest. Thus, the neighbourhood community has common interest in the maintenance of the physical environment, while the members of an international human rights organization have similar values and beliefs concerning the human race.

\textsuperscript{17} Grigg, “A World of Repositories”: 289.
Importantly, each of these communities help to shape individual identity and participation in civil society. The conceptual framework of an individual is informed by this myriad of communities rather than one single source. As Ivan Karp states:

Every society can be seen as a constantly changing mosaic of multiple communities and organizations. Individual identities and experiences never derive entirely from single segments of society—merely one of the communities out of which the complex and changing social order is made.\(^\text{18}\)

At the organizational level it is equally possible to have ties to diverse communities, all of which shape identity and actions. An environmental organization will have ties to similar societies, to the research community, to the government and to the volunteer community.

The difficulty for archivists is in determining where the strongest ties of the creator lie, in other words, in which community was the creator predominately involved? By discovering what community most shaped the identity of the creator, and with which community the creator was most actively involved, it becomes possible to determine where the archives should be preserved. However, the documents themselves can not be ignored. If the preponderance of material relates to professional activity it is unjustifiable for an institution to acquire the records based on the significance of the creator’s role as an amateur poet. Thus, the principle of complementarity must also be considered, what other archives are closely linked and related to the fonds in question? In some cases the archives may

be closely linked to a geo-political community, or even the nation, but frequently the records will be related to smaller community activities and have more localized concerns.

Individuals or groups may often wish their archives to be preserved in a non-community institution for a variety of reasons. Some may wish to transcend categorization that comes with community archives: a northern artist, a quebecois politician, or woman entrepreneur. Many creators may wish their heritage to reach a broader public in an effort to spread understanding about their culture. Others may simply see a national or provincial institution as being more prestigious. In these cases the right of the creator to dispose of the archives wherever he or she desires must be respected.19

A final drawback to the deposit of private archives in a community archives may be that no appropriate institution exists. Although perfectly willing to keep archives in the labour community, a union may instead be forced to donate them to a university since the labour community had not established an archives. The usual response of archivists when offered records is to determine if they fit the institutional mandate and if not to recommend another institution. However, if no more appropriate institution exists, the archives eventually find a home in some repository. In these cases archivists need to reconsider whether their time and financial resources might not be better directed in helping the appropriate

19 Consultative Group, Canadian Archives, 87.
community to develop an archival institution. Perhaps we need to spend more time fostering and developing grass roots institutions than in pursuing active acquisition.

Ecomuseums and Heritage Resource Centres

In many ways, museum professionals have often seemed even less interested in establishing community institutions than archivists. Museums tend to serve communities through exhibits within a larger institutional complex, rather than advocating the establishment of community specific institutions, much as large archival institutions acquired archives of small communities rather than fostering local institutions. In the last decade or so however, a number of new museums, known as neighbourhood or ecomuseums, have been established which are intended to serve a particular regional community. Nancy Fuller explains the premise behind these new institutions:

Ecomuseums are based on the belief that museums and communities should be related to the whole of life. They are concerned with integrating the family home with other aspects of the community, such as the natural environment, economics, and social relationships. Ecomuseums are community learning centres that link the past with the present as a strategy to deal with the future needs of that particular society. Their activities and collections reflect what is important to the community not necessarily conforming to mainstream values and interpretations .... The mission is to develop community autonomy and identity. Rather than serving as storehouse or a temple, both of which isolate objects from ordinary people and require professional assistance for access and understanding, an ecomuseum recognizes the importance of culture in the development of self-identity and its role in helping a community adjust to rapid change.

20 See for example Museums and their Communities where the majority of articles are concerned with representing and involving communities in exhibits. An important exception is Nancy Fuller's account of a community museum in Arizona, "The Museum as a Vehicle for Community Empowerment: The Ak-Chin Indian Community Ecomuseum Project."
The ecomuseum thus becomes a tool for the economic, social and political growth and development of the society from which it springs.\textsuperscript{21}

The ecomuseum, as Fuller articulates it, can be seen as cultural resource centre in which the full spectrum of cultural property is represented. The emphasis is frequently on cultural activity and interaction rather than object preservation. Instead of preserving an artifact of the culture, the skills or activities that create the object are fostered in the museum.\textsuperscript{22} Even in exhibits that are object oriented an effort is made to involve the community in designing the exhibit and attempting to address both current and traditional issues. The aim is to actively involve the community both in representing itself to itself and to others, while also fostering a sense of cultural continuity by encouraging traditional cultural practices and also allowing for reinterpretation and change as the culture develops.\textsuperscript{23}

One of the more appealing aspects of the ecomuseum plan is that it incorporates a wide variety of cultural institutions. Fuller describes the ecomuseum as containing "audiovisual materials, paper documentation, physical sites, traditional ceremonies, (and) oral histories," as well as the more traditional museum

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 328.
\textsuperscript{22} See Les Groube, "The Ownership of Diversity" for a description of the centre established in Papua New Guinea which has recreated a living village scene with people performing traditional activities and creating traditional objects. The centre also runs educational programs designed to encourage new generations to learn the skills and culture of their ancestors.
\textsuperscript{23} Michael Ames in "Cultural Empowerment" offers examples of programs and exhibits at the Museum of Anthropology which were designed to give First Nations people greater control over their cultural representation, some of which included demonstrations of cultural activity. The Trickster program in particular was intended to express many current Native attitudes through a traditional cultural form.
objects.\textsuperscript{24} In this sense an ecomuseum is combining the roles of community
centre, museum, archives and library, all of which are designed specifically to serve
the needs of the particular society which creates it. Private archives of
organizations or members within the community would clearly be a vital component
of this plan.

The benefit of maintaining private archives within a community institution
such as this is obvious. Archives maintained within the community of creation
have a strong context that is easily discernible, unlike archives which have been
removed from the community forcing context to be reconstructed through various
descriptive practices. As Richard Kurin says

\begin{quote}
In these cases it is the living whole rather than the dead specimen that
is encouraged. The curatorial concern is directed not toward what is
in the museum, but toward the living context- natural and/or cultural-
from which the object, specimen, painting or document is
generated.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

For researchers, the relationships between creators and between fonds are made
explicit. Equally important is the significance of these archives to the community
as a means of understanding the community’s heritage and way of confronting the
present. Thus, these archives can serve a variety of purposes and users rather than
merely the research clientele of large institutions. Private archives in a community
context allow the creating group to maintain control over representation through
cultural property, as well as facilitating continuing use by the creators. The
ecomuseum focuses on cultural connections and relationships between all types of

\textsuperscript{24} Fuller, "Community Empowerment," 330.
\textsuperscript{25} Kurin, "India Folklife Exhibitions," 317.
cultural property rather than looking exclusively at the relationships within the same form of cultural property, and this means that private archives are connected not only to other archival material but to material culture, oral history, cultural activity and the physical environment.

The ecomuseum concept could usefully be expanded to include philosophical as well as geographical communities. Given the significance of these communities in identity formation and worldview it seems reasonable to consider the possibility of these communities establishing their own ecomuseum or cultural resource centre. Even in the ecomuseum based on a physical community, individuals “are not asked to turn over valued items for storage in a repository.” 26 The focus is not on physical control but on shared knowledge and access to cultural property. For physically dispersed communities this means that not every cultural resource would be stored in the same location, and yet knowledge and awareness about the resources would be disseminated throughout the community. With increasing use of automation, the transmission of information and the use of widely dispersed materials are made much easier and this is likely to benefit geographically scattered philosophic communities. In this sense, the archival networks proposed by the Canadian Archives report would be extremely useful.

In the archival realm there have been certain philosophic communities, notably the gay and lesbian, that have established archival institutions. 27 Although

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26 Fuller, “Community Empowerment,” 330.
the result of community awareness and involvement, the Canadian Gay Archives was designed to facilitate scholarship and research, rather than serve the community directly. This focus results partly because the community does not have clear geographic limits, and also because of the political desire to inform other segments of the population about the gay community. As a component of an ecomuseum the gay archives could continue to serve research needs, but its primary focus would be on enabling members of the gay community to foster identity and understand the history of their community.

A hypothetical example of a philosophic community ecomuseum would be the establishment of an environmental cultural resource centre. Individuals or groups actively involved in environmental conservation could jointly establish a centre to promote an historical awareness of the movement, which would ideally foster a stronger sense of community and shared concerns. The centre could preserve a wide variety of objects, archives, publications and other relevant material, which would all serve continuing activity as well as research. The involvement of large organizations as well as individuals would provide a wide range of past experiences and also open up new possibilities for cooperation and coordination of activities. For large voluntary organizations that currently maintain records for legal and fiscal purposes, the centre would facilitate cost sharing of these activities through shared administration and storage. A centre such as this is much

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28 Ibid., 196.
easier to develop if it does have certain geographic limits, but these need not be established by political boundaries nor tied to a small geographic community.

As well as establishing a variety of community archives/heritage centres it would be extremely valuable to link these different institutions through a communication network. Not only would this facilitate the dissemination of knowledge but it would also make it feasible to coordinate acquisition mandates. The Canadian Archives report states that

archives are more likely to define their roles in provincial or local rather than national terms (thus) the provinces or territories are the most natural and most manageable bases for archival networks.29

These provincial networks could then be linked to those of other provinces, so that a national system could exist without the actual removal of cultural property from the community of creation. A network would be particularly useful since many of these institutions would only contain material from one specific cultural group and on their own could not be considered representative of general society. Taken together however, it would be possible to construct a more representative portrait.

As Luciana Duranti says

A network of local archives, community archives, even archives resulting from a consortium of small bodies and corporations, is important for the preservation of what is vital to survival in small communities, in quasi deserted areas, that is, a sense of identity, the material outcome of the everyday fight for better living, the pride of things accomplished.30

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29 Consultative Group, Canadian Archives, 67.
Although there are drawbacks to the concept of an ecomuseum or cultural heritage centre, it is an effective means of allowing control of cultural property and representation to rest with the creator or at least the community, as well as ensuring that the records serve more than just research interests. For private archives it is a particularly appealing option since it stresses the importance of the community context from which the records evolved and ensures the integrity of the larger context of creation. The cultural heritage centre also emphasizes the significance of archives within a specific culture, and provides for an understanding of the connections between archives and other types of cultural property.

**Principles of Acquisition**

Acquiring private archives is always a delicate issue and one that can never be completely subjected to steadfast rules. Creators' wishes, institutional mandates and financial concerns inevitably play a large role. Thus, this thesis does not claim to propose unalterable rules, but rather to suggest some guidelines that should help to shape acquisition policies rather than specific acquisition decisions.

**Non-State Acquisition**

Where possible the state, particularly but not exclusively at the national level, should avoid acquiring private archives. The significance of location of preservation is great, and thus, the context of preservation as well as creation should be carefully assessed. The state acquisition of private archives opens up the potential for the meaning and significance of these materials to be altered or distorted. As well the private archives in the custody of the state can be seen as supporting the dominant group and thus, the archives can contribute to the creation of hegemony.
Certain private records, particularly those related to political activity, should still be acquired by state institutions since these creators and their records will have the greatest ties to the state and its public records. Indeed the state is the community in which they were primarily generated and thus they have more meaning and significance than in another institution.

**Cultural Connections to Community**

Private archives should be acquired in order to facilitate cultural connections to the community in which they were created. By focusing on the community of creation rather than strictly on the research community, archives have the potential to serve a number of cultural roles, including research. By focusing on the cultural significance of the archives it is possible to recognize relationships between a variety of different types of cultural property which of course aids in the understanding of the culture in its entirety.

**Community Specific Institutions**

Institutions themselves should be designed to serve the creator community as well as others. This can be achieved through acquisition programs in larger institutions designed to serve the cultural needs of a specific community or through an institution created specifically for a distinct community, such as an ecomuseum. The development of these programs and institutions should be coordinated with members of the creator community.

Community in this sense encompasses both philosophical and physical entities, and so the acquisition need not be tied to one specific physical locale. The creation and fostering of archival networks would be indispensable in this area. It
is important that the designation of community come from members of the group itself rather than an outsider determination. Individuals and organizations must clearly identify with a particular community before their archives can be acquired as part of a community archives program. This means that acquisition should occur when the creator can be consulted. Of course it is possible that the creator may have no wish to be associated with the community that wishes to acquire the archives, and in these cases the creator's wishes must be respected.

**Complementarity**

Archives must be acquired on the principle of complementarity, that is, archives concerned with related functions or activities, or creators with similar responsibilities or interactions naturally complement each other. Thus, the archives of a politician or a public servant are frequently complementary to certain groups of public records. Complementarity refers to both creator and fonds. Archival institutions should not acquire material based solely on a macroappraisal of the creator which confirms the creator's significance to the mandate or to other similar creators whose archives have already been acquired. Simply because a creator has strong ties to a community does not mean that their archives will reflect this. The records themselves must clearly show the ties to the community and to the other archives in the institution. Conversely archives cannot be acquired solely for their informational content in disregard of the creator's ties to other communities. Even if the records have a great deal of significance for the community the links to other communities must be considered.
System of Archival Institutions

Finally, the development of a strong archival network and the establishment of many community archives would greatly facilitate the appropriate acquisition of material. By establishing more archival institutions it is possible to increase the amount of control that communities, philosophic and physical, have over their cultural property and their representation. Institutions can then help to strengthen cultural connections in the present and the ties to the past. Nor does there need to be any limit on the number of institutions established. While some may claim to represent a given geographical region it is equally likely that many sub-groups within this designation would prefer to establish their own institution in order to ensure that they maintain control over their heritage. As long as communication between these groups is promoted there should be little competition, even though there may be some areas of overlap.

By developing a reliable communications network between archival institutions, the physical dispersal of archival material is not as much of an impediment to access. By facilitating communications between institutions it becomes possible to share not only knowledge of programs and acquisitions but also possibly provide access to holdings through loans or electronic communication. Location becomes less essential to the researcher while at the same time creator communities can maintain custody and control.

Summary

International changes in the late twentieth century are resulting in a globalization of much of society, and this has in turn led many people to look at the
significance of smaller regional and cultural groups. For many individuals and organizations it is these small groups that are the significant factor in determining self-identity. The cultural connections to these small communities are much greater than to any larger social group. In light of these changing perceptions it seems reasonable to reassess the manner and purposes for which private archives are acquired.

Although the concept of the ecomuseum originated in a different discipline, its purpose and ideas are suitable for archives. By combining the principles of the ecomuseum with the archival focus on dispersed local institutions connected by a communication network an ideal institution emerges: a cultural institution designed to serve the needs of a specific cultural community but linked to other institutions throughout the country. Although this type of institution may not always be feasible there are certain principles that can be followed for any type of private archives acquisition.

The suggestions made can not always be followed, nor should they be since exceptions will probably occur that merit the disregard of them. Likewise there are bound to be other issues concerning private archives that have been overlooked in these principles. However, it is hoped that this discussion of the issues of private archives will encourage archivists to examine more critically their activities and to question accepted practice. These principles are based on the assumption that private archives are an essential cultural resource and one that needs to be preserved, underlying this is the belief that this preservation is best carried out by those communities that have the most cultural connections to the archives and thus,
have the greatest stake in ensuring their continuing preservation and use. That community based cultural institutions face the same difficulties as larger organizations is clear, but it it to be hoped that at this level the problems of representation and cultural dominance are more manageable, and that more diverse members of the culture can be included in the discourse. Perfect objective representation may be unachievable but community institutions may have a better chance at reflecting the manifold cultural connections.
CONCLUSION

In the introduction, the debate between Robert McDonald and Christopher Hives was mentioned to illustrate two emerging points of view concerning the acquisition of private archives and their significance. This discourse formed the starting point for analyzing the traditional practices concerning private archives and their changing cultural role within society. An historical investigation into private archives indicated that after archives came to be valued for their research potential there were two primary approaches to acquisition, one with active state involvement the other where this responsibility was left to private initiative. In Canada the tradition of state institutions acquiring private material was not only accepted but lauded as a holistic and encompassing approach to societal documentation. However, with diminishing resources and the increasing focus on the importance of regions this practice is coming under critical scrutiny. While current pragmatic concerns such as those voiced by Hives counsel the acquisition of private archives by local institutions, there are also compelling theoretical considerations about the nature of private archives that suggest this as well.

The loss of heritage is a serious problem for many groups when their archives are acquired by the state since these groups lose their immediate contact and continuity with the past. To a certain extent these groups lose control over their cultural representation since the tangible remains of their past have been acquired by others and preserved for research use rather than continuing cultural interaction. The potential for the state to appropriate and distort representation of minority groups through the acquisition of private archives is also an important
consideration. Likewise state acquisition may contribute to the creation of hegemony where only the dominant viewpoints are represented, and the minority groups marginalized. Decontextualization of material occurs whenever it is removed from its context of creation, but institutions designed and run by the community of creation are more likely to recognize and preserve relationships between creator, records and community than a state institution.

Throughout this thesis attention has been focused on the significance of societal attitudes for determining archival practices and perceptions about archives. These perceptions of course alter over time as societies change and evolve, and as more radical ideas gradually become incorporated into mainstream thought. Society itself is comprised of numerous distinct communities all of which impact greatly on their members, shaping and fostering identity and conceptual frameworks. Acquisition, like other archival functions is performed by archivists who are greatly influenced by the society and community in which in which they live. The choices archivists make about what is acquired and preserved reveal their social and cultural backgrounds, their decisions are reflections of the important issues of their society. Rather than ignoring this, or attempting to create an objective taxonomy of value, archivists should be encouraged to acknowledge their own socio-cultural background and help to develop acquisition programs or specific cultural institutions that reflect an awareness of this. One means of achieving this is to make the archivist and the institution represent specific communities rather than all of society. Rather than attempting to represent equally all elements of society, the institution and its archivists can concentrate on specific segments. By concentrating
on particular groups it is possible to represent diverse elements rather than just the
dominant viewpoint, and this is true not just for societal representation but also for
representation within the group itself. This community specific approach concurs
with the growing recognition of the importance of communities in our society and
the significance of culture for the community.

Communities, physical and philosophic, are the primary social entity in
which identity is created and fostered, and as such are enormously important in the
shaping of conceptual frameworks. It is these conceptual frameworks that will
determine the values, beliefs and attitudes of individuals who comprise society. An
essential element of these communities is their cultural property, which provides
links to the past and a sense of cultural continuity. Archives are one facet of
cultural property and as such are extremely important to the cultural self-knowledge
of the community. Although cultural property contains information that is useful
to other groups, the creating community has significant symbolic associations to the
material which are often hard to reconstruct in an institution geared towards
preservation and display for research purposes. Each element of cultural property
created by the community or its members is linked to all other components of the
culture as well as to the members of the group, and these relationships are
destroyed when the material is removed from the community.

Recognizing the cultural and social significance of communities many
archivists have recently begun to encourage and advocate community archives
which can be linked by a network to other institutions in a specific geographical
area. These changes in the archival landscape are significant and well worth
promoting, particularly if the definition of community could be extended to include philosophic as well so that a greater range of communities could be served. In addition to these changes it would be beneficial to consider recent movements in the museum world where new institutions, notably the ecomuseum, are emerging that are devoted to preserving and fostering the entire cultural spectrum of certain communities. These institutions preserve not just specific types of cultural property but also the interrelationships between these materials and foster their continuing use and interaction with the community. The focus is on the preservation of the culture for the members of the community not in order to aid scholarly investigations.

While this thesis has discussed some of the larger philosophic questions regarding private archives acquisition most of these areas deserve further investigation. It would be valuable to examine more closely the question of archives as cultural property, and in turn to investigate the attitudes of specific communities to their archives as cultural heritage. The role of cultural institutions in identity formation has been discussed only briefly and could certainly be explored further by archivists. Finally of all the concepts discussed in this thesis the idea of representation is perhaps the most integral to the archival endeavour and as such worthy of far more investigation.

31 Jian Liu, "The Potential for Acquisition of Ethnic Archives," discusses some of these issues and studies similar to this could be conducted by archivists desiring to determine how best to serve their community.
The principles and guidelines suggested in this thesis are not infallible. Considering that they are based in current societal perceptions and attitudes it is logical that the methods for acquisition will be likely to change as society also alters and develops. The principles suggested here attempt to reflect current Canadian attitudes towards the emerging role of communities and their relationship to private archives, and ideally they will help facilitate acquisition on community specific approach rather than a sweeping societal mandate. The essential aspect to remember is that the relationships between the archivist, creator, community, cultural property and the institution are important and should be recognized and encouraged, since these relationships are deemed important by our society.
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