

SERIES: HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE

By

LINDA M. JANZEN

B.A., The University of Saskatchewan, 1979

M.A., The University of Saskatchewan, 1987

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARCHIVAL STUDIES

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies

We accept this thesis as conforming

to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

MAY 1994

© Linda M. Janzen, 1994

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

(Signature)

School of Library, Archival & Information Studies
Department of _____

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Sept 6 / 94

ABSTRACT

This study examines the concept of the series in archival literature and practice. Although the series is an important element in archival arrangement and description and appraisal, and is central in controversy relating to traditional archival principles, it has never been the subject of analysis *per se*.

This thesis examines the history and theory of series through analysis of English North American archival literature, and its immediate antecedents. It aims to trace the origins and development of the series concept.

The study makes various conclusions about the series: Firstly, the series concept has an abstract element, is part of a single fonds and has a single provenance. Secondly, different definitions of series have served different purposes for archivists in the past; archivists need now to develop a concept and definition of series which will serve current goals. Thirdly, the methods and principles respecting the appraisal of series are not clearly defined, and more study is required in this area, as in other areas of appraisal.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1. The Series, Archival Theory and Archival Principles	4
CHAPTER 2. Defining Series	40
CHAPTER 3. Appraising Series	69
CONCLUSION	91
BIBLIOGRAPHY	93

LIST OF FIGURES

1. A document in two series and two fonds . . . 34

INTRODUCTION

This thesis represents an attempt to come to terms with the series - that ubiquitous entity with which we archivists always must deal in our work and in our thinking about our work; in our finding aids and in our essays.

The mention of "series" conjures up, for many student archivists, at least, the almost nightmarish complexities of the Australian system for records control and the theoretical debates it has triggered regarding record groups and fonds. Other concepts, such as that of a series reflecting a specific administrative function, or comprising the records of a particular sub-unit within an administrative organization, come also to mind. Any archivist working on an arrangement and description or appraisal project must always be thinking about what comprises a series in a particular fonds, and how that series should be dealt with.

The idea of studying series arose both from courses completed as part of the M.A.S. program, and from real work as an archivist faced with records to appraise and arrange and describe. The series is a worthy candidate for study in all its aspects because although it is always present in the background, neither the series, nor its persona in the archival literature, has been the focus of specific study. This means that various ideas about series have not been compared or synthesized, or evaluated in historical perspective. Conflicts and inconsistencies have not been

openly acknowledged. Although it is the central unit with respect to arrangement and description and appraisal, the series is frequently ill-defined.

The series is dealt with here in three chapters, focussing on the series and archival principles, the definition of series, and the appraisal of series. The emphasis throughout is on analysis of the archival literature to come to an understanding of the ideas which are held by archivists, how these developed, and how they can be rationalized. Thus, the sources for this study consist of archival literature and archival manuals, rules, and dictionaries which reflect current and historical thought about series. The study covers a broad range of issues in relation to the series, some of which are historical, some theoretical, and some practical.

Chapter One deals with the abstract concept of series, and how the archival principles of respect des fonds, provenance, and original order have been debated in relation to the series. Chapter Two places side by side, compares, and analyzes the various definitions of series which have been offered to archivists. Chapter Three considers how archivists have dealt with the appraisal of series, and what this implies for appraisal principles generally.

Trudy Huskamp Peterson suggests that archival theory is as much "a map of where archivists have been as an atlas

for future travels."¹ This thesis might be considered a floor plan of a building on a street on that map. Marked on the floor plan are room numbers, stairways, elevators, and especially the critical red dot labelled "You are here". Knowing where we are with respect to series will help us get where we want to go.

¹Trudy Huskamp Peterson, "The National Archives and the Archival Theorist Revisited," AA 49 (Spring 1986): 126.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SERIES, ARCHIVAL THEORY, AND ARCHIVAL PRINCIPLES

Over the course of the nineteenth century the basic principles of archival practice were articulated in various European countries. In 1841, the French proposed classement par fonds, or classification of records by individual institution, corporation, or family, as an alternative to other forms of classification which had been found unsatisfactory at the Archives Nationales. The Prussians expanded on this concept in 1881 by proposing the Provenienzprinzip and the Registraturprinzip as further practical axioms of archival arrangement. The Provenienzprinzip required that the records of constituent organizational units within an institution be kept together, and the Registraturprinzip, that these records be maintained in their original order and with their original designations.¹ Nineteenth century Europe also saw some more abstract consideration of the essential nature of archives and of archivists' work. This more abstract side of archival thinking is illustrated in the Manual for the

¹On the history, see T.R. Schellenberg, Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956), 172-5; and Terry Eastwood, "General Introduction," in The Archival Fonds: from Theory to Practice, ed. Terry Eastwood (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists. Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards, 1992), 2-3.

Arrangement and Description of Archives, published in the Netherlands in 1898.²

The Dutch manual's discussion of the nature of archival fonds reflects the broad trends of thought in European and Dutch society at the time. Not even archives were beyond what a conservative intellectual of the time referred to as the "hypnotic spell of the dogma of Evolution."³

During the decade preceding the publication of Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species in November 1859, a number of Dutch scientists and intellectuals in the university community had proposed, taught and published theories about the laws of nature and the development of the organic world. Hence, Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection was easily accepted in most intellectual circles. The first Dutch translation of The Origin of Species was published in 1860.

The Dutch archivists presented a picture of archives as
 an organic whole, a living organism which grows, takes shape, and undergoes changes in accordance with fixed rules.⁴

²S. Muller, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin, Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives, trans. of the 2d ed. by Arthur H. Leavitt (New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1968).

³Abraham Kuyper, *Evolutie: Rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit*, 20 Oct. 1899 [Evolution: address delivered at the transference of the rectorship at the Free University, Oct. 20, 1899 (Amsterdam and Pretoria: Borkhandel vrhn Hóveker en Wormser, 1899), quoted in Ilse N. Bulhof, "The Netherlands", in The Comparative Reception of Darwinism, ed. Thomas F. Glick (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), 269.

⁴S. Muller, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin, A Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives, 19. Note that the "archival collection" which they discuss here is what we would be

This characterization captures concisely the overall concept of archives which the Dutch authors wanted to project, but it is noteworthy that there are frequent references in the manual to the "organic" nature of archives. Muller, Feith and Fruin speak of an archives being "formed and transformed while it was still a living organism."⁵ The authors' phrase "the skeleton of the archival collection" was debated among members of the Netherlands Association of Archivists, and two differing ideas of the skeleton were offered. The originator of the metaphor stated he had in mind the framework of a house, while another member suggested the skeleton of an animal. This latter allusion, the manual noted, was "more in harmony with the definition that the archival collection is an *organic* whole"⁶

Considering the development of archives in abstract terms allowed archivists to compare archival work with scientific work. In debate about the wording of the manual, one member of the Dutch Association of Archivists remarked:

The archivist deals with the archival collection just as the paleontologist does with the bones of a

more likely now to refer to as an archival fonds, and does not imply an artificial gathering of materials. With respect to the "organic" nature of archives, the Prussians did express ideas about the organic nature of each registry, but not in such overtly Darwinian terms. See Ernst Posner, "Max Lehmann and the Genesis of the Principle of Provenance," Indian Archives 4 (July/Dec. 1950): 138.

⁵Muller, Feith and Fruin, Manual, 60.

⁶Ibid., 69. Italics are in Leavitt's translation.

prehistoric animal: he tries from these bones to put the skeleton of the animal together again.⁷

The Dutch manual was thus a theoretical work about archives, as well as a seminal manual of archival practice. It had a significant impact on European archivists who at that time lacked, for the most part, any international consensus on archival principles and practice.⁸ Muller, Feith and Fruin's manual was translated into German in 1905, into Italian in 1908, and into French in 1910.

Because the first English translation of the Dutch manual did not appear until 1940, the English archivist Hilary Jenkinson became acquainted with Dutch archival theory through the French translation. It was no doubt Jenkinson's own A Manual of Archive Administration, originally published in 1922, which made an English translation of the Dutch manual less urgent to English-speaking archivists. The society of late Victorian England in which Jenkinson grew up was permeated by a broad movement of thought regarding nature and man's place in nature, a movement which stemmed from Darwin's works and came to be known popularly as "Darwinism", despite its broader origins.⁹ Jenkinson's view of the nature of

⁷Ibid., 70-71. The metaphor of the paleontologist continues on pages 71 and 72.

⁸For a thorough discussion of the situation at the time, see William F. Birdsall "The American Archivists' Search for Professional Identity, 1909-1936" (Ph.D. diss., U. of Wisconsin, 1973), 69-118. He deals with this comprehensively in Chapter IV "Laying the Foundation for an Archive Economy". See especially page 99.

⁹See generally Robert M. Young, Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in Victorian Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

archives reveals the impact of this movement of thought, and coincides to a high degree with the view of the Dutch archivists. As had they, he championed the "organic" nature of archives. Jenkinson pointedly heads one of the sections of his manual "The Evolution of Archives."¹⁰ On page 25, he discusses "Differentiation." Jenkinson explains, theoretically, how an archival fonds is differentiated into distinct "classes":

from an original collection not arranged upon any particular principle there will very soon be separated off such classes as by reason of their numbers or the fact that they are frequently required for reference are judged worthy of the dignity of a separate file.¹¹

Following his discussion of the causes of differentiation in archives, Jenkinson proposes to "glance at the varying careers of all these generations of Archives", that is, of these series, or "various offshoots", which were differentiated from the "original

1985), 1-22. See also Philip G. Fothergill, Historical Aspects of Organic Evolution (London: Hollis & Carter, 1952), 118-120.

¹⁰Hilary Jenkinson, A Manual of Archive Administration, 2d ed., 1937, reissued with an introduction and bibliography by Roger H. Ellis (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., 1965), 22.

¹¹Hilary Jenkinson, A Manual of Archive Administration, 25. Note that the term "collection" is here to be equated with fonds and does not imply an artificial collection. The term "class" which Jenkinson uses, and the British still use, is commonly considered the equivalent of our term "series". Jenkinson himself did not equate class and series. He distinguished them, but seemed to use them interchangeably at times. He says, on page 116, that a class is composed of one series, or possibly "where they are very small" of a succession of several series. So, it seems that to Jenkinson, a class and a series generally had the same actual record content but were nevertheless distinct conceptually: A class was identified by administrative function, and a series by filing arrangement, as he concludes on page 111.

stock."¹² Among many possible "careers" Jenkinson notes that "an archive class may die out with the circumstances which brought it into being", or "may become itself so important that its original connexion with the parent stock is almost or entirely lost sight of."¹³ Jenkinson goes on to speak of "natural classifications of Archives", in terms which allude to biological classification.¹⁴

The language of organic development in archives has been used in more recent North American literature, often without Jenkinson's discrimination. T.R. Schellenberg was a major offender in this respect; the examples are many.¹⁵ Other writers of archival literature have taken it up, and used it with more or less precision.¹⁶ However that may be, we should not lose sight of the significance and value

¹²Note that the terms and phrases in quotation marks here are Jenkinson's own terms on page 28 of A Manual of Archive Administration.

¹³Jenkinson, Manual, 28, 29. Jenkinson emphasized "natural accumulation" to the end of his career. See his article "Roots" in Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson, (Gloucester: Alan Sutton 1980), 369.

¹⁴Jenkinson, Manual, 31: "by one process or another they come to life and, having come, live and develop along certain lines." See also the allusion on p 28: "While the original stock, the Ancient Miscellanea, continues to flourish and perhaps to throw out fresh branches, what may be the fate of its various offshoots?"

¹⁵T.R. Schellenberg, "Archival Principles of Arrangement," AA 24 (Jan 1961): 18: "each record item...is part of an organic whole." That we can accept, but then he speaks of a series "showing organic activity" on page 21. What does that mean? Again in his The Management of Archives (New York: Columbia University press, 1965), 81, he speaks of "organic activities or transactions". He uses the word "organic" repeatedly in The Management of Archives, on pages 90, 98, 167, for example, without really making it clear what he means by the term.

¹⁶See, for example, Max. J. Evans, "Authority Control: An Alternative to the Record Group Concept," AA 49 (Summer 1986): 252-3; Oliver W. Holmes, "History and Theory of Archival Practice," in University Archives, ed. Rolland E. Stevens (Champaign: U. of Illinois, 1965), 3-4.

of the original allusions to the organic world in archival theory and literature made by Muller, Feith and Fruin and by Jenkinson.

In abstract terms, then, a "series" is somehow a differentiated or identifiable part of an archival fonds which itself is always changing in accordance with "fixed rules" in response to the environment of activity in which it arises. This concept appears to be heavily influenced by scientific and popular thinking about biological evolution in the last half of the nineteenth century. The "organic" metaphors popularized by Jenkinson and Muller, Feith and Fruin derive their meaning from that context.

Archival principles expressed in the terms provenance, respect des fonds, and original order have not always co-existed peacefully with the concept of the series. The series has frequently been central to discussion of basic principles of archives. The Australian archivist, P.J. Scott, who developed a complex system for identifying and controlling modern records affected by rapidly increasing rates of administrative change, believed that in essence, the series put the two cardinal principles of archives into direct conflict:

respect for provenance required that all series...be assigned to their correct creating agency, even by breaking-up series; respect for original order required equally that original record-keeping systems be preserved intact and not dismembered.¹⁷

¹⁷See his series of articles on the problems and the solution developed in the Australian Archives: P.J. Scott, "The Record Group Concept: A Case for Abandonment," AA 29 (October 1966): 493-504;

Scott decided in favour of retaining original record-keeping systems, and his solution to the "problem" of series was labeled by one critic, who expressed the concerns of many, as "the scarcely touched-up fact of the old system...the classification by topic." He implied that Scott failed to respect the principle of provenance and attempted to substitute the "series" for the "fonds", thus rejecting the basic principle of respect des fonds.¹⁸

Since the series does figure in these theoretical arguments, we must look at the origins of the problems in relating series to respect des fonds, provenance, and original order.

The definitions of, and ideas about interrelationships among these three terms used to express archival principles are not subjects of unanimity within the archival community. In fact, the "definitions" of these concepts are not and never have been as clear cut as we would like.

P.J. Scott and G. Finlay, "Archives and Administrative Change: Some Methods and Approaches (Part 1)," Archives and Manuscripts 7 (August 1978): 115-127; P.J. Scott, C.D. Smith and G. Finlay, "Archives and Administrative Change: Some Methods and Approaches (Part 2)," Archives and Manuscripts 7 (April 1979): 151-165; P.J. Scott, C.D. Smith and G. Finlay, "Archives and Administrative Change: Some Methods and Approaches (Part 3)," Archives and Manuscripts 7 (May 1980): 41-54; P.J. Scott, C.D. Smith and G. Finlay, "Archives and Administrative Change: Some Methods and Approaches (Part 4)," Archives and Manuscripts 8 (December 1980): 51-69; P.J. Scott, "Archives and Administrative Change: Some Methods and Approaches (Part 5)," Archives and Manuscripts 9 (Sept. 1981): 3-18. For the quotation see "Part 4," 56.

¹⁸M. Duchein, "Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of Respect des fonds in Archival Science," Archivaria 16 (Summer 1983): 71-2. This is a translation of the article which was published as M. Duchein "Le respect des fonds en archivistique: principes theoretiques et problemes pratiques," La Gazette des Archives 97 (1977): 71-96.

The confusion which reigns regarding the definition of these terms and the interrelationships among the principles they represent has been noted by archivists in the past. Birdsall noted that at the time of the first Conference of the International Council of Archives in Brussels in 1910 there was no uniform "European" body of archival techniques, and that while the Brussels Conference passed a resolution endorsing the principle of provenance, it was already being disputed and interpreted differently by archivists throughout Europe.¹⁹ In 1950, Ernst Posner expressed dissatisfaction with these definitions and noted the confusion among the principles of provenance, respect des fonds, and respect for original order:

The term [principle of provenance] is admittedly inadequate because it fails to stress the fundamental difference between the new principle and that of respect des fonds...."Principle of the sanctity of the original order" would be more to the point.²⁰

Similar confusion about the meaning of the term "provenance" was noted by Ian MacLean. He believed that Jenkinson's understanding of respect des fonds was the same as that of the Germans' concept of Provenienzprinzip.²¹

¹⁹Birdsall, 99-100. Terry Cook likewise notes the confusion about terminology in his paper "The Concept of the Archival Fonds: Theory, Description and Provenance in the Post-Custodial Era," in The Archival Fonds: from Theory to Practice, ed. Terry Eastwood (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists. Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards, 1991), 35-6.

²⁰E. Posner, "Max Lehmann and the Genesis of the Principle of Provenance," 133 n.2. Again on page 134, Posner makes it clear that he equates the principle of provenance with the Registraturprinzip. He clearly believed that the principle of original order was the most important archival principle.

²¹Ian MacLean, "An Analysis of Jenkinson's 'Manual of Archive Administration' in Light of Australian Experience," in Essays in

Muller, Feith and Fruin use the phrase *respect des fonds* only twice in passing in their manual, and seem not to use the word "provenance" at all.²² The 1964 Elsevier's Lexicon of Archive Terminology and the 1984 Dictionary of Archival Terminology, further illustrate the confusion of terminology. The 1964 dictionary offered definitions of "Le Principe de Provenance" and "Fonds d'Archives". "Principe du respect des fonds" was given only as an equivalent to "Le Principe de Provenance". In 1984, "Respect des fonds" merited nothing more than a reference to "Principle of Provenance", the entry for which is:

The basic principle that records of the same provenance must not be intermingled with those of any other provenance; frequently referred to as "respect des fonds". Also extended to include the registry principle.²³

"Principe du respect des fonds" was again given as a French equivalent of the principle of provenance. Likewise, the 1984 definition of "Registry Principle" noted that it was "sometimes implied in the principle of provenance."²⁴ The confusion noted above can be dealt with in principle simply by adopting and using the definition of "Archival Integrity" offered by the 1984 dictionary:

A basic standard derived from the principle of provenance and the registry principle which requires that an archive/record group shall be preserved in its

Memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson, ed. A.E.J. Hollaender (London: Society of Archivists, 1962), 140 and n.7.

²²Muller, Feith and Fruin, Manual: *respect des fonds* appears on pages 34 and 50.

²³Peter Walne, ed., Dictionary of Archival Terminology (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1984), 130.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 144

entirety without division, mutilation, alienation, unauthorised destruction or addition, except by accrual or replevin, in order to ensure its full evidential and informational value.²⁵

As is well known, the principle of respect des fonds was first enunciated in 1841 at the Archives Nationales in France. It was the result of a reaction against the practice at the Archives Nationales during and after the French Revolution, of classifying archives by criteria other than their administrative origins. An example of the kind of classement which went on at the Archives Nationales before the enunciation of the principle is provided by Henri Bordier's 1855 treatise on French archives: the Bureau du triage removed all papal bulls from the records of churches, abbeys and other establishments and put them together in a group.²⁶ Bordier hailed classement par fonds, as it was enunciated in a memo to French archivists from the Minister of Interior in April, 1841, with enthusiasm.²⁷ The new principle of classement par fonds, as opposed to classification by subject or form, required that records which originated with any particular corporation, establishment, family, or individual, be kept together. Within the fonds, however, the French proposed that records could be organized by subject and by whatever

²⁵Ibid., 21

²⁶Henri Bordier, Les Archives de la France ou Histoire des Archives de l'Empire, des Archives des Ministeres, des Departements, des communes, des Hopitaux, des Greffes, des Notaires, etc. (Paris 1855: Reprinted Geneva: Megariotis Reprints, 1978), 51. The Bureau du Triage des Titres was established in April 1796 with the mandate of disposing of useless records.

²⁷Ibid., 51.

seemed best in each case - a geographical, chronological, or alphabetical arrangement.²⁸

Since the word "fonds" figures in both the phrases "respect des fonds" and "classement par fonds", it is worth some special examination. The French word fonds is derived from the Latin fundus (i) m. Fundus originally referred to the bottom, lowest part, or foundation, and came to refer to a piece of land, a farm or estate.²⁹ Fonds and a later derivative of it, fond, both continue to exist in modern French.³⁰ French dictionaries offer a wide range of definitions and uses of the two words fonds and fond, many overlapping. Indeed, Larousse notes that writers tended to confuse the two words. While both words can designate material capital in goods or money, the specialized archival use of the term is linked by Larousse to the *figurative* meaning of fonds as "Ensemble des ressources, autres que les biens matériels, propres à quelque chose et que l'on peut exploiter."³¹ The archival meaning,

²⁸see Bordier, 51-52, quoting the memo from the Interior Minister, and T.R. Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 170, also quoting the memo.

²⁹Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978) reprinted 1958, 793-94.

³⁰Jacqueline Picoche, Dictionnaire Etymologique du français (Montreal: Les Dictionnaires Robert-Canada SCC, 1983), 303.

³¹See Grand Larousse de la langue française, v.3 (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1973), 2013, 2014: fonds. n. m. Fig. Ensemble des ressources, autres que les biens matériels, propres à quelque chose et que l'on peut exploiter: *Cette société offre un fonds très riche, dans lequel un romancier peut puiser pour ses romans. Enrichir le fonds d'une langue. Specialem.* Dans les bibliothèques, les archives, etc., totalité des livres, manuscrits ou documents qui proviennent d'une collection: *La bibliothèque Ambrosienne a un fonds provenant du monastère de Bobbio.* I translate the Larousse definition quoted in the text above as "All the resources, other than

according to Larousse, is thus associated with the usable resources of an institution or organization other than its monetary funds.

Bordier's use of the term fonds in 1855 suggests that the word was, at that time, less than a term of art. Bordier in fact seems to use it in two senses which seem contradictory in the modern context. In his discussion of classement par fonds he emphasizes the character of a fonds as originating with a particular corporation, family, or individual, as discussed above. Elsewhere, however, he refers to the fonds of the section judiciaire. The section judiciaire was one of the general divisions of the French archives which included records from many sources, and would not correspond to the records of a corporation, family or individual.³²

Modern definitions of fonds tend to emphasize the Dutch/Jenkinsonian concept of "natural accumulation" as the essential element.³³ A further necessary element is that of autonomy, which has been defined in different ways. The Dutch manual defined the necessary autonomy of a fonds as

material goods, belonging to something, and which one can make use of."

³²Bordier speaks of the fonds of the section judiciaire on page 8. For an outline of the contents of the section judiciaire, see Bordier, 248-269.

³³See, for example, the Glossary of Rules for Archival Description, by the Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards of the Bureau of Canadian Archivists, page D-3. See Also Terry Cook, "The Concept of the Archival Fonds: Theory, Description, and Provenance in the Post-Custodial Era," 39-40 for examples of modern definitions of fonds. It is interesting to note that the 1974 "A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers," compiled by Frank B. Evans et al., AA 37 (July 1974): 415-433, did not even include the term fonds.

the inclusion of specific types of records. Jenkinson followed them in accepting the principle that a fonds must have an autonomy of some sort, and proposed that the necessary level of autonomy was that of the records of an administration which was

an organic whole, complete in itself, capable of dealing independently, without any added or external authority, with every side of any business which could normally be presented to it.³⁴

Since the words fonds and provenance will be used frequently in the following discussions, a "working definition" of these terms is called for, although they are not the central object of our discussions. When I use the term fonds, I mean to imply the Jenkinsonian concept of natural accumulation of records reflecting the work of an administration with a relatively high level of autonomy. When I say provenance, I refer to the identity of the creator of an archival entity such as the fonds or series. Authors whose work is discussed below in relation to my subject may or may not accept similar definitions. Whether they do or not should in most cases be made clear from context of the discussion.

Leaving now our excursus on the meaning of "fonds", and returning to the historical development of archival

³⁴Jenkinson Manual, 101. Note that Jenkinson here extends the "organic" metaphor to the administration itself, not just its archives. Duchein adopted Jenkinson's concept of autonomy and refined practical requirements for autonomy. See the discussion in Cook, "The Concept of the Archival Fonds," 42-43. Scott's concept of autonomy was more closely linked with that of a record-keeping system as a more or less physical entity.

principles in relation to the series, we see in the first French formulation of respect des fonds a recognition of a link between the fonds and the creating body, but no implication that there is any link among the records within the fonds, apart from the fact that they are of a common origin; that is, the link was of each document to its source, not of each document to others in the fonds. The idea of a series as an archival entity within a fonds simply did not enter into the concept of respect des fonds. Nor did that principle apparently encompass any concept of archives as an organic accumulation of records of activity, with each document linked to the one which called for its own generation, and the one which it, in turn, required to be generated. Therefore, the original concept of respect des fonds did not even offer, much less enshrine in theory, any concept of series of records as naturally-occurring entities within an archival fonds.³⁵

The Prussian contributions to archival theory, the Provenienzprinzip and the Registraturprinzip, were first articulated, in 1881, in regulations establishing how things were to be done in a particular institution.

³⁵The Archives Nationales did at the time use the term série, as illustrated by Bordier. The Archives Nationales was divided into Sections - such as the Legislative Section and Administrative Section - relating to a general area. These sections were divided into series. Within the Legislative Section, for example, were four series, A-D. These were A - Collections of Laws; B - Proceedings of National Assemblies; C - Minutes of National Assemblies; D - Missions of deputies and committee papers. These series are clearly not directly related to the series which are the subject of investigation in this thesis.

The Provenienzprinzip established that records should be grouped according to their origins in subordinate administrative bodies within the government. The Registraturprinzip referred to the way in which the archival institution was required to maintain the records physically after transfer from the administrative office where the records were in active use. In the Prussian state, each unit of government had its own registry office, and a "registry" was the equivalent of a unit of government. According to the Prussian archival regulations, each agency was to be assigned a stack area in the archival repository intended exclusively for the records of that agency. Within that stack area, these records were to be maintained in the order and with the designations which they received in the course of the daily business of the agency.³⁶

The Registraturprinzip recognized that there was some archival significance to the way in which an agency organized its records physically and intellectually. The requirement that records be placed in a designated stack area in the order given them by the registry office gave them a clear physical manifestation; the requirement that their original designations be maintained recognized the value of the original intellectual organization of groups of records. The registry principle established the notion of respect for original physical and intellectual

³⁶Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 173, 174, 175.

organization of administrative records by their keepers. While neither the Provenienzprinzip nor the Registraturprinzip defined "series" of records, the registry principle allowed for the eventual definition of series as integral units within a fonds, and for defining them in terms of their organization or filing system, with physical and intellectual components.

It seems that what we have in terms of archival theory and principles of archival practice are two quite separate and distinct lines of development. Along one line, we have the French and Prussian development of the concepts of respect des fonds, provenance, and the registry principle. Along another line, we have the thought of Muller, Feith and Fruin, and Jenkinson, which emphasize the organic elements of archives, their development, and the internal relationships among records and groups of records. The two different lines of thought produce different concepts of "order" in archives - one that is mandated by the registry principle, and refers to the original organization of records in an office, with physical and intellectual components, and the other a natural order which is inherent in archives, which Jenkinson emphasizes as an essential element of archives, and which organization of records physically and intellectually, in a registry or any other record-keeping system, is intended to make more clear. However difficult it may be to separate these two notions in practice, the concepts themselves are distinct.

These two concepts of "order" are closely bound up with the concept of archival series. Henceforth, when it is necessary for the purpose of clarity of argument, to distinguish these two concepts which have been subsumed under the "principle of original order", the terms "natural order" and "original organization" will be used.

While the Jenkinsonian principle of organic, naturally accumulating archives, that is, the principle of "natural order", has never been a subject of genuine controversy in the contemporary archival community, the principle of "original organization" has been controversial. Both concepts also have implications for the concept of archival series. Let us look now at the problems which arise regarding series and "original order".

We have seen, in archival thinking, a gradual erosion of the principle of "original organization" (a respect for the original physical and intellectual arrangement of records) in favour of the principle of "natural order" (respect for, and elucidation of, the administrative, transactional, links among records). There is a marked contrast between current archival thinking and practices and the original Prussian dictum on original organization, which mandated that records were to be kept in the order and with the same designations established by the administrative office, in a stack area specifically set aside for the individual agency.³⁷

³⁷On the Prussian insistence on physical order, see Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 174-175.

This is most clearly illustrated with respect to the physical aspect of original organization. Current archival thought rejects completely the physical aspect of original organization, considering it simply backward and a holdover from centuries and decades when information systems could not adequately serve archival purposes. Max Evans disparages the practice of locating related records in physical propinquity to each other, which he notes was at one time a practice recommended by the U.S. National Archives, and of arranging records on the shelves in the stacks in the same order in which they are listed in the archival inventory.³⁸ A similar rejection of the physical is evident in David Bearman and Richard Lytle's analysis of relationships among records.³⁹ Likewise, it was revealed by Carl Vincent of the Canadian Public Archives that "no attempt is made to keep records from a series in any original order on the shelves" at that institution.⁴⁰ Others have suggested that a new concept of "order" in archives is called for.⁴¹ There are, of course, still those who would adhere to physical order with the rigidity

³⁸Max J. Evans, "Authority Control: An Alternative to the Record Group Concept," 254.

³⁹David A. Bearman and Richard H. Lytle, "The Power of the Principle of Provenance," Archivaria 21 (Winter 1985-86): 21.

⁴⁰Carl Vincent, "The Record Group: A Concept in Evolution," Archivaria 4 (Winter 1976-77): 11.

⁴¹Frank Boles, "Disrespecting Original Order," AA 45 (Winter 1982): 29-30, where he calls for a new theory of order in archives, and Brien Brothman, "Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice," Archivaria 32 (Summer 1991): 85. Brothman makes a conceptual distinction between "original order" and "archival order". "Archival order", he suggests, is a "serviceable, idealized, archival intellectual order", created by the archivist.

of the Prussians, but these are few and not very vocal.⁴² Essentially, current archival thought rejects the notion that the physical aspect of original organization is a useful means of enhancing understanding of the natural order of archives. This implies a continuing acceptance of the notion that the intellectual aspect of original organization is a valid means to elucidating natural order, and an acceptance of the principle of natural order itself.

The beginnings of this trend of thought which subordinates aspects of original organization to the overall aim of elucidating natural order can be traced to T.R. Schellenberg in the nineteen fifties. Schellenberg was among the first to reject the principle of "original organization", as we are now calling it for purposes of argument, as an end in itself. Schellenberg for the first time articulated what may be called his "disrespect for original order" in a 1961 article.⁴³ He rejected, firstly,

⁴²See, for example, Gerald L. Fischer, "Letting the archival dust settle: some remarks on the record group concept," Journal of the Society of Archivists 4 (October 1973): 644: "We should not deceive ourselves that the listing of series on card indices or other tables, however elaborate, is any substitute for the reality of the administrative structure and physical propinquity that the records of a given agency once had." and "...archivists should contemplate with concern any method of arranging records that does not, so far as possible, ensure an enduring physical reflection of the administrative structure that gave rise to them."

⁴³T.R. Schellenberg, "Archival Principles of Arrangement," 19. It seems that earlier, Schellenberg had been less clear on this. In Modern Archives, in 1956, page 168, he had written that "Archival principles of arrangement relate, first, to the ordering of groups of records in relation to each other, and secondly, to the ordering of individual items within the groups." P.J. Scott likewise rejects the idea that there is some "hierarchy" of series. See "The Record Group Concept: A Case for Abandonment," 497. The phrase "disrespect for original order" was apparently first coined by Frank Boles in his article "Disrespecting Original Order". Boles is much in implied agreement with Schellenberg on original order. The substance of his

the idea that there was any "original order" among the various series of a fonds. He also argued that the "record items" (meaning files) *within* a record series need not *necessarily* be maintained in their original organization. Schellenberg gave examples of filing systems in which individual files have an arrangement which "does not contribute to an understanding of the activity that is reflected in the series as a whole."⁴⁴ He believed that in such cases, the original organization could be destroyed. He did emphasize, however, that if the original organization has any value in showing "organic activity", that is, if it had any value in clarifying the natural order of the fonds, the original organization should "by all means" be preserved. Schellenberg is here subordinating the importance of physical and intellectual organization of records to a more abstract concept of archival integrity, and a more abstract concept of what the essence of a series was. His aim, above all, is to preserve the integrity of archives. To do this, he feels, one should 1) do nothing to obscure their source in a particular body and 2) do nothing to obscure their source in a particular activity.⁴⁵ Schellenberg was clearly of the view that many filing systems, that is, systems of original organization, do the second of these - obscure the

argument is the same as Schellenberg's. Boles reviews the problems associated with retention of original order and proposes solutions for practice.

⁴⁴Schellenberg, "Archival Principles of Arrangement," 21.

⁴⁵Ibid., 23.

relation of records to a particular activity. Schellenberg repeated these views in his 1965 Management of Archives. Although Schellenberg there asserts that "Methods of filing are unimportant to an archivist,"⁴⁶ he must surely mean to say that methods of filing, that is, systems of original organization, are less important than preserving and elucidating the natural order of a fonds, and that respecting original organization is simply a means to that end.

It should be remembered that much of Schellenberg's writing was directed toward the education of archivists in a fledgling archival profession in the United States. Schellenberg, while aiming to appear to be offering very practical, usable advice to his audience, was also trying to illustrate, nonetheless, the real substance of what archivists should be doing. Schellenberg was aiming to impress upon them that the real substance of their arrangement and descriptive work was elucidating the natural order of the fonds, not simply providing users with a reproduction of the original organization of the records.

Schellenberg's approach becomes all the more defensible when one considers what other writers in the field of archives were propounding at the time. Frank B. Evans was allowing American archivists to find solace in physical arrangement. He asserted that archivists must, after determining what the series are in each record group,

⁴⁶Schellenberg, The Management of Archives, 102.

"give these series a 'meaningful' physical order."⁴⁷ O.W. Holmes emphasized the "sanctity" of the "original order" and, while admitting that this was sometimes "difficult to carry into execution", believed that nevertheless the original organization must be rigidly respected. Finding aids and information systems, in his view, would compensate for the "inconveniences" resulting from retention of original organization.⁴⁸

Schellenberg thus recognized that original organization is intended to elucidate natural order and that the two principles are closely connected. It should be borne in mind that Schellenberg was never an advocate of wholesale reorganization of administrative records in order to provide convenient access to specific information. It was really only with great reluctance that he cast doubt on the principle of original order.⁴⁹ In typical Schellenberg fashion, he framed the problem as one of practice and practicality, rather than as one of theory or principle. In an attempt to find practical support for his position, he expressed a belief that filing systems in Europe, where the principle of original order originated, were unlike the "modern" filing systems with which American

⁴⁷F.B. Evans, "Modern Methods of Arrangement of Archives in the United States," AA 29 (April 1966): 258, 261.

⁴⁸Oliver W. Holmes, "History and Theory of Archival Practice," 4-5. Holmes also emphasized the "physical placement of each series in relation to other series" in his 1964 article "Archival Arrangement - Five Different Operations at Five Different Levels," AA 27 (January 1964): 28.

⁴⁹This reluctance is quite apparent in his article "Archival Principles of Arrangement".

archivists had to deal, and the principle of original order, therefore, could not be so rigidly applied.⁵⁰ The fact that Schellenberg pushed his view of the uniqueness of the modern American archival situation so far as to assert that "the modern archivist" needs "to redefine archives in a manner more suited to his own requirements", thus incurring the wrath of orthodoxy as represented by Jenkinson, should not blind us to the fact that his disrespect of original order has a valid theoretical basis.⁵¹ With respect to original organization and natural order of record series, Schellenberg should not be treated like the boy who cried 'Wolf'!

This is especially the case since support for his views comes even from Europeans. The Frenchman M. Duchein argued that the principle of respect for original order was based in Germanic and Anglo-Saxon registry traditions. He believed, therefore, that the principle of original order did not correspond to any reality in, for example, France, and that filing systems for current records made "respect for internal structure" difficult. Duchein concludes that original order should not always be respected.⁵² In the terms we are using for purposes of argument, Duchein concludes that original organization of records does not always help to elucidate their natural order. Neither Duchein nor Schellenberg can be accused of failure to

⁵⁰Schellenberg. "Archival Principles of Arrangement," 22.

⁵¹See Schellenberg's Modern Archives, 15. For the reaction of Jenkinson, see Hilary Jenkinson, "Roots," 369.

⁵²M. Duchein "Theoretical Principles," 77-79.

acknowledge the inherent organic nature and integrity of archives. Duchein specifically rejects 'classification', and Schellenberg repeatedly emphasizes the importance of the organic nature of archives.⁵³ Their emphasis on "natural order" rather than "original organization" carries with it an implicit recognition of the idea that an archival series has some inherent nature other than that imposed by a filing scheme.

The principle of provenance has likewise been controversial in relation to archival series. The perception by archivists of a conflict between "original organization" and "natural order", or the basic idea that the original organization of records does not always elucidate organic links within an archival fonds, has been expressed by archivists as the idea of conflict between the principles of provenance and original order.

Richard Berner and Uli Haller argue that if the original filing scheme of records does not "reflect provenance", it should be "adjusted" to do so. They suggest that this merely gives provenance proper precedence over original order.⁵⁴ P.J. Scott believed that the proper description of record series put provenance and original order into conflict, and argues that his

⁵³Ibid., 71-2; Schellenberg, The Management of Archives, 90, 98.

⁵⁴R.C. Berner and Uli Haller, "Principles of Archival Inventory Construction," AA 47 (Spring 1984): 140.

descriptive system respects original order in physical arrangement and provenance in descriptive media.⁵⁵

These attempts to oppose provenance and original order are mistaken. What is in fact going on is the opposition of the two principles we have identified above as "original organization" and "natural order". The concept of original order, as the phrase is used in archival literature, and specifically by the authors noted in the above discussion, is limited in content to the physical arrangement and organization of records. When authors need to call upon some "higher principle", revealing the essential organic nature of archives, that of "Provenance" is invoked. It would seem, however, that our concept of an inherent "natural order" to archives has been subsumed under the principle of provenance in their minds.

The notion of provenance as something comprehending the existence of all manner of organic links among records in an archives is perhaps what led Scott to his concept of provenance of record series. The Australian system of series description has raised the concerns of archival orthodoxy largely because of its concept of "multiple-

⁵⁵Scott, "Archives and Administrative Change (Part 4)," 56, 61. On page 56: "First we embarked on a fundamental re-examination and re-definition of archival principles, and concluded that in essence the two cardinal principles were here in conflict: respect for provenance required that all series, including portions of multiple-provenance series, be assigned to their correct creating agency, even by breaking-up series; respect for original order required equally that original record-keeping systems be preserved intact and not dismembered." And on p.61: "By this approach, we feel we are able to reconcile the conflict between the two cardinal principles alluded to above, respecting original order in physical arrangement as strictly as possible and respecting provenance in descriptive media...."

provenance" or "variable-provenance" of series.⁵⁶ This has been viewed by critics as a breach of respect des fonds, because records of different provenance are melded into one archival unit.⁵⁷ This elevates the record series to a level above that of the fonds.

There are indeed difficulties with the concept of "multiple-provenance". "Provenance" is another archival term which, as we have seen, has been used to mean a variety of things. The earliest formulation of the Provenienzprinzip required the attribution of records to the specific administrative unit within a larger organization which created and used them. In principle, we must accept that the "provenance" of record series is the fonds of which they are a subordinate part, and from which they acquire their primary identity. But how is that "primary identity" to be determined? Jenkinson clearly was of the view that records "belong" in an archival sense, to the administration or administrative unit in which they last played an active role - that is, to the last administration which used them in the course of routine business.⁵⁸ However difficult this may be to determine in practice, Jenkinson's principle is clear.

⁵⁶See Scott et al. "Archives and Administrative Change (Part 4)" 51, 57, for his definitions of these terms.

⁵⁷For critical views, see M. Duchein, 71-2, who considers the series system the "scarcely touched-up face of the old system...the classification by topic...." and Gerald L. Fischer "Letting the archival dust settle: some remarks on the record group concept," 644.

⁵⁸Jenkinson, A Manual of Archive Administration, 104: "An Archive belongs to the last Administration in which it played an active part."

Muller, Feith and Fruin are not quite so dogmatic as Jenkinson. They give the example of the book of investitures of the fiefs of the Abbey of St. Paul.⁵⁹ Records of investiture were entered in the same book before and after annexation of those fiefs by the States of Utrecht. The Dutch manual simply recommends that such a register should be noted by cross references in the description of the archives of each administrative body. In another example, Muller, Feith and Fruin note that changes in functions might require documents to be passed from one corporate body or administrative board to another.⁶⁰ They believed that the documents passed to the new possessor of functions remained part of the archives of the original possessor of the function, although practicalities had required their relinquishment to the new holder of the function.

How, then, can a record series have "multiple-provenance"? It cannot. Scott uses the term "provenance" in a sense closely related to its use in the museum and manuscript community, where "provenance" may mean simply a source of acquisition of an artifact, or may mean a careful tracing of ownership and physical location of an artifact in order to establish its value and/or its authenticity.⁶¹

⁵⁹Muller, Feith and Fruin, Manual, 25

⁶⁰Ibid., 37

⁶¹The glossary of the Alberta Museums Association's Standard Practices Handbook for Museums, 1990, page 212, defines Provenance as "for works of art and historical objects, the background and history of ownership; in anthropological collections, the more common term is "provenience" which defines an object in terms of the specific geographic location of origin...."

It is in this sense, of tracing the "ownership", so to speak, of records, that Scott uses the term "multiple-provenance". This tracing of archival ownership is the identification of links among series of records which is a critical element in all archival work. Scott's system for describing records in series aims fundamentally to do just that - identify links among records to clarify the overall nature of the creating agency and the functions it performed. Thus, we should accept that Scott's "multiple-provenance" concept does not theoretically deny the identification of specific record series with a particular fonds, but simply highlights the necessity of establishing links among records on a basis beyond that of strict administrative organization. Scott's concept highlights the necessity of identifying functional and other relationships among records which are brought about by the inherent complexities of administration, not *just* the complexities brought about by administrative change.⁶²

Scott's focus on the series was the result of his belief that the fonds was an inadequate concept for this century fundamentally because of its old-fashioned nature. He considered it to be a "static" unit, appropriate only for a stable environment such as presumably existed in the "past."⁶³ This has led the most modern of archival

⁶²Scott, of course, was motivated to find a solution to problems specifically brought about by administrative change, and he does not explicitly acknowledge that these problems are the same as the inherent complexities of administration.

⁶³Such remarks proliferate throughout the literature. P.J. Scott gives it clear expression in "Archives and Administrative

thinkers, such as Evans, in line with the thinking of Scott, to assert that the series is the basic "unit of archival control" and is an organic entity which may be "affiliated" from time to time with a "variety of record groups" or "communities of convenience."⁶⁴

No archivist would deny the complexities of relationships among records series within a fonds and between series in different fonds, and new and better methods for dealing with these complexities will always be needed and welcomed. Archival science, however, will not be served by the conceptual creation of wandering spirits of series denied their identity as part of an archival fonds.

We must hold that the series, as an archival unit, is necessarily subordinate to the fonds, and is part of a single archival fonds. It is still within the context of the fonds that the essential nature of an archival series becomes apparent. The nature of a fonds, its creator, and the place of a series within a record-keeping system gives a series its identity. Only after this primary identity is established by the primary relations of the series to the

Change (Part 4)," 52: "...the fonds is well-suited to a stable past environment, to a static or closed group of records, to a single deposit in archival custody; however, it copes less well with the dynamics of the present and the future, with a changing or open group of records, with continuing deposits into archival custody." It seems to me that, however "static" the original concept of fonds may have been in France, Muller Feith and Fruin and Jenkinson viewed the fonds as anything but a static entity.

⁶⁴These are the views expressed by Max Evans in "Authority Control: An Alternative to the Record Group Concept," 252-253. Here Evans uses the term "record group" in the sense of fonds.

fonds, can secondary relations be established with other records within and beyond the fonds within which the series exists. It is thus necessary, in order to establish appropriate links among record series, to first understand their nature as part of an archival fonds. Without such a basic identity, it would not be possible even to adequately establish secondary links.

How, then, to deal conceptually with records which clearly have more than one identity? We might consider the idea that although each series can be part of only one fonds, a single document or record can be part of more than one file, each file might belong in a different series, and each of those series might be a subordinate part of a different fonds.

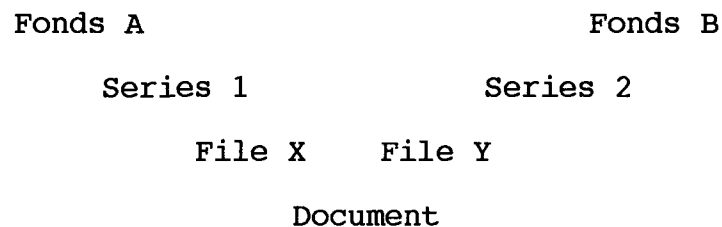


Figure 1: A document in two series and two fonds

The establishment of the idea that each series can be part of only one fonds does not make it necessary to reject Scott's system, or proposals such as those by Evans and

Bearman and Lytle, for identifying relationships among records. It should be borne in mind, however, that Scott's system, at least, was a solution to a practical problem. Scott's attempt to justify his system theoretically is really little more than an afterthought, and certainly his original intention was not to revolutionize archival theory.⁶⁵ In Scott's system, the "series" is less a theoretical construct, or an archival unit, than simply the name given to the descriptive unit which is the basis for intellectual control of information in his system.

Links among records and record series are, however, inherent in archives and it is these links which it is an archivist's job to identify and elucidate. This, however, does not require, at least in theory, the establishment of new archival units which consist of a part of one fonds here, part of another there.

The idea that a series as an archival unit is inherently a subordinate part of a *single* fonds and can have only a *single* provenance is perhaps in need of further support. Archivists are, of course, highly sensitive to the need to establish relationships among records and would be quick to deny the appropriateness and even the possibility of describing a fonds in isolation. This is appropriate. Certainly there are many and various links

⁶⁵Scott published his original attack on the record group concept in 1966, and did not get around to dealing with "theoretical principles" until 1980, in Part 4 of the "Archives and Administrative Change" series. Meanwhile, what he calls his "management technique" or "system of control" for record series was serving the purposes of the Australian Archives very effectively.

between series of one fonds and those of another. The question is, is it possible for a record series to have the same essential nature in two or more fonds?

Scott's system, and modern computerized information retrieval, has encouraged archivists to think of series as things which may move from one fonds to another through time as the result of administrative change such as the transfer of functions. Yet, is it possible for a series of records to be "transferred" to another administrative unit? There are difficulties with this whether a series is defined by function or by record-keeping system, or by both. If a series is defined by function or activity, certainly that function may be transferred to another office, which may receive from its predecessor office current records pertaining to a function to enable it to begin to carry out its new duties. But, in the process, any transferred records would be incorporated into the record-keeping systems of the new office. The relationship of functions in the new office would also have an impact on the work processes and the record-keeping processes, and there would be new relationships with yet other record series within and without the fonds which is the new home of the series. It would seem, therefore, that this series has a brand new identity all its own, and is a new series in the new office. A new series, but one closely linked, of course, with the series of records created and

maintained by the previous holder of the function in the course of carrying out his duties.

Jenkinson supports the idea that records should be linked primarily with their creator, that is, to the fonds of which they are a part and only secondarily to records expressing the same or similar function. Archives, he says, should be "classed" under the administration which "created" them, even if they belong to the same "series", in which case there should be proper cross-referencing.⁶⁶ Here we must be careful in our analysis of Jenkinson's terminology. If his "class" is the equivalent of our series, he is saying that archives should be identified as series in connection with their creating administration. He uses the term "series", in this case, it seems, to refer to a group of documents of a specific *form*: an example he gives is that of "the series of Archives known as *Bishop's Certificates*". Clearly, the occurrence in two different fonds of documents of precisely the same form and content, and therefore presumably an expression of the same function, is contemplated by Jenkinson. In such a case, he gives primacy to the link of the archive "class" to its creating agency.

Consider a situation where a single function is split among three administrative units concurrently. If the function is "garbage disposal", there might be one administrative unit responsible for collecting garbage,

⁶⁶Jenkinson Manual, 103.

another responsible for disposing of it, and yet another responsible for recycling it. Each unit maintains its own files which includes records concerning these activities. Is this one record series, or three? While there are clear links among the functions, the reality is that they are records maintained separately from each other, with distinct creators, and with distinct relationships to other records. These are three record series because, although related to the same function, they exist in different record-keeping systems. Records similarly related in function, but created in sequence rather than concurrently, likewise have a unique series identity within a single archival fonds. The close relationships between series, which it is an archivist's job to identify, should not minimize or obliterate the fact that related series differ in provenance, and in place within the record-keeping system of the creator.

The debates concerning the principles of provenance, respect des fonds and original order in relation to archival series serve to bring into relief aspects of the concept of archival series, and to assist in drawing the following conclusions. Firstly, series "exist", like fonds, as genuine archival entities. This notion is expressed by Jenkinson following Muller, Feith and Fruin, and is implied by other archivists such as Schellenberg, who recognize some element of order in archives in addition to that of the organization of a filing system. Secondly,

we conclude that series have a single provenance, and are part of a single archival fonds.

Accepting these points about the abstract concept of archival series, we can proceed, in Chapter Two, to consider how series have been defined in practice.

CHAPTER TWO

DEFINING SERIES

This chapter considers how the "series" has been defined in practice. The term "series" is now so broadly defined that the term is used as a tag for any "group" of records regardless of the basis of the connection among the records in that group. An historical overview of the term "series" and the concepts it has signified is called for here.

The Dutch Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives of Muller, Feith and Fruin, and Jenkinson's Manual of Archival Administration express similar concepts of series.¹ In the translation of the Dutch manual, the term "series" clearly relates to a group of records of a particular documentary form.² The manual speaks, for example, of "...series of resolutions, protocols, accounts and other documents...." and of "...series of minutes, letters, judgements, protocols, accounts, receipts, etc."³ This concept of series is emphasized by the contrast which

¹As noted in Chapter 1, while the French Archives Nationales did use the term série in the mid-nineteenth century, its use there was completely unrelated to the sense in which we are discussing it here. See Bordier, 88-90. Duchein notes the possibility for confusion in "Theoretical Problems," 80: "The internal divisions of fonds are often called in English series....The English term series causes confusion in translation, for in French archival science the word série designates the main alphabetic division in which fonds are placed within an archival depository."

²With respect to the concept of "documentary form", see Luciana Duranti, "Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science (Part V)," Archivaria 32 (Summer 1991): 6.

³See Muller, Feith and Fruin Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives, 67, 72.

the Dutch manual draws between a "series system" and a "dossier system" of record-keeping.⁴ In a series system it was the type of the document which determined its place in a record-keeping system, not the content of the documents. By contrast, in a dossier system, the subject of the document determined filing and storage. It is therefore appropriate to hold that the Dutch archivists did have a very specific concept of series, as a group of records of the same documentary form, that is, having the same physical and intellectual aspects of form.

Jenkinson also linked the term "series" with the concept of a group of records of a particular documentary form. This is not surprising since the French translation of the Dutch manual had a significant impact on Jenkinson's own 1922 manual. Jenkinson describes series as "the continuous collections of Rolls, of Registers, or of Files of documents of the same kind...."⁵ He refers elsewhere to series as groups of records of a particular form or type.⁶

When American archivists first began in 1909 to meet to discuss relevant issues, the Dutch archival manual was still relatively recent, and unavailable in English. Jenkinson's manual, reflecting British theory and practice, was still in the future. There were primarily two things upon which Americans focussed in relation to the

⁴This is a contrast they make repeatedly. See, for example, pages 80, 83, and 159.

⁵See Jenkinson, Manual, 111.

⁶Jenkinson, Manual, 103, where Jenkinson speaks of the series of archives known as "Bishops' Certificates".

arrangement and description of archives. These were things to which they were led by European archival theory, as "translated" for them by a small group among them who knew one or more European languages, and by American library practice. The issues came into focus in the terms "provenance" and "classification"; these two terms were often combined into the phrase "classification by provenance." In his paper "American Archival Problems", presented to the First Annual Conference of Archivists in 1909, Waldo Gifford Leland discussed "classification of archives," which he believed should be "according to their origin."⁷ While archivists specifically rejected librarians' classification by subject, the concept of classification did remain paramount in their view of archival arrangement and description. In 1912, Leland wrote:

The administrative entity must be the starting point and the unit, and the classifier must have a thorough knowledge of the history and functions of the office whose records he is arranging....⁸

The archivist was the "classifier". In the same year V.H. Paltsits envisioned a "Manual of Archival Economy" (an American version of Muller, Feith and Fruin's manual, so to speak), which would include a chapter on classification.⁹

⁷W.G. Leland, "American Archival Problems," In American Historical Association Annual Report 1909, 346. This paper was presented at the 1st Annual Conference of Archivists.

⁸W.G. Leland, "The National Archives: A Programme," American Historical Review 18 (Oct. 1912): 24.

⁹V.H. Paltsits "Plan and Scope for a 'Manual of Archival Economy'" American Historical Association, Annual Report 1912, 260. The paper was presented at the 4th Annual Conference of Archivists.

In 1914, Ethel B. Virtue presented a paper to the Conference of Archivists entitled "Principles of Classification for Archives".¹⁰ Her "classification" consisted of the identification of 13 "series" of records within the Governor's Office. Thus, in early archival thought in North America, "series" were elements in a system of "classification". They were seen to be essentially subdivisions, as Leland said, "subordinate to the entire body of archives." This concept reflects the emphasis placed on the concept of "provenance", newly transplanted from Europe, and American library practice. Emphasis was on two things: 1) the body of records of the same provenance, and 2) the need for them somehow to be "classified" or subdivided and described and made accessible to the historical research community whose interests dominated thinking in that early phase.¹¹ T.R. Schellenberg later illustrated this state of mind clearly when he compared the principle of provenance with the Dewey Decimal System.¹²

The American concept of "series" arose only incidentally from these two primary focal points of provenance and classification. In North America classification for description and access became the determining factor in the definition and identification of

¹⁰Ethel B. Virtue, "Principles of Classification for Archives," in American Historical Association, Annual report 1914, 373-380.

¹¹See Birdsall, 69-118.

¹² T.R. Schellenberg, The Management of Archives, 94.

series. Whereas series were originally viewed by Jenkinson and the Dutch as groups of records of a particular documentary form, the American view became one of series as descriptive units within a classification system designed to assist researchers.

This concept of series as "descriptive units" was further entrenched in the next phase of archival development in the United States. The United States National Archives was established and its first National Archivist appointed in 1934. In the spring of 1935, staff of the National Archives Accessions Division began the task of attempting to locate and identify federal government records. In Washington, the task was mostly completed in 1936, but this left all the records outside the capital yet to be located and identified. To accomplish this task, the National Archives proposed a "relief project" to the Work Projects Administration (WPA) which would provide employment for jobless white collar workers.¹³ This relief project became commonly known as the Survey of Federal Records. The Survey of Federal Records project continued until the end of 1937, at which time it was incorporated into another WPA project, the Historical Records Survey (HRS), which functioned until 1942. The HRS was a broader project encompassing all types of historical records including state, local and private materials. By 1942, the

¹³Donald McCoy, The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents, 1934-1968 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 64.

two projects had "surveyed" more than five million linear feet of records outside Washington. This work had been done by literally thousands of white-collar workers drawn from the relief rolls, under the direction of Philip Hamer and T.R. Schellenberg initially in the Survey of Federal Records project, and later of Luther H. Evans and Edythe Weiner in the Historical Records Survey project. The nature of the task literally forced those involved to recognize the need for, and to establish, some sort of descriptive standard which could be applied with some consistency by the (previously jobless) white-collar workers and could eventually be the basis of the overall report of the Historical Records Survey. Thus we find in the very first year of the publication of American Archivist, an article by those in charge of the Historical Records Survey which emphasizes the intention of the Survey that "the series shall constitute the basis of an entry."¹⁴ The need for a standard unit of entry in their final report made questions regarding the nature of "series" more than an "academic question". As they said, "The object of the system [of description used by the Historical Records Survey] is to have one of our entries cover a complete record series...."¹⁵ It was therefore necessary to identify and define series so that they could be "entered"

¹⁴Luther H. Evans and Edythe Weiner, "The Analysis of County Records," AA 1 (October 1938): 187-88.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 197.

in their appropriate place among the ranks of the nation's treasure house of records.

In the 1930s everyone was thinking about series. The problem of defining and limiting series was discussed at a session of the 2nd Annual Meeting of the SAA in 1938 in the broader context of the "classification of archives".¹⁶ They considered questions such as the problems brought about by administrative re-organization, and how far records may differ from each other before each must be considered a distinct series. The new Society of American Archivists, established in 1936, instituted a Cataloging and Classification Committee which was headed by Margaret Cross Norton. She led the committee in revising a cataloging code issued in 1936 by Illinois State Library. In the 1938 revision, the Illinois State Library's Catalog Rules: Series for Archival Material, Norton noted that much study had been given to "archival cataloging problems" by the National Archives, state archivists and particularly by the Historical Records Survey. These had clearly established, in her view, that the "unit of cataloging" is the series.¹⁷ Like books in libraries, archives had to catalogued and classified. In 1940, Norton wrote:

Just as the book is the library unit which must be put into classification relationship with other books, so the series is the archival unit

¹⁶H.A. Kellar, "The 2nd Annual Meeting of the SAA," AA 2 (Jan. 1939): 27.

¹⁷ Richard C. Berner, "Arrangement and Description: Some Historical Observations," AA 41 (April 1978): 171.

which must be related to other archival series in the classification.¹⁸

If archives, like books, had to be catalogued and classified, there had to be a unit to serve the purpose, and that unit came to be called the "series".¹⁹ The 1941 Annual Report of the National Archives, which established and defined the records group concept, also dictated that henceforth, arrangement and description projects were to involve the identification of series, their naming and the establishment of logical groupings of series. "The units of description in the inventories shall, as a rule, be series."²⁰ Thus, by 1956 in Modern Archives, T.R. Schellenberg could write that

Inventories produced in the National Archives differ from those produced in most European archival institutions chiefly in the unit of description that is employed. The unit is a series.²¹

Alongside the concept of series as a "unit of entry" in a cataloging and classification system, or

¹⁸ M.C. Norton, "Classification in the Archives of Illinois", originally published in A.F. Kuhlman, ed., Archives and Libraries (Chicago: ALA, 1940). Excerpted in Thornton W. Mitchell, ed. Norton on Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archives and Records Management, (Carbondale: S. Illinois University Press, 1975), 107.

¹⁹R. Berner points out that "...the record series concept as developed in the public archives field was available for application as early as 1940, when it was identified in some state archives, the National Archives, and the Historical Records Survey as the "main catalogueable unit". See Richard C. Berner, Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: A Historical Analysis (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983), 6.

²⁰Ibid., 28.

²¹T.R. Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 209.

descriptive unit, there developed the concept of series as groups of records reflecting a particular administrative function. This concept developed as a reaction against a concept of series as records of a particular organizational or administrative unit. The emphasis on organizational units and seeing the records of organizational units as "series" were important aspects of early cataloging and classification at the U.S. National Archives. Among the first units established in 1935 in the new National Archives were a Division of Cataloging and a Division of Classification. A.R. Wright, a member of the Classification Division from 1935 until it was abolished in 1941, described the three steps of classification at the National Archives' Classification Division:²² 1) Each series was allocated to that government office which in the conduct of its business created or substantially altered the series of records; 2) the office to which the series was allocated was placed in its position as a subordinate part of another agency; and 3) all subordinate offices were arranged under superior offices chronologically by date of founding. The National Archives' attempt to focus on the series in relation to basic descriptive and indexing functions was not very successful.²³

The failed attempt at "classification" in the National Archives came to be perceived in the American archival

²²A.R. Wright, "Archival Classification," AA 3 (July 1940): 174.

²³See McCoy, 69-91. See F.B. Evans, "Modern Methods of Arrangement in the United States," 241-263.

community as the failure of "organizational" classification - that is, the failure of a classification system which concentrated attention on the assignment of records to specific administrative units, and the detailing of relationships among administrative units, as Wright outlines. This was very much the view expressed by E.G. Campbell about the time when the Classification and Cataloging Divisions were abolished. While rejecting "organizational classification", he proposed "functional classification".²⁴ Organizational classification was conceptually flawed, in his view, because it did not allow for administrative change, and overlooked what he saw as the fundamental purpose of classification, which was to make records available for research use. Campbell seems here to be very much in the library mode of thought: a subject heading assigned to a book makes it accessible to users with a subject inquiry, therefore a function heading assigned to a series would make it accessible to a researcher with an inquiry framed from a functional point of view. Campbell's solution was to make a list of functions performed by a given agency and then to list each of the series or type of document under the appropriate function.²⁵

T.R. Schellenberg took up the issue of functional versus organizational classification. In line with

²⁴E.G. Campbell, "Functional Classification of Archival Material," Library Quarterly 11 (Oct. 1941): 431-441.

²⁵Ibid., 438-9. On this idea, see also Evans, "Modern Methods," 254, who makes a similar proposal.

contemporary thought of his day, he rejected organizational classification in favor of functional classification.²⁶ Classification by organization is generally inadvisable, he says, because of the fluidity of modern government organizations. In this section of his text, Schellenberg seems to be dealing primarily with concepts related to the organization of current records and is not talking about imposing classification schemes on series of records already at the archives. It is probably for that reason that the relationship between "classification" and the identification of series is not made clear. Also, the new interest of the National Archives in records management in the 1940s no doubt contributed to the fogging of distinctions between what to do in classification of current records and what to do with records at the archives. The debates over defining series at the archives focussed on the same two points of definition by function or by administrative organization. That this was the case is made clear by Schellenberg's definition of series in Management of Archives:

Series and subseries are physical units, within archival groups of manuscript collections, that are established by a consideration of their functional, as distinct from their organizational, origins.²⁷

²⁶T.R. Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 58-62.

²⁷T.R. Schellenberg, Management of Archives, xvi.

The debate over functional versus organizational classification focussed on the idea that functional classification would allow the system to deal with administrative change. This linked the concept of series with that of administrative function, which, presumably, would remain substantially the same regardless of which organizational unit exercised that function at any given time. This concept of administrative function is different from the notion of the function of the record itself, that is, the documentary function, expressed in the various forms of records, which was paramount in the concept of series held by the Dutch archivists and by Jenkinson.²⁸

This look at the "history of series" illustrates the origins of the different concepts of series with which archivists now have to deal: The early notion of "series" was of a group of records of similar documentary form, in the medieval tradition. The American problem of dealing with vast quantities of more or less contemporary records raised issues of "classification", and "units of entry" to

²⁸Jenkinson clearly recognized two different concepts of function. As a medievalist, he was very conscious of the link between documents of a certain type and a specific administrative action which gave rise to them. In his scheme for classification of archives, he suggests that the Functions of the Administration which produced the archives can be used as general headings for classes of documents. See Manual, 111. The distinction between "unit function" and "original record function" is also noted by Frank Boles, Archival Appraisal (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1991), 31-2. Helen Samuels' use of the word "function" is again distinct. In her "institutional functional analysis", function is a more abstract concept relating to basic goals of institutions, not directly relevant to administrative organization or record function. See Helen Samuels, "Improving our Disposition: Documentation Strategy," Archivaria 33 (Winter 1991-92): 127-29, 139.

solve the problem of how to produce consistent, usable, finding aids. As North American archivists attempted to find a way to rationalize their work, they found that modern American record-keeping systems did not correspond to the traditional narrow concept of series. Since they had to describe records as they found them, they settled upon description of a filing system, or physical group of records as a "unit of entry", and this came to be equated with the concept of series. Alongside this remained the more abstract concept of series defined by relation to a particular administrative function.

Now let us turn to the actual definitions of series offered by archivists.

Norton was among the most prominent of the archivists who were giving attention to the records series concept in the nineteen thirties. She was much interested in the concept of a "cataloging unit" or "unit of entry", and the "classification" of series by identifying relationships among them. In 1939 Norton defined "series" as "a group of materials representing the same functional use, filed as a physical unit."²⁹ This definition has two real elements, these being "the same functional use" and "filed as a physical unit." The rather vague phrase "a group of materials" seems to be simply a phrase for "records." She may have used that phrase in order to include both public

²⁹Norton, "Archives and Libraries: Classification and Cataloging," Illinois Libraries 21 (April 1939): 2-4. excerpted in T.W. Mitchell, ed., Norton on Archives, 90.

records and private papers in the scope of her definition of series. The phrase "the same functional use" raises the question what she means by function in this context. It seems that she is referring to the functional or documentary form of the document or file, which, of course, reflects its use: hence her phrase "functional use". Norton sees a "functional grouping" as something that can be made of a number of series, once they are identified. She suggests grouping series of records relating to the same or similar administrative functions. Thus, to her, administrative function was not a criterion for defining series, but rather could be a basis for grouping them, once they were identified in relation to their function as records. Therefore, functional groupings were at a level above actual series. The second feature of Norton's definition of series is that it is "filed as a physical unit." As we have seen, archivists have been a long time in shaking off pre-occupation with "physical" order, and Norton's use of the phrase "physical unit" does reflect that pre-occupation to some extent. However, she links the "physical unit" concept with the idea of a organized filing system.³⁰ Norton's concept of series thus emphasizes the documentary function of records *and* their filing organization.

When T.R. Schellenberg wrote Modern Archives in 1956, defining "series" was certainly an item on his agenda, and

³⁰Norton, "Classification in the Archives of Illinois," excerpted in T.W. Mitchell, ed., Norton on Archives, 108.

his work with the Federal Records Survey and at the National Archives during the era of classification and cataloging had given him plenty of opportunity to think about the question. The series was especially important to him since he viewed the "series" as the characteristic element of American, as opposed to European, finding aids, and he was aiming very much to educate American archivists in basic principles and practical techniques. Schellenberg offered his readers over the years a variety of definitions of series. The first, in 1956, was:

A series may be defined as a group of documents, folders, or dossiers that has been brought together for a specific activity.³¹

In 1961, he wrote that "...it is likely that the series was created in the course of performing a particular kind of action."³² In 1965, he called series "units of records arising from organic activities or transactions", and "physical units", "established by a consideration of their functional, as distinct from their organizational, origins."³³ He also wrote that the term "series" referred to units established on the basis of their functional origins, in contrast to "groups" which referred to units established on the basis of their organizational origins.³⁴

³¹Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 60.

³²Schellenberg, "Archival Principles of Arrangement," 16.

³³Schellenberg, Management of Archives, 45, xvi.

³⁴Schellenberg, Management of Archives, 161. Berner, "Arrangement and Description: Some Historical Observations," 176, criticizes Schellenberg for confusing series with subgroups. In his view, Schellenberg was typical. No one, in Berner's view, at that time had grasped the distinction between series and subgroups. Berner makes the same criticism of Gracy's 1977 manual. As Berner

Whenever Schellenberg defined series, he always went on to explain ways in which the series might be identified, and he repeatedly offers the same options, in much the same words: A series might be identified by filing arrangement, "physical type of record", or relation to a particular subject or activity.³⁵ He was looking at the series question in a very practical way, attempting to offer to archivists ways of identifying something to use as the basis of a descriptive "entry" in an inventory. The options that he offers repeatedly for identifying or establishing series are consistent in that one way only. Schellenberg seemed to see "series" as just a term which could be applied to a descriptive unit, no matter how that unit was defined.³⁶ In accordance with this view, he is quite comfortable with the idea of archivists "creating" series. In discussing the possible ways of identifying series, that is, on the basis of arrangement or record type, he concludes that if an archivist cannot divide

sees it, everyone failed to realize that it was record-creating activity (which can be equated with administrative function) which defined subgroups, while "series" related only to filing arrangement. It is true that Schellenberg linked series with administrative functions and activities, so Berner's point has some value. Whether series relate only to filing arrangement is another question.

³⁵Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 60, 185; "Archival Principles of Arrangement," 16; Management of Archives, 168-169.

³⁶In Modern Archives, page 185, Schellenberg wrote: "In the United States the term "series" may apply to aggregations of documents of a particular type, as in Europe. It may, however, also be applied to the entire body of records organized according to an integrated filing system, irrespective of whether the individual file units within his system are of a particular type. The meaning of the term has been extended even to include aggregations of records brought together without perceptible order, whose only bond of coherence is their common relation to a particular subject or activity."

records into series on the basis of arrangement or record type, "he may arbitrarily designate a lot of them as a series on the ground of their relation to a specific transaction or matter of business."³⁷ The arbitrary nature of a series is emphasized in a 1948 archival manual produced by the U.S. Department of the Army. There, a series was defined thus:

A term arbitrarily applied to a part of an organized body of records which part is distinguishable from the whole body of records by virtue of variations in arrangement or subject content, significant volume...or peculiar physical form of the papers themselves....³⁸

Schellenberg's main aim in defining series was to provide guidance for identifying groupings of records which could be the subject of a collective description. He recognized that the criterion could vary widely from case to case. In his discussion of original order of series and the need or not to maintain such order, however, Schellenberg reveals a basic conflict in his mind about the concept of series. He argued that it was not necessary to maintain the original filing arrangement of records if that arrangement obscured the relation of records to a particular activity.³⁹ He is torn between a concept of a

³⁷Schellenberg, Management of Archives, 169. A similar statement is made by Oliver W. Holmes, "Archival Arrangement- Five Different Operations at five different levels," AA 27 (Jan. 1964): 31.

³⁸Departmental Records Branch, Adjutant-General's Office, Reference Service Guide for Departmental Records, Washington, 1948, Appendix 15-2, Department of the Army, quoted in Kenneth Munden, "The Identification and Description of the Record Series," AA 13 (July 1950): 213 n.2.

³⁹Schellenberg "Archival Principles of Arrangement," 23.

series as a filing system only, or as an entity somehow bound together by some inherent feature of the records. He is able to articulate this inherent feature only rather vaguely as "relation to an activity."

O.W. Holmes' article on archival arrangement was published in American Archivist in 1964, and became a classic expression of the approach of the National Archives of the United States. He argued that

a true series is composed of similar filing units arranged in a consistent pattern within which each of the filing units has its proper place.⁴⁰

Holmes then opts for filing as the basis of series. The influence of Schellenberg's and Holmes' definitions of series is apparent in the Society of American Archivists' Committee on Terminology's 1974 "Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers".

"Series" was defined as

file units or documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, have a particular form, or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use.⁴¹

⁴⁰O.W. Holmes, "Archival Arrangement - Five Different Operations at Five Different Levels," 30. This definition was implicitly endorsed by F.B. Evans, in "Modern Methods of Arrangement of Archives in the United States," AA 29 (April 1966): 258. The extensive influence of this article is noted in W. Rundell, "Oliver Wendell Holmes," AA 45 (Spring 1982): 249, and by Terry Abraham, "Oliver Wendell Holmes Revisited: Levels of Arrangement and Description in Practice," AA 54 (Summer 1991): 371.

⁴¹Frank B. Evans, D.F. Harrison, and E.A. Thompson, compilers, W.L. Rolfes, ed. "A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers," 430.

This definition became the basis of Gracy's definition in his arrangement and description manual. The 1984 International Council of Archives Dictionary of Archival Terminology adopted the definition virtually verbatim. Influential writers such as Max Evans have simply adopted it without further comment.⁴²

The multiplex definition offered by the Basic Glossary implicitly rejects the notion that the "series" can be defined in a single, broadly applicable way. The primary element of the definition which has become so pervasive is the idea of "file units or documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit"; the rest of the definition goes on to give reasons why records might be maintained as a unit, which can apparently be for any reason. The idea of a series as a filing system is predominant. For example, any group of files which has file titles arranged in alphabetical order is a series. The concept of series as records "maintained as a unit"

⁴²David B. Gracy, Archives and Manuscripts: Arrangement and Description, SAA Basic Manual Series, (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1977): 7-8. See definition of "Series" in Peter Walne, ed. Dictionary of Archival Terminology, 434. See also Max Evans, "Authority Control: An Alternative to the Record Group Concept," 250 n.6. Terry Cook, "The Concept of the Archival Fonds," 45, adopts the definition of series from Gracy's manual, which is essentially the same as the Basic Glossary definition. The Bureau of Canadian Archivists' Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards' Rules for Archival Description, page D-5 essentially adopts the Basic Glossary definition, with minute changes in wording and punctuation. The prevalent influence of the 1974 "Basic Glossary" definition can also be seen in the Glossary of terms associated with the general rules of ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description. See International Council on Archives, "ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description," Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992): 20.

reflects, as does the "filing system" concept, a very physical concept of series. This is perhaps not surprising, since archivists have tended to deny that the series is anything but a physical entity.⁴³

The factors which lead to records being "maintained as a unit" are only secondary to the fact that they are so maintained, and the reasons for it can be almost anything: because they (1) relate to a particular subject, (2) relate to a particular function (the implication here is that function refers to an administrative function, which is closely linked with the concept of subject) (3) result from the same activity (This is essentially a repetition of the idea of records relating to a particular administrative function) (4) have a particular form (it seems to refer to physical form, in accordance with the concept of "maintained as a unit", since records of similar physical form, such as maps, are frequently maintained in one physical location for convenience of storage and access) (5) because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use. This last element of the definition makes anything possible: a relationship might arise from the fact that they were created, received, or used by the same officer, or created and used for the same purpose, or created in sequence or received in sequence.

⁴³For example, Berner, "Arrangement and Description: Some Historical Observations," 176. Cook, "The Concept of the Archival Fonds," 67-8.

Whatever it might be, it is secondary to the fact that they were maintained as a unit.

This definition, which has become so widely used and accepted, puts primary emphasis on the idea of a series as records organized and maintained for the purposes of retrieval - by the way files were classified and physically arranged, rather than on the basis of any inherent characteristics of the records themselves. The physical concept of series also provides a convenient unit to serve as the object of a standard descriptive entry in a finding aid.

The definition of series adopted by P.J. Scott for the basic unit in his descriptive system is similar in substance to the one offered by the SAA Glossary. Scott offered a definition of "series" only once, in his 1966 case for the abandonment of the record group:

The definition of series currently in use is a group of record items which, being controlled by numbers or other symbols, are in the same sequence of numbers or symbols, or which, being uncontrolled by numbers or symbols, result from the same accumulation or filing process and are of similar physical shape and informational content.⁴⁴

We see here the same primary emphasis on the filing system, on the physical accumulation and filing process.

Consideration of qualities of the records themselves extends only to their "physical shape", and their "informational content", which similar features must exist

⁴⁴P.J. Scott, "The Record Group Concept: A Case for Abandonment," 498.

in combination with the "accumulation" of records in a "filing process". The "physical shape" of records is not intellectually significant. The phrase "informational content" is rather vague. Does it mean records bearing on the same subject, as suggested by the SAA glossary, or perhaps arising from the same administrative function? It is unlikely that it alludes to administrative function since Scott did not see the series as a unit related directly to administrative function. He implies that a series may in fact be "functionally-oriented", but that fact is purely incidental to, and not the determining factor of, its existence as a series.⁴⁵ The idea of functional groupings of records is specifically rejected by Scott in his series system of record control.⁴⁶ In his view, functional groupings do not provide the necessary administrative context.⁴⁷ He saw the approach to records by function as a "complementary intellectual approach."⁴⁸ Thus, like Cross Norton, Scott clearly rejected the idea that administrative function was a critical element of identifying series.

Scott's concept of "disposal class" sheds some light on his concept of series. He defines a "disposal class" as

a group of records within the same record series or an individual record, or a group of

⁴⁵See, for example, Scott, "Archives and Administrative Change - Some Methods and Approaches (Part 2)," 156.

⁴⁶Scott, "Archives and Administrative Change - Some Methods and Approaches (Part IV)," 54.

⁴⁷Scott, "The Record Group Concept," 495, 498.

⁴⁸Scott, "Archives and Administrative Change - Some Methods and Approaches (Part V)," 12, 16.

forms with the same form no., which, being of similar function and content, merit the same disposal action.⁴⁹

He recognizes that a disposal class can be a group of records within a complex filing system, or a whole series. This implies that he means a group of records *within* a series (which his definition, above, equates with complex filing system), or a whole series, where such a series consists, incidentally to their physical organization and maintenance, of records of similar documentary form, which is clearly implied by the phrase "forms of the same form no." However, if this is what Scott implies in his definition of series, he is still giving that inherent characteristic only secondary importance to their physical organization and maintenance. This is not surprising since Scott saw the "series concept" primarily as a tool for the physical and administrative control of archives.⁵⁰

The 1992 "update" of the SAA 1974 "Basic Glossary" endeavored to reflect new developments in terminology among American archivists.⁵¹ The definition of series offered there simply rephrases the 1974 definition and adds a phrase from Scott's series definition, noted above. The 1992 definition of series, then, is

⁴⁹Scott, "Archives and Administrative Change - Some Methods and Approaches (Part 3)," 41.

⁵⁰see Scott, "The Record Group Concept: A Case for Abandonment," 497, 500, 502, as examples of his repeated emphasis on things like "physical arrangement and numerical control".

⁵¹Lewis J. Bellardo and Lynn Lady Bellardo, comps., A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers, Archival Fundamentals Series (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1992), v.

File units or documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they result from the same accumulation or filing process, the same function, or the same activity, have a particular form; or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use. A series is also known as a record series.⁵²

All these definitions attempt to come up with a "descriptive unit" which can be identified easily by an archivist faced with records which have reached the end of their active life span, and can serve as a unit of entry in a finding aid to be used by researchers.

We are beginning to see a very different approach from archivists involved in records management and from records managers themselves. This group has also defined series. The glossary appended to The Life of a Document, a records management text, is a compilation of definitions and terms chosen from several volumes on archives and information systems.⁵³ The glossary gives two definitions of the term "record series":

Groups of identical or related records which are normally used and filed as a unit, and which permit evaluation as a unit for retention scheduling purposes.

and

a group of identical or related records that are normally used and filed as a unit, and that permit evaluation as a unit, and that

⁵²Ibid., 32.

⁵³Marlène Gagnon, comp., "Glossary of Technical Terms," in The Life of a Document by Carol Couture and Jean-Yves Rousseau. tr. David Homel (Montréal: Vehicule Press, 1987), 231-321.

permit evaluation as a unit for retention scheduling purposes.⁵⁴

Both these definitions are taken from other records management texts. They clearly have an element quite lacking in the "archival" definitions we have looked at so far - the idea that a series comprises records which can and must be evaluated for retention as a unit, that is, can be appraised as a unit. This aspect of the definition, as in the "archival" definitions, is coupled with the idea that a series consists of records "normally used and filed as a unit". In this view, the organization of records permits them to be appraised as a unit.

The 1989 Federal Provincial Territorial Records Management Council Report, written by Walter Meyer zu Erpen, offers a definition of record series similar to that in The Life of a Document:

A group of records filed together in a unified arrangement which results from, or relates to, the same function or activity and permits evaluation as a unit for retention scheduling purposes. A record series is classified based

⁵⁴Ibid., 302. The two definitions are quoted, respectively, from William Benedon, Records Management 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-hall, Inc. 1969) and from Gerald Brown, Wilmer O. Maedke, and Mary F. Robek, Information and Records Management (London, Glencoe Press, 1974). A 1983 records management text, interestingly, does not include either "series" or "record series" in its glossary. The term "record series", is, however, used in the text as something which is the subject of a retention schedule, thus showing consistency with the definitions in Life of a Document. See Violet S. Thomas, Dexter R. Schubert, and Jo Ann Lee, Records Management: Systems and Administration (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1983), 140.

upon retrieval needs and maintained as a unit according to reference frequency.⁵⁵

This definition is offered in the context of a report advocating an integrated approach to records classification and scheduling. In fact, the definition of series quoted above is offered by the author of the report as evidence that classification and scheduling functions "should never be viewed in isolation." The requirement is that records should be physically organized and classified into "filing systems" which will facilitate records disposition. Thus, the element which allows record series to be disposed of as a unit is what should determine their physical organization, not vice versa - the physical organization should not determine their identity as series, and, thereby, their retention and disposition. The physical arrangement should arise from an analysis of the qualities of the records which give them the quality of being record series and permit them to be evaluated, retained or disposed of as an archival unit. Meyer zu Erpen does not address the question how one can, theoretically, identify series of records where classification systems are not integrated with retention scheduling. His very definition of series theoretically *requires* that records be organized on the basis of their retention period, which is the essential element of his concept of series. It does suggest

⁵⁵Report of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Records Management Council on Records Retention and Disposition Scheduling, prepared by Walter J. Meyer zu Erpen, 1989/12/11: 12.

that file systems organized on some other basis would not be organized in series, the essential characteristic of which is a shared retention requirement. This contrasts with North American archival definitions which equate records organization, no matter what its basis might be, with series of records, which are seen as physical entities.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Jenkinson's and Muller, Feith and Fruin's concept of series was a very narrow one - that of records of the same documentary form. That narrow concept in fact compares quite closely with that of modern records managers like Meyer zu Erpen. This narrow concept of series plainly conflicts with the concept of series as a filing system, or an identifiable portion thereof, as held by Scott and the SAA glossary. Scott's concept of "disposal class" ("a group of records...which...merit the same disposal action") is similar to the records managers' concept of series, but it is a concept quite distinct from Scott's own concept of series.

The definitions of series we have considered above illustrate a basic conflict - the conflict between the concept of series as a descriptive "unit of entry" in an archival inventory; or a physical "filing accumulation" in the office of origin, and the concept of a series as an archival unit defined by intellectual characteristics of the documents themselves.

All of these concepts - those of "unit of entry/descriptive unit", "filing accumulation" and "archival unit" - are important to archivists, and they should be recognized as separate and distinct concepts. This may help in achieving a resolution to the problem of conflicting series definitions. Descriptive units, as is now recognized, can in fact be units at any record level.⁵⁶ The concept of series, therefore, no longer needs to be linked with the concept of a unit of entry or descriptive unit, as it perhaps once did. With respect to series definitions which emphasize filing accumulation and physical organization, these serve a valid purpose. The actual physical and intellectual organization of records in offices of origin is beyond the control of archivists who see records for the first time long after they have ceased to be actively used. Hence, it will not always be possible to see these various "filing accumulations" as archival series defined by common record characteristics, other than a common creator. Series definitions reflecting the emphasis on physical organization were developed in a context where archivists had no involvement with records before they reached the archives, and are very useful in such circumstances. But as archivists become more involved in records systems throughout the record life-cycle, particularly in the design and creation of record-keeping

⁵⁶See, for example International Council on Archives, "Statement of Principles regarding Archival Description," Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992): 13.

systems, a more specific and limited concept of the record series as a unit of records sharing common intellectual aspects of form and function will be not only desirable, but essential if any real "management" of records is to happen. In this new context, identifying series should focus on identifying transactions, their procedures and the documentary forms embodying them. Thus, as Luciana Duranti points out, if different files in the same fonds receive a common description,

it is because they either result from consecutive phases of the same transaction; from similar transactions related to different subjects; or from consecutive transactions related to the same subject. Thus, within the same fonds, arrangement and description have to concentrate on the transactions.⁵⁷

Identification of series thus needs to focus on similar factors relating to transaction, procedures and documentary forms, not on physical arrangements, or alphabetical arrangements of files, or other arbitrary elements of filing system organization. Limiting the concept of series in this way will direct more attention to documentary form and function, which should be the basis of arrangement and description. This approach to defining series will also ultimately simplify their appraisal, which is the next subject to be considered.

⁵⁷Luciana Duranti, "Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science (Part IV)," Archivaria 31 (Winter 1990-91): 18.

CHAPTER THREE

APPRAISING SERIES

While the last decade has seen renewed discussion of archival appraisal, little or none of that discussion has focussed on appraisal in relation to the series. It has recently been suggested that, like economics, the study of archival appraisal has a "macro" and a "micro" branch: the macro branch dealing with broad "social documentation goals", and the micro branch with the selection of specific records within fonds.¹ This dichotomy, proposed by Frank Boles, was designed to place his research on what he calls "micro-level appraisal tools" in context of the appraisal literature of the nineteen eighties which focussed most prominently on "macro-level appraisal" which questions how archivists can document significant aspects of society as a whole, not just governments or other controlling elites. F. Gerald Ham's 1974 presidential address to the Society of American Archivists initially opened this question.² His ideas about a more activist approach are reflected in the concept of "documentation strategy", developed in the

¹Frank Boles, in association with Julia Marks Young, Archival Appraisal (New York, N.Y.: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1991), 98. Boles' other publications on micro-appraisal techniques are: Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young, "Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records," AA 48 (Spring 1985): 121-140, and Frank Boles, "Mix Two Parts Interest to One Part Information and Appraise Until Done: Understanding Contemporary Record Selection Processes," AA 50 (Summer 1987): 356-368.

²F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge," AA 38 (January 1975): 5-13.

United States, and a complementary European concept of a "documentation plan".³ Also concerned with appraisal on the broad scale, although somewhat differently focussed, are theories such as those of Terry Eastwood and Terry Cook.⁴ Eastwood suggests that value can be attached to records which were valued and used by contemporaries as evidence of transactions. Cook argues that an appraisal model should articulate the most important societal structures, functions, records creators, and records-creating processes in a society, in an attempt to focus on critical points of social interaction. Cook in fact adopts Boles' terminology and calls his approach a "macro-level" model.⁵

Cook recognizes explicitly, and others implicitly, that "traditional appraisal", is an essential step after that of macro-appraisal.⁶ When Cook speaks of "traditional

³The most significant works with respect to documentation strategy are Helen Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," AA 49 (Spring 1986): 109-24, Richard J. Cox and Helen W. Samuels, "The Archivist's First Responsibility: A Research Agenda to Improve the Identification and Retention of Records of Enduring Value," AA 51 (Winter/Spring 1988): 28-42, Larry J. Hackman and Joan Warnow-Blewett, "The Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and a Case Study," AA 50 (Winter 1987): 12-46. Booms' concept of a documentation plan is outlined in Hans Booms, "Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources," trans. Hermina Jolderdsma and Richard Klumpenhower, Archivaria 24 (Summer 1987): 69-107. Boom's article was first published in German in 1972. See also Hans Booms, "Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity," Archivaria 33 (Winter 1991-92): 25-33.

⁴Terry Eastwood, "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal," in Barbara L. Craig, ed., The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 71-89. Terry Cook, "Mind over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal," in Craig, ed., 38-70.

⁵Cook, "Mind over Matter," 41, 47.

⁶*Ibid.*, 47.

appraisal", he refers to the appraisal standards developed by Schellenberg and the Europeans whose ideas influenced him, which offer archivists more explicit how-to-appraise guidelines.⁷ A variety of more or less useful guidelines regarding appraisal have been available ever since 1901 when Meissner formulated appraisal standards for German archivists.⁸ These guidelines, however, tend to recommend analysis of the actual content of the records themselves, not appraisal in relation to the series or other archival units of which they are a part. Schellenberg established the concepts of evidential and informational value and offered directions on how to evaluate record types and individual documents on the basis of their content. Brichford's 1977 manual expanded ideas found in Schellenberg's work.⁹ Frank Boles' work has departed

⁷See T.R. Schellenberg, "The Appraisal of Modern Public Records," Bulletins of the National Archives 8 (October 1956): 233-78, and Modern Archives. Schellenberg's publications entrenched in American archival practice basic concepts such as those of evidential and information value, and dominated thinking in the field of appraisal for twenty years.

⁸T.R. Schellenberg outlined the work of his European predecessors in the field of appraisal, and offered some new principles, in "The Appraisal of Modern Public Records". Schellenberg's appraisal principles were widely accepted throughout North America. He defined the concepts of evidential and informational value on page 238 of the bulletin as follows: records of evidential value contain evidence of the organization and functioning of the body that produced them; records of informational value contain information on persons, corporate bodies, things, problems, conditions, and the like, with which the organization dealt. The terms evidential and informational were drawn by Schellenberg from the text of the Records Disposal Act of 1943.

⁹Maynard Brichford, Archives and Manuscripts: Appraisal and Accessioning Basic Manual Series (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1977). Brichford's was the first American attempt after Schellenberg to present an overview of appraisal theory and practice to archivists, and he emphasized many of the same elements which Schellenberg did.

somewhat from his predecessors in that he focusses not only on the characteristics of records, but on the other factors which influence archivists' appraisal decisions. Thus, in addition to the "value of information" in records, Boles considers questions related to the "costs of retention" and "implications of the selection decision" as factors in the appraisal process.¹⁰

These "traditional" approaches to archival appraisal share an assumption that the need to preserve the archives of an agency or government, or to acquire records relating to a particular sphere, is established by some factors external to the appraisal process they discuss. In Schellenberg's case, this is implied: the need to document the activities of United States government is to him self-evident. In Boles' case, it is express: the policy of the institution dictates what is to be documented. The discussion in this chapter of the appraisal of series makes the assumption, likewise, that the broad questions about what part of society is to be documented are separate from issues discussed here.

The concept of appraisal on two levels - macro and micro - is useful as a way to relate different focal points in the study of appraisal, as long as macro and micro appraisal are not rigidly separated. Separating macro and micro appraisal is, for the time being, a useful technique

¹⁰Boles most recent work, presented in Archival Appraisal, discusses appraisal in terms of three "modules" which he identifies as "value of information", "costs of retention", and "implications of the selection decision".

to isolate areas which will eventually begin to influence and inform each other. The discussion of appraisal in this chapter might usefully be considered a discussion of topics of micro-appraisal, the question being, how does the collective nature of a record series affect the value assigned, for purposes of archival appraisal, to the individual records or files included in it?

The appraisal of series has one implied requisite: the *identification* of series, however the series is defined. The identification of series is a critical element in archival arrangement and description. Yet there remains confusion about the temporal relationship between the archival tasks of arrangement & description and appraisal.¹¹ The clear assumption in many cases, as for example in the report of the U.S. Working Group on Standards for Archival Description, is that appraisal comes *before* arrangement and description.¹² Brichford's manual also places appraisal and accessioning together as necessary steps preliminary to arrangement and description. These assumptions need to be reconsidered.

It is certainly true that some aspects of appraisal precede arrangement and description. Most obviously,

¹¹Although arrangement and description are sometimes considered two separate activities, the former more related to physical arrangement and the latter to production of finding aids, I consider arrangement and description to be a single intellectual task involving analysis and identification of records, which is then followed by the physical tasks of arranging them and producing the actual finding aid.

¹²"Report of the Working Group on Standards for Archival Description," American Archivist 52 (Fall 1989): 440.

appraisal of a fonds always precedes the compilation of the finding aid intended for public use. If the production of the finding aid is equated with arrangement and description, then clearly appraisal does precede arrangement and description. Secondly, it is of course true that preliminary appraisal decisions are made in conjunction with a decision an archival institution makes to acquire a particular fonds, hence the fonds might be considered appraised, in some sense, even before it reaches the archival institution. This preliminary appraisal, however, is usually an evaluation of the significance of the record creator, rather than appraisal of the records themselves. We might consider that to be "appraisal for acquisition" rather than "appraisal for selection".¹³ We might also consider pre-acquisition appraisal to be informed by principles of macro-appraisal or broad social documentation goals, and later selection of records within the fonds as a process of micro-appraisal.

Or does arrangement and description *precede* appraisal? If arrangement and description is the process of identifying and analyzing records and their interrelationships, then one would certainly expect that this process should be completed before records are evaluated for retention or disposition. But the actual destruction of records, like the final compilation of the

¹³See Victoria L. Blinkhorn, "The Records of Visual Artists: Appraising for Acquisition and Selection" (M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1988). She clearly distinguishes these two separate processes.

finding aid, is simply a physical act putting into effect the decisions which have been made in the process of an archivist's work.

In fact, arrangement and description and appraisal are intellectual processes which require the same type of information and analysis. Instructions offered to archivists for identifying series, for example, focus on much the same kind of information called for in appraisal. Archivists are directed by the 1974 Basic Glossary definition of "series" to define series by record type, or form, or relation to a particular activity, and are likewise instructed to evaluate records of a particular form or as evidence of a particular activity.¹⁴ Duranti notes that "the identification of the action and of the procedure guiding it" is important not only for arrangement and description, but also for appraisal.¹⁵ Recognizing that arrangement and description and appraisal are dependent on much similar information and are to a considerable extent interdependent and concurrent processes puts the idea of "appraising series" in a somewhat different perspective.

Despite some confusion about the sequence or concurrence of the processes of arrangement and description and appraisal, there is a considerable degree of consensus in the archival literature that archivists do, or should, or at least say they should, "appraise series". That is,

¹⁴Frank Evans et al., "Basic Glossary," 430. Brichford, 2-5.

¹⁵Luciana Duranti, "Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science (Part IV)," Archivaria 31 (Winter 1990-1991): 18.

there is consensus that appraisal or evaluation should be made of a specific collective archival unit known as the series: that a *series* should be deemed worthy or not of archival preservation.

The exceptions to this consensus are related to the two extremes of series definition discussed in Chapter 2. These extremes are those represented on the one hand by the Australian system where a direct connection between the "series" and the "disposal class" is explicitly rejected,¹⁶ and, on the other hand, by records managers who advocate integrated records classification and scheduling systems in which series would be defined so that all records in the series would receive the same appraisal and disposition. These two definitions of series, which are definitions established as specific elements in highly organized records control systems, carry with them, as part of the definition, a specific relation to appraisal: negative on one hand and positive on the other.

For most archivists not confined within a single records control system where a record series is narrowly defined, it is a tacit assumption that it is the record series which is to be appraised collectively.¹⁷ Even as

¹⁶For the most explicit statement of this see Beverly Hart, Stephen Ellis and Ian Pritchard, "The Appraisal and Scheduling of Government Records: A New Approach by the Australian Archives," AA 50 (Fall 1987): 593 and n.7.

¹⁷For examples, see the following: Michael Cook, Archives Administration: A manual for Intermediate and Smaller Organizations and for Local Government (Folkstone, England: Dawson & Sons Ltd., 1977), 69; Terry Cook, "Mind over Matter," 52; Luciana Duranti, "Diplomatics: New uses for and Old Science (Part VI)," Archivaria 33 (Winter 1991-92): 6. See also David Levine, "The Appraisal Policy of

early as 1956, Schellenberg implies that appraisal decisions should be made regarding series, asking "which records series are essential?" to reflect critical management decisions.¹⁸ When appraisal became a popular subject in the late seventies and eighties, the idea that it was "series" which should be appraised was certainly a point of discussion. Brichford, in his 1977 manual, expressed the idea that "collective appraisal at the record series level is desirable."¹⁹ More recently, the idea of appraising series has started to become canonized as a counterpart to the principle of respect des fonds. Bradsher, for example, requires that series be appraised as "aggregates, not items", and uses this collective appraisal method as a basis for distinguishing between libraries and archives: archives select series of records, libraries select individual items.²⁰ Along the same line, Maygene Daniels writes that

most appraisals recommend retention or destruction of a series as a whole in order to protect the integrity and full informational content of the records.²¹

In discussing appraisal of photographs, Leary writes that

the Ohio State Archives," AA 47 (Summer 1984): 291-293, who clearly accepts the concept of evaluating series; also Frances Fournier, "'For they would gladly learn and gladly teach' - University Faculty and their Papers: A Challenge for Archivists," Archivaria 32 (Summer 1992): 70; and Blinkhorn, 122.

¹⁸Schellenberg, Appraisal of Modern Public Records, 244, 253.

¹⁹Brichford, 16.

²⁰James G. Bradsher, "An Introduction to Archives", in J.G. Bradsher, ed., Managing Archives and Archival Institutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 8.

²¹Maygene F. Daniels, "Records Appraisal and Disposition," in Bradsher, ed., Managing Archives and Archival Institutions, 63.

adherence to the principles of provenance and archival integrity means appraising only groups of photographs, making judgements about the entire series or collection, not discrete parts of it.²²

Thus, there is a consensus, in theory, that series should be appraised as collective entities. This *idea* of appraising series, however, is not really reflected, for the most part, in traditional appraisal guidelines such as those offered by Schellenberg and Brichford. They tend to assign value to records in relation to their documentary type and functional characteristics which are taken to be indicative of their actual content. This type of analysis does tend to direct attention more to characteristics of individual documents than to the characteristics of the record series as a whole, and directly applies only to homogenous series of records. In his discussion of appraisal for informational value, although not always in his discussion of series apart from appraisal, Schellenberg implicitly equates "series" with a group of records of a specific type or form, which would have similar types of information contained in them.²³ Brichford's 1977 manual focussed on record types to the point of listing record types in categories of "usually valuable", "often valuable", "occasionally valuable", "often without value" and "usually

²²William H. Leary, The Archival Appraisal of Photographs: A RAMP Study with Guidelines (Paris: General Information Programme and UNISIST, UNESCO, 1985), 23.

²³Schellenberg, The Appraisal of Modern Public Records, 257, 260, 268, 276. This emphasis on record type or form is admittedly much less significant in Schellenberg's discussion of appraisal for evidential value. See pages 248-49.

without value."²⁴ He recognizes, however, that this does not solve appraisal problems for records series which are inclusive of many different types of records reflecting various functions and activities. The question of how to appraise records within such homogenous series is neither a new problem nor one confined to North America.

Collingridge noted in 1956 that there was at that time an international problem regarding how best to appraise mixed classes of records - that is groups in which records deserving preservation are interfiled with those that need not be preserved.²⁵

Thus, despite the clear acceptance of the *idea* of appraising series, there is less clarity, and little direction about how this idea is actually to be applied in the case of record series which relate to a wide variety of administrative functions and record types. Schellenberg advocates "purging" of files of "top management" of records on housekeeping matters.²⁶ Brichford also makes several exceptions to appraisal at the series level, such as "the removal of duplicates and easily identified classes of documents" from a record series, or allowing the archivist to "employ records appraisal techniques at the folder or filing unit level" in large subject files or complicated

²⁴Brichford, 22-23.

²⁵J.H. Collingridge, "The Selection of Archives for Permanent Preservation," Archivum 6 (1956), quoted in Nancy E. Peace, "Deciding What to Save: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice," in Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance, ed. Nancy E. Peace (Lexington: Heath and Co., 1984), 8.

²⁶Schellenberg, Appraisal of Modern Public Records, 249.

filing systems.²⁷ Brichford also calls for "continued selection or winnowing"²⁸ of bulky series with filing systems which include valuable as well as useless material.

The uncertainty about what appraising series entails brings into question the rationale for appraisal of series in the first place. The various exceptions Brichford allows to the retention or disposition of an entire series implies that he sees the collective appraisal of records in series as simply a practical matter: generally speaking, an archivist does not have time to examine each document individually, therefore it is convenient to appraise at the series level. It is desirable only because it is convenient, and ceases to be desirable if it would cause intolerable inconvenience such as the retention within the series of an unacceptable proportion of individual documents which lack value, as defined by Brichford's other standards.

On the other hand, considerable effort has been made to rationalize decisions to retain or dispose of only certain files or documents within series while still maintaining in principle that series are being collectively appraised. Daniels, who strongly states the connection between appraising series as collective entities and archival integrity, nevertheless distinguishes between "appraisal at the series level", and "retention and disposition of an entire series":

²⁷Brichford, 10, 14.

²⁸Brichford, 16.

Although entire series of records are not always retained or disposed as units, appraisal itself is almost always conducted at the series level.²⁹

This appears at first to be a distinction without a difference. Can one distinguish between "appraisal" and "retention and disposition"? Perhaps one can. Since the days of Schellenberg, North American archivists have been exhorted to make appraisal decisions on the basis of a knowledge of the records of an entire fonds, that is, to appraise the fonds as a whole. Yet it has never been suggested, Jenkinson apart, that archivists should retain or dispose of an entire fonds to protect the integrity of the records.³⁰ It has been accepted that parts of a fonds only should be retained, despite the lack of any theoretical justification for this breach of archival integrity.

Is this justification for the breach of archival integrity any less valid at the series level than it is at the fonds level? Daniels has simply gone that one step further. It has been an accepted concept that "appraisal" and "retention and disposition" are two distinct concepts at the fonds level. Is it possible likewise that we can usefully distinguish between "appraisal of an entire series" and "retention and disposition of an entire series", as Daniels has done, and apply this concept at the

²⁹Daniels, "Records Appraisal and Disposition," 55.

³⁰Jenkinson rejected the idea that selecting among records for preservation was part of an archivist's job. See his Manual, 248-250.

series level as we do at the fonds level? This may indeed be a valid concept in very specific circumstances such as one discussed below, where the records which are removed from a series chosen for archival retention are proportionally few, and are clearly identifiable by their lack of substantive connection to the function or activity reflected in the series which is the prime reason for its retention. In many situations, however, the distinction proposed by Daniels may merely mask the fact that it is not really series which are being appraised at all, but rather individual files.

The link between a positive appraisal decision of a series and the necessity of preserving it in its entirety has certainly been made by archivists in the past, and certainly has the potential to result in the retention of uninteresting and "useless" documents along with those of value. Schellenberg seems to accept in some circumstances that a proper appraisal of public "bureau central files" may make it necessary to "keep large quantities of rather unimportant records" along with records of executive direction which have significant evidential value.³¹ In his view, this situation would arise only when records were not "properly classified" when in current use. But it has also been suggested that this concept of integrity of the fonds which has resulted in the retention of a tremendous quantity of "duplicative and historically insignificant

³¹Schellenberg, Appraisal of Modern Public Records, 249.

information", is a concept which should be revised.³² A concept of archival integrity dictating retention of an entire series, however, would not have an entirely negative result. It would result in the retention of fewer series of records. It would force archivists to be more cautious in appraising series as of archival value than would be necessary if it were acceptable to preserve only parts of series. Being highly selective about series which would necessarily be retained in their entirety would perhaps result in the elimination of "superfluous" series, rather than in just the elimination of superfluous documents or files within a series. This would thus achieve the result aimed at by appraisal within the series, and would perhaps result ultimately in a better "quality" in record series chosen for preservation.

The idea that one should not appraise within series of records is somewhat difficult to accept on a theoretical basis when we see that it is an accepted practice in the case of private records or papers. Even recent M.A.S. theses have distinguished between this type of fonds, in which it is "unlikely that an entire series of records can be eliminated", and in which archivists need to "select within the series" or do a "classical weeding", and the case of public records, where entire series must be retained or discarded.³³ It has been suggested that in

³²Patricia Aronsson, "Appraisal of 20th Century Congressional Collections," in Archival Choices, 82.

³³Blinkhorn, 122 and n.7, 127, 133.

such fonds, the destruction of an entire series would distort the picture of the records creator.³⁴

Is it then the "public" nature of government records which makes it improper to appraise within a series? This would put a somewhat different slant on the concept of "archival integrity": series should be kept intact not because of the natural bond among records within it, but because the files of public institutions and officials are evidence of their stewardship of public resources and public trust, and as such, should not be distorted through the selection of documents within series. This is something of a modification of a classic Jenkinsonian principle of non-appraisal. We accept for practical reasons, and perhaps because of the social need for selection, that not all series can be preserved. However, in the case of those whose significance merit preservation, that significance extends to all documents within the series for reasons which are not strictly archival, but rather political and social. This is a concept of archival integrity different from that advocating rigid adherence to original order and aiming to create an enduring archival image of a records creator as inherently valuable *per se*. There is perhaps an appropriate distinction with respect to appraisal practice between public records and other records. The idea that the provenance of records may

³⁴Fournier, 70. Fournier notes that appraisal for selection of university faculty papers is "primarily a process of weeding such items as ephemera, certain duplicates, and housekeeping material."

affect their appraisal is hinted at in Schellenberg's discussion of evidential value in records, when he suggests that original organization and arrangement of series important for their evidential value should be retained, whereas this is less important in the case of series of records with only informational value.³⁵

However, private organizations or corporations are as accountable to members or shareholders as governments are to citizens. From the point of view of an institutional archivist in a private organization, the integrity of institutional records is no less important than is that of public records to a "public" archivist. It is perhaps the perspective of the institution which determines how far an archivist must protect the integrity of records by retention or disposition of entire series. As Schellenberg suggests, in series being retained for "informational" value only, the original structure and organization of series is less important. If archival institutions function as research centers, "collecting" records for research, then perhaps appraisal has different aims from those in institutional archives, and appraisal within series, and retention or disposition of only parts of a series, is acceptable, as suggested by Blinkhorn and others.

The apparent impossibility of retaining or disposing of entire series has obliged archivists to develop concepts

³⁵Schellenberg, The Appraisal of Modern Public Records, 248-49.

of "weeding", "sampling" and "selective retention", all of which refer to methods for choosing individual files or documents within a series or fonds to be destroyed or preserved. Discussion of various methods of sampling, each quite specifically defined, and not always consistently, has been quite extensive.³⁶ The precise definitions of each of these various methods is not a primary concern here. What is significant for our purposes is to distinguish between methods designed to remove a relatively small proportion of records from a series which has been appraised as valuable, and methods designed to retain a representative "informational" sample of series which have been determined not to merit archival retention. Theoretically, sampling methods should be applied to the latter sort of series, but this is not always accepted in principle or in practice. "Weeding", "purging", and selective preservation, on the other hand, are methods of selecting records within a series considered valuable as a collective archival entity. While the distinction between the two types of methods do indeed seem to become blurred in some cases, and the availability of selective preservation and sampling methods may indeed affect decisions about whether a series is of archival value or not, they are theoretically distinct in their nature and application.

³⁶For a thorough review, see David R. Keply, "Sampling in Archives: A Review," AA 47 (Summer 1984): 237-242.

The selective removal of records from a series designated for archival retention is advocated in a variety of circumstances. Blinkhorn advocates the "weeding" of ephemera and duplicates in the case of artists' records. Haas et al. advocate the removal of "routine" from "substantive" correspondence in the case of scientists' files on scientific experiments, or weeding from a "bulky file" the small portion of valuable material in the case of personnel records.³⁷ In the case of general correspondence files it has been argued that it is appropriate to destroy files with file headings relating to facilitative and internal operations within a larger file classification system.³⁸ These examples illustrate the variety of meanings given to "weeding" in a variety of circumstances. In practice, it means removing whatever is not needed, without requiring archivists to be very specific about why records within a series are not needed. Weeding is thus a concept designed to deal with problems created by a heterogeneous series of records which is of archival value by virtue of its importance to its creator for maintenance of its organization, security, function and development. In these circumstances, removal of records from the series could be rationalized theoretically on the grounds that the records were clearly identifiable by their lack of

³⁷Blinkhorn, 127; Joan K. Haas, Helen W. Samuels, and Barbara Trippel Simmons, Appraising the Records of Science and Technology: A Guide (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985), 55, 35.

³⁸Harold T. Pinkett, "Selective Preservation of General Correspondence," American Archivist 30 (January 1967): 40.

substantive connection to the function or activity reflected in the series which is the prime reason for its retention as a series. It is a somewhat different situation where "weeding" extends to the removal of files which, although clearly substantively connected with the function of the series, are not considered of sufficient individual value to merit retention. An example of this might be to "weed" from a series of files of correspondence those files relating to a particular type of correspondent, or to "weed" "thin files" and retain only the "fat files". This is probably not an activity properly described as "weeding" of series, but actually more closely resembles appraisal of individual files, and selection for retention on the basis of the contents of the file, rather than their relation to a specific element reflected in the series as a whole. In such a case, we are not really appraising series any longer.

Sampling, in contrast to weeding, is a method applied to homogenous series of records such as case files, which are bulky series, lack administrative value, have relatively little informational value, and would otherwise be completely destroyed. These are the kind of series about which an appraisal decision should be an easy one, unlike many series subjected to weeding, which are frequently the "hard cases". Sampling is an activity which should take place after a series has been appraised as a whole and has been determined not to merit archival

retention. Sampling is thus, by definition, something other than appraisal, and also quite distinct from "weeding".³⁹

The various weeding and sampling solutions proposed by archivists meet a need, and are a reflection of the fact that records are often not organized in a way that makes appraisal of series a workable solution to the appraisal problem.

Another solution to the problems raised by appraisal at the series level is to do appraisal at some other level, and proclaim it openly. Boles' recent work on appraisal, in contrast to that of Brichford, Daniels, and others, does not pay even lip service to the concept of appraising series. To Boles, appraisal is "a rational exercise in policy creation and implementation."⁴⁰ In his view, all aspects of the appraisal process are related to policy. Just as an institutional acquisition policy dictates the general nature of the fonds an archival institution will acquire, so, in his mind, should an institutional appraisal policy dictate at which level appraisal should be done. The nature of such a policy depends on things such as the amount of time an institution wishes to spend on appraisal. He writes:

An archivist, therefore, should choose the level at which records will be appraised. Just as many repositories choose not to arrange &

³⁹Archivists have been critical of situations where "sampling" is being expected to do the basic job of appraisal. See Keady, 240.

⁴⁰Boles, "Mix 2 Parts Interest," 368.

describe records below the series level, so too they can decide not to appraise below the series level.⁴¹

Boles makes the question of appraising archival series, or any other unit, simply a matter of policy. The idea that appraisal is a matter of policy which is established on an institutional level on the basis of institutional factors external to the records is somewhat difficult to accept for archivists who are aiming to achieve some discipline-wide understanding of what goes on in the appraisal process.

On the other hand, the idea that what is appropriate in appraisal of series is dependent on circumstances is an idea which archivists have illustrated they are willing to accept. The relevant factor in each situation, however, should not be institutional policy, but rather the nature of the records, their provenance, the institutional mandate, and a variety of other factors related to the particular fonds itself. We need further refinement of ways of attaching value to the structure and organization of records in different situations, depending on the provenance of the records and record-keeping systems, and the archival institution's identity and aims. Distinctions of this kind are suggested in the literature, but only implicitly, and have not been rationalized. Further discussion of the sort of "practical" issues discussed in this chapter may eventually lead to such rationalization.

⁴¹Boles & Young, "Exploring the Black Box," 130-1.

CONCLUSION

As I suggested at the outset, this study is an attempt to map out the historical and conceptual territory of the series. This I have done by identifying the origins of the concept, illustrating how it has developed, and how it has been used in relation to appraisal and arrangement and description.

While the series itself has been the focal point of this thesis, analysis of the relevant archival literature illustrates also the nature and development of archivists' ideas about and discussion of series.

The foregoing chapters have dealt with series from a variety of different perspectives - historical, theoretical and practical - and in relation to a variety of archival tasks. Hence, a summary of the conclusions reached in each chapter is in order here. Chapter One looked at the origins of the concept of series in the archival *Weltanschauung* and the place of the series concept in debates about the basic archival principles of provenance, respect des fonds and original order. There I concluded that the series was indeed an abstract archival entity apart from its manifestations, and that it was in principle a part of a single fonds with a single provenance. Chapter Two looked at how the series has been defined historically from Muller, Feith and Fruin through Jenkinson and twentieth century North American archivists. There I concluded that various definitions of series met various

purposes, that many definitions are conflicting or incongruous, and that it is necessary to limit the definition of series for the concept to serve archivists better as we become more involved in records management. Chapter Three looked at how archivists have viewed the series in relation to appraisal, and aimed to illustrate the rationales behind a variety of practices in appraising series. That chapter is yet another step toward an understanding of how archivists appraise records and how we rationalize our appraisal decisions.

This study of series represents, of course, its author's attempt to deal with questions left unanswered, or perhaps even unasked, in the course of archival studies and archival work. Its survey of the literature, and its conclusions may, I hope, be useful to others with similar unanswered questions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abraham, Terry. "Oliver W. Holmes Revisited: Levels of Arrangement and Description in Practice." American Archivist 54 (Summer 1991): 370-77.
- . "Collection Policy or Documentation Strategy: Theory and Practice." American Archivist 54 (Winter 1991):
- Alberta Museums Association. Standard Practices Handbook for Museums. Edmonton: Alberta Museums Association, 1990.
- Aronsson, Patricia. "Appraisal of 20th Century Congressional Collections." In Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance, ed. Nancy E. Peace, 81-101. Lexington: Heath & Co., 1984.
- Atherton, Jay. "From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management - Archives Relationship." Archivaria 21 (Winter 1985-86): 43-52.
- Barr, Debra. "The Fonds Concept in the Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards Report." Archivaria 25 (Winter 1987-88): 163-170.
- Bearman, David, and Peter Sigmond. "Explorations of Form of Material Authority Files by Dutch Archivists." American Archivist 50 (Spring 1987): 249-53.
- Bearman, David, and Richard H. Lytle. "The Power of the Principle of Provenance." Archivaria 21 (Winter 1985-86): 14-27.
- Bellardo, Lewis J. and Lynn Lady Bellardo, comps. A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers. Archival Fundamentals Series. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1992.
- Berner, Richard C. "Arrangement and Description: Some Historical Observations." American Archivist 41 (April 1978): 169-181.
- Berner, Richard. Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: A Historical Analysis. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983.

- Berner, Richard C., and Uli Haller. "Principles of Archival Inventory Construction." American Archivist 47 (Spring 1984): 134-55.
- Birdsall, William F. "The American Archivists' Search for Professional Identity, 1909-1936." Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1973.
- Blinkhorn, Victoria L. "The Records of Visual Artists: Appraising for Acquisition and Selection." M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1988.
- Blouin, Francis X. "An Agenda for the Appraisal of Business Records." In Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance, ed. Nancy E. Peace, 61-79. Lexington: Heath & Co., 1984.
- Boles, Frank. "Disrespecting Original Order." American Archivist 45 (Winter 1982): 26-32.
- Boles, Frank, and Julia Marks Young. "Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records." American Archivist 48 (Spring 1985): 121-140.
- Boles, Frank. "Mix Two Parts Interest to One Part Information and Appraise Until Done: Understanding Contemporary Record Selection Processes." American Archivist 50 (Summer 1987): 356-368.
- Boles, Frank, in association with Julia Marks Young. Archival Appraisal. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1991.
- Booms, Hans. "Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources." Translated by Hermina Jolderdsma and Richard Klumpenhower. Archivaria 24 (Summer 1987): 69-107.
- Bordier, Henri. Les Archives de la France ou Histoire des Archives de l'Empire, des Archives des Ministeres, des Departements, des communes, des Hopitaux, des Greffes, des Notaires, etc.. Paris: 1855. reprint, Geneva: Megariotis Reprints, 1978.
- Bradsher, James G. "An Introduction to Archives." In Managing Archives and Archival Institutions, ed. James G. Bradsher, 1-17. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

- Brichford, Maynard. Archives and Manuscripts: Appraisal and Accessioning. SAA Basic Manual Series. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1977.
- Brooks, Philip. "The Selection of Records for Preservation." American Archivist 3 (October 1940): 221-34.
- Brothman, Brien. "Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical terms of Archival Practice." Archivaria 32 (Summer 1991): 78-100.
- Bulhof, Ilse N. "The Netherlands." In The Comparative Reception of Darwinism, ed. Thomas F. Glick, 269-306. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972.
- Bureau of Canadian Archivists. Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards. Rules for Archival Description. Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1990.
- Campbell, E.G. "Functional Classification of Archival Material." Library Quarterly 11 (October 1941): 431-41.
- Cencetti, Giorgio. "Abstract of Il fondamento teorico della dottrina archivistica." American Archivist 3 (October 1940): 279-80.
- Chestnut, Paul I. "Appraising the Papers of State Legislators." American Archivist 48 (Spring 1985): 159-72.
- Cook, Michael. Archives Administration: A Manual for Intermediate and Smaller Organizations and for Local Government. Folkestone: Dawson & Sons. Ltd, 1977.
- _____. "Description Standards: The Struggle Towards the Light." Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992): 50-57.
- Cook, Terry. "The Concept of the Archival Fonds: Theory, Description, and Provenance in the Post-Custodial Era." In The Archival Fonds: from Theory to Practice, ed. Terry Eastwood, 31-85. Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists. Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards, 1992.
- _____. "'Many are called, but few are chosen': Appraisal Guidelines for Sampling and Selecting Case Files." Archivaria 32 (Summer 1991): 25-45.

- _____. "Mind over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal." In The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor, ed. Barbara L. Craig, 38-70. Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992.
- Couture, Carol, and Jean-Yves Rousseau. The Life of a Document. Translated by David Homel. Montréal: Vehicule Press, 1987.
- Cox, Richard J. American Archival Analysis: The Recent Development of the Archival Profession in the United States. Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1990.
- Daniels, Maygene F. "Records Appraisal and Disposition." In Managing Archives and Archival Institutions, ed. James G. Bradsher, 53-66. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Duchemin, Michel. "Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of Respect des fonds in Archival Science." Archivaria 16 (Summer 1983): 64-82.
- Duranti, Luciana. "Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science (Part IV)." Archivaria 31 (Winter 1990-91): 10-25.
- _____. "Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science (Part V)." Archivaria 32 (Summer 1991): 6-16.
- _____. "Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science (Part VI)." Archivaria 33 (Winter 1991-92): 6-24.
- Eastwood, Terry. "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal." In The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor, ed. Barbara L. Craig, 71-89. Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992.
- Eastwood, Terry, ed. The Archival Fonds: from Theory to Practice. Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists. Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards, 1992.
- Elsevier's Lexicon of Archive Terminology. Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1964.
- Evans, Frank B. "Modern Methods of Arrangement of Archives in the United States." American Archivist 29 (April 1966): 241-263.

- Evans, Frank B., D.F. Harrison, and E.A. Thompson, compilers. "A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers." ed. W.L. Rolfes. American Archivist 37 (July 1974): 415-433.
- Evans, Luther H., and Edythe Weiner. "The Analysis of County Records." American Archivist 1 (October 1938): 186-200.
- Evans, Max J. "Authority Control: An Alternative to the Record Group Concept." American Archivist 49 (Summer 1986): 249-61.
- Fenyo, Mario D. "The Record Group Concept: A Critique." American Archivist 29 (April 1966): 229-39.
- Fischer, Gerald L. "Letting the archival dust settle: some remarks on the record group concept." Journal of the Society of Archivists 4 (October 1973): 640-45.
- Fishbein, Meyer H. "A Viewpoint on appraisal of National Records." American Archivist 33 (April 1970): 175-87.
- Fothergill, Philip G. Historical Aspects of Organic Evolution. London: Hollis & Carter, 1952.
- Fournier, Frances. "'For they would gladly learn and gladly teach': University Faculty and their Papers: A Challenge for Archivists." Archivaria 32 (Summer 1992): 58-74.
- Gracy, David B. Archives and Manuscripts: Arrangement and Description. SAA Basic Manual Series. Chicago: Society of American Archivist, 1977.
- Grand Larousse de la langue française. v.3. Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1973.
- Green, K.A. "The Series - A Specialized 'Record Group'." Archives and Manuscripts 3 (November 1967): 13-15.
- Haas, Joan K., Helen W. Samuels, and Barbara Trippel Simmons. Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology: A Guide. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985.
- Hackman, Larry J., and Joan Warnow-Blewett. "The Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and a Case Study." American Archivist 50 (Winter 1987): 12-46.
- Ham, R. Gerald. "The Archival Edge." American Archivist 38 (January 1975): 5-13.

- Hart, Beverly, Stephen Ellis, and Ian Pritchard. "The Appraisal and Scheduling of Government Records: A New Approach by the Australian Archives." American Archivist 50 (Fall 1987): 591-97.
- Healy, Susan. "The classification of modern government records in England and Australia." Journal of the Society of Archivists 11 (January & April 1990): 21-26.
- Hill, Edward E. "The Preparation of Inventories at the National Archives." In A Modern Archives Reader, ed. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch, 211-235. Washington: National Archives and Records Service, 1984.
- Holmes, Oliver W. "Archival Arrangement - Five Different Operations at Five Different Levels." American Archivist 27 (January 1964): 21-41.
- Holmes, Oliver W. "History and Theory of Archival Practice." In University Archives, ed. Rolland E. Stevens, 1-21. Champaign: University of Illinois, 1965.
- International Council on Archives. "ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description." Archivaria 34 (Summer 1992): 17-32.
- Jenkinson, Hilary. A Manual of Archive Administration. 2d ed. 1937; reissued, with an introduction and bibliography by Roger H. Ellis, London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., 1965.
- _____. "Roots." in Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson. Edited by Roger H. Ellis and Peter Walne, 368-80. Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1980.
- _____. "Modern Archives. Some Reflections on T.R. Schellenberg's Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques." in Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson. Edited by Roger H. Ellis and Peter Walne 339-42. Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1980.
- Kellar, H.A. "The 2nd Annual Meeting of the SAA." American Archivist 2 (January 1939): 17-36.
- Kepley, David R. "Sampling in Archives: A Review." American Archivist 47 (Summer 1984): 237-42.

- Klumpenhouwer, Richard. "Concepts of Value in the Archival Appraisal Literature: An Historical and Critical Analysis." M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1988.
- Leary, William H. The Archival Appraisal of Photographs: A RAMP Study with Guidelines. Paris: General Information programme and UNISIST, UNESCO, 1985.
- Leland, Waldo Gifford. "American Archival Problems." In American Historical Association Annual Report 1909. 342-348. Washington: 1911. Reprinted by Carrollton Press, Inc. Washington, D.C.
- Leland, Waldo Gifford. "The National Archives: A Programme." American Historical Review 18 (October 1912): 1-28.
- Levine, David. "The Appraisal Policy of the Ohio State Archives." American Archivist 47 (Summer 1984): 291-93.
- Lewinson, Paul. "Problems of Archives Classification." American Archivist 2 (July 1939): 179-90.
- Lewis, Charlton T., and Charles Short. A Latin Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879. Reprinted 1958.
- Livelton, Trevor. "Public Records: A Study in Archival Theory." M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1991.
- Lockwood, Elizabeth. "Imponderable Matters: The Influence of New Trends in History on Appraisal at the National Archives." American Archivist 54 (Summer 1990): 394-405.
- MacLean, Ian. "An Analysis of Jenkinson's 'Manual of Archive Administration' in Light of Australian Experience." In Essays in Memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson, ed. A.E.J. Hollaender, 128-152. London: Society of Archivists, 1962.
- McCoy, Donald. The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents, 1934-1968. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978.
- Muller, S., J.A. Feith, and R. Fruin. A Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives. Translation of 2nd edition by Arthur H. Leavitt. Reissue with a new foreword by Ken Munden. New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1968.

- Munden, Kenneth. "The Identification and Description of the Record Series." American Archivist 13 (July 1950): 213-227.
- Norton, Margaret Cross. Norton on Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archives and Records Management. Edited by Thornton W. Mitchell. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975.
- Paltsits, V.H. "Plan and Scope for a 'Manual of Archival Economy'." In American Historical Association Annual Report 1912. 253-63. Washington: 1914.
- Peace, Nancy E. "Deciding What to Save: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice." In Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance, ed. Nancy E. Peace, 1-18. Lexington: Heath & Co., 1984.
- Pedersen, Anne, ed. Keeping Archives. Sydney: Australian Society of Archivists, 1987.
- Pepler, Jonathan. "The impact of computers on classification theory." Journal of the Society of Archivists 11 (January & April 1990): 27-31.
- Peterson, Trudy Huskamp. "The National Archives and the Archival Theorist Revisited." American Archivist 49 (Spring 1986): 125-33.
- Picoche, Jacqueline. Dictionnaire Etymologique du français. Montreal: Les Dictionnaires Robert-Canada SCC, 1983.
- Pinkett, Harold T. "Selective Preservation of General Correspondence." American Archivist 30 (January 1967): 33-43.
- _____. "American Archival Theory: The State of the Art." American Archivist 44 (Summer 1981): 217-22.
- Polden, Kenneth A. "The Record Group - A Matter of Principle." Archives and Manuscripts 3 (May 1968): 3-7.
- Polden, K.A. "Preserving the Principle of Provenance." Archives and Manuscripts 4 (May 1971): 12-15.
- Posner, Ernst. "Max Lehmann and the Genesis of the Principle of Provenance." Indian Archives 4 (July/Dec. 1950): 133-141.

Report of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Records Management Council on Records Retention and Disposition Scheduling. Prepared by Walter J. Meyer zu Erpen. Unpublished report. 1989/12/11.

"Report of the Working Group on Standards for Archival Description." American Archivist 52 (Fall 1989): 440-61.

Roper, Michael. "Modern Departmental records and the Record Office." Journal of the Society of Archivists 4 (April 1972): 400-412.

Rundell, Walter. "Oliver Wendell Holmes." American Archivist 45 (Spring 1982): 248-50.

Samuels, Helen W. "Who Controls the Past." American Archivist 49 (Spring 1986): 109-24.

_____. "Improving our Dispositon: Documentation Strategy." Archivaria 33 (Winter 1991-92): 125-40.

Schellenberg, Theodore R. "The Appraisal of Modern Public Records." Bulletins of the National Archives 8 (October 1956): 233-78.

_____. Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956.

_____. "Archival Principles of Arrangement." American Archivist 24 (January 1961): 11-24.

_____. "The Principle of Provenance and Modern Records in the United States." American Archivist 28 (January 1965): 39-41.

_____. The Management of Archives. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.

Scott, Peter J. "The Record Group Concept: A Case for Abandonment." American Archivist 29 (October 1966): 493-504.

_____. "Archives and Administrative Change: Some Methods and Approaches (Part 5)." Archives and Manuscripts 9 (September 1981): 3-18

- _____. "Facing the Reality of Administrative change - some further remarks on the Record Group Concept." Journal of the Society of Archivists 5 (October 1974): 94-100.
- Scott, Peter J., and G. Finlay. "Archives and Administrative Change: Some Methods and Approaches (Part 1)." Archives and Manuscripts 7 (August 1978): 115-127.
- Scott, Peter J., C.D. Smith, and G. Finlay. "Archives and Administrative Change: Some Methods and Approaches (Part 2)." Archives and Manuscripts 7 (April 1979): 151-165.
- Scott, Peter J., C.D. Smith and G. Finlay. "Archives and Administrative Change: Some Methods and Approaches (Part 3)." Archives and Manuscripts 7 (May 1980): 41-54.
- Scott, Peter J., C.D. Smith and G. Finlay. "Archives and Administrative Change: Some Methods and Approaches (Part 4)." Archives and Manuscripts 8 (December 1980): 51-69.
- Sink, Robert. "Appraisal: The Process of Choice." American Archivist 53 (Summer 1990): 452-58.
- Taylor, Hugh A. "Transformation in the Archives: Technological Adjustment or Paradigm Shift." Archivaria 25 (Winter 1987-88): 12-28.
- Thibodeau, Sharon Gibbs. "Archival Arrangement and Description." In Managing Archives and Archival Institutions, ed. James G. Bradsher, 67-77. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989.
- Thomas, Violet S., Dexter R. Schubert, and Jo Ann Lee. Records Management: Systems and Administration. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1983.
- Turnbaugh, Roy. "Plowing the Sea: Appraising Public Records in an Ahistorical Culture." American Archivist 53 (Fall 1990): 562-565.
- Vincent, Carl. "The Record Group: A Concept in Evolution." Archivaria 4 (Winter 1976-77): 3-16.
- Virtue, Ethel B. "Principles of Classification for Archives." In American Historical Association Annual Report 1914 v.1 373-380. Washington: 1916.

- Walne, Peter. ed. Dictionary of Archival Terminology.
International Council on Archives. ICA Handbooks
Series. Volume 3. Munich: K.G. Saur, 1984.
- Wright, A.R. "Archival Classification." American
Archivist 3 (July 1940): 173-86.
- Young, Robert M. Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in
Victorian Culture. Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1985.