

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN THE ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS  
IN LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVAL REPOSITORIES

By

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## ABSTRACT

Until recent years, archivists have been reluctant to consider photographs as being archival in nature. The evidential value possessed by some photographs was ignored and archivists also failed to see where the informational value of a photographic image could be enhanced when viewed within the context in which it was created. Instead, archivists preferred to arrange and describe photographs as discrete items. For assistance in this endeavor, archivists turned to members of the library profession. Librarians, for their part, found that photographs were not amenable to standard bibliographic formats or classification schemes devised for printed monographs. The result was the creation by members of both the library and archival professions of numerous and often idiosyncratic methods for the physical and intellectual control of photographs.

The volume of photographic images acquired by libraries and archival repositories now makes it virtually impossible to continue dealing with photographs as discrete items. The research needs and methodologies of users have also changed; photographs are increasingly being sought as historical documents in their own right and not just as illustrations to accompany the written word. In response to these two factors, librarians began organizing and describing photographs as "lots" and archivists moved slowly toward the arrangement and description of photographs as archival fonds. This evolution, far from complete with regard to photographs, resembles an earlier evolution affecting the arrangement and description of

textual archives, particularly manuscripts.

Today archivists in many Western countries are seeking to establish standard formats in the description of archival materials. This goal has become particularly urgent in the face of computer technology and the desire to form automated archival networks. It remains to be seen whether the final standards adopted in Canada, for instance, will encompass photographs or whether photographs will retain a "special" status. Without question, photographs have and will continue to present members of the library and archival professions with problems in arrangement and description. This is demonstrated in the body of this thesis through a survey of the professional literature and through field work undertaken in six libraries and archival repositories in the Vancouver area and in Victoria, British Columbia. However, the existence of problems should not mean that the approach to photographic archives should be any different, in essence, from the approach and principles applied to textual archives.



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# PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN THE ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS IN LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVAL REPOSITORIES

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The principle of provenance and its corollary original order are fundamental to the physical and intellectual control of private and public archives. Maintaining provenance means that "the archives of a given record creator must not be intermingled with those of other record creators."<sup>1</sup> Maintaining original order means that "records should be kept in the order imposed on them during their current life...."<sup>2</sup> The arrangement of archives according to provenance and original order preserves the organic nature of individual fonds, while also preserving the relationship among the documents within each fonds. In turn, this protects the evidential value of the documents, that is, the authentic and adequate documentation of the organization and functioning of the creating body. It also protects the informational value of the documents, that is, the information the archives contain on persons, place, subjects and the like with which the creating body dealt.<sup>3</sup> Finding aids, such as inventories, should reflect the organic structure of a fonds and therefore description begins at the fonds or group level and proceeds downward toward the subgroup, series, subseries, file and item levels. Normally, inventories do not go below the series level. The subject content of a fonds should never or rarely be used as a means of physically arranging documents, but should be made known through the finding

aids produced. Therefore, the archivist must focus on the organic nature of each fonds and put the maintenance of its integrity ahead of the patron's preference for subject-based arrangement and description.

In his 1965 publication, The Management of Archives, T.R. Schellenberg stated that "Information on the provenance of pictorial records within some government agency, corporate body, or person is relatively unimportant, for such records do not derive much of their meaning from their organizational origins."<sup>4</sup> Schellenberg did not completely abandon the idea of applying archival principle of provenance (respect des fonds) and original order (respect pour l'ordre primitif) to photographs, but suggested they be used primarily in easing the handling of large groups of photographs.<sup>5</sup>

Otherwise, archivists should have no compunction about arranging prints and negatives in numerical order and describing them as discrete items through the use of card catalogues, lists and indexes. Inventories, Schellenberg felt, were unnecessary and guides only required by larger institutions.<sup>6</sup>

Schellenberg's thoughts on the arrangement and description of photographs reflected, rather than molded the practices of archivists, librarians, museum curators and other custodians of nontextual materials. Like Schellenberg, very few professionals could see where photographs possessed evidential value or where maintaining provenance would enhance the informational value of an image. The widespread practice of arranging and describing (or in library terminology, organizing and cataloguing) photographs item-by-item and according to subject content, was, and still is, the outcome of such factors as the perceived research value of the photographs and the nature of user demands.

Librarians and archivists have found that the majority of users will search for a particular image of a specific event, subject or person. As opposed to research, which entails studying large groups of documents to detect underlying significance and the relationship between two or more variables,<sup>7</sup> a search requires that users be able to find that one image or selection of images within a relatively short period of time and with a minimum of difficulty. In public libraries and in school libraries, photographs must be administered in such a way as to allow easy access. In academic libraries, special collections and archival repositories, the arrangement and description of photographs has also been geared to search rather than research. Students, historians, and publishers search, often as an afterthought, for images to illustrate the written text. As Larry Weinstein and Robert Booth, authors of Collection, Use and Care of Historical Photographs have discovered, many users

come for a particular photo they know you have and nothing more. They will not look at pictures, discover any new images, or even enjoy looking at old photographs.<sup>8</sup>

Browsers, on the other hand, will ask to see everything on a given topic, but will decline viewing bodies of photographs for which there are only preliminary inventories available. Weinstein and Booth also found that all users expect each photograph to be accurately dated and thoroughly identified.<sup>9</sup>

Users and archivists alike tend to believe that there are few documents "more useless than unidentified images."<sup>10</sup> Archivists and librarians

interested in the diplomatics of photographs are even more emphatic on this point than their colleagues. Having trained themselves to be "visually literate", these specialists have found that nearly all photographs present a biased or distorted view of reality. Distortion may be the outcome of conscious or unconscious manipulation on the part of the photographer.<sup>11</sup> The general public, however, accepts photographic images as reflections of truth and reality.<sup>12</sup> To avert the misuse or misinterpretation of photographs, archivists and librarians feel compelled to furnish a description for each image. This stance makes item-level description paramount while rendering unthinkable the idea of description at any higher level, such as at the fonds and/or series levels.

In dealing with photographs as discrete items, Schellenberg advised archivists to adopt the techniques of the library profession.<sup>13</sup> Yet librarians, like archivists, have been overwhelmed by the variety and complexity of photographs. The nature of the medium itself suggests myriad possible methods of organization and cataloguing. Moreover, until recently, few library schools offered courses in picture librarianship.<sup>14</sup> As a consequence, knowledge regarding photograph collections was acquired through trial and error experiments or as the result of on the job training. This situation led to the creation of numerous tailored and highly idiosyncratic organizational schemes and retrieval systems.

Indeed, librarians have stressed the need for taking an ad hoc approach to the organization of picture collections.<sup>15</sup> The choice of methods was to be determined after considering the unique nature of the photographs held by each institution and the individual character of usership at each library.

In some cases, this led to the adaptation or abandonment of traditional library standards and rules. Hilary Evans, for example, has stated that picture librarianship (which includes dealing with photographs as well as other pictorial material) runs "parallel to, rather than deriving from, book librarianship."<sup>16</sup> A more moderate opinion claims that picture librarianship challenges some elements of traditional librarianship while reiterating other.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the specialized area of picture librarianship, there is a general agreement that "no-one can claim to have the right answer to all situations."<sup>18</sup>

A definitive textbook, outlining universally acceptable means of organizing and describing photographs, therefore, has yet to be written. Picture librarians prefer to rely on case studies as a means of disseminating information and advice. The underlying message of most articles published by picture librarians is "this worked for us so maybe it will work for you."<sup>19</sup> Yet as Ron D'Altroy, formerly of the Historical Photograph Section of the Vancouver Public Library found, an investigation of various systems of filing and storing photographs proved most methods to be "very complicated and...virtually useless "for his purposes."<sup>20</sup> He was forced, eventually, to create his own system and then, in turn, offered his ideas to his colleagues through a professional journal. No doubt the publication of case studies has helped numerous librarians, D'Altroy notwithstanding, but it has also created something of a vicious cycle, resulting in the frequent repetition of a limited body of ideas and techniques.

Archivists and other custodians of photographs who have looked to

librarians for guidance have found little in the way of established or accepted standards or procedures. In consulting library literature, these professionals are further handicapped through a lack of familiarity with basic library techniques such as descriptive cataloguing, classification and indexing. Thus, they have created their own systems of arranging and describing photographs which are equally, if not more, idiosyncratic than those designed by librarians.

The overwhelming and expensive task of describing photographs at the item level coupled with conflicting and confusing methodologies of physical and intellectual control have led to unfortunate situations. While researching the early oil industry in Texas, historian Walter Rundle found that photographs in some museums and archives were totally unorganized and, in one instance, photographs were literally scattered all over the floor. Rundle concluded that a lack of intellectual access to photograph collections is the norm.<sup>21</sup>

In the mid-to-late 1970s, a number of factors converged to bring about a new awareness on the part of librarians and archivists regarding the appropriateness of applying the principle of provenance and original order to photographs. First and foremost there was a noticeable upsurge in interest shown by the public in historical photographs. As user requests for new and varied visual material increased, librarians and archivists acquired more and larger bodies of photographs to meet the demand. Sheer volume negated the possibility of item-level description in making the material accessible to patrons. The approach of academics toward photographs also changed. Where photographs were once considered solely as



adjuncts to the written word, they were now being used as documents capable of standing on their own merits.<sup>22</sup> Extended research projects convinced users and staff alike that the informational value of a photograph was greatly enhanced when viewed within the context in which it was created. In other words, when provenance was not observed and a photograph was severed from its series or group origin, it became very difficult to interpret the meaning of the photograph or to determine the bias of the photographer.<sup>23</sup> Nancy Malan summarized the situation when she stated "A historical photograph is a fragment of history. It is like a single bone found during an archaeological dig. Taken alone it has limited meaning."<sup>24</sup>

The need to protect the informational value of photographic fonds through the maintenance of provenance has been conceded but there is still some question concerning the evidential value possessed by photographic fonds. If an archivist considers only the informational or scholarly research value of a particular fonds, he or she might not be as scrupulous in preserving provenance and original order as would be the case in protecting the evidential, particularly the legal, value of a fonds.<sup>25</sup> However, the fact that many photographic fonds do possess administrative or legal value, is slowly gaining acceptance within the archival community.

Recognizing photographs as "records in the archival sense" has not made it any less difficult to deal with a medium which often shows "little evidence of a time series and obstinately resist[s] an original order between inclusive dates."<sup>26</sup> Archivists and librarians are still in the experimental stage of arranging and describing photographic fonds according to provenance and original order. A similar evolution, marked by some of

the same uncertainties and inconsistencies, occurred earlier in the twentieth century in regards to manuscript collections. Although they were at one time the domain of librarians and were most often catalogued at the item level, manuscript fonds are now, for the most part, considered part of the "archival family" and arranged and described according to archival principles.

The application of archival principles to photographic fonds has not completely negated the need to describe some fonds and/or discrete photographs at the item level. Since 1978 and the publication of the second edition of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules and in 1982 with the publication of Elisabeth Betz's Graphic Materials members of both professions have been able to apply a standardized format in describing nontextual material at the item and fonds levels.<sup>27</sup> The advent of automation, the hope for standardization and the promise of information networking have pulled the members of the two professions closer together. It is clear that archivists and librarians will continue to benefit from a sharing of skills and techniques if further standards and effective means of arranging and describing photographs and photographic fonds are to be developed.

The problems and issues faced by archivists and librarians in the arrangement and description of photographs will be dealt with in the following chapters. Methods, primarily developed by librarians, for the organization, cataloguing and retrieval of photographs will be the focus of Chapter Two. Tracing the evolution away from organizing and describing photographs as discrete items toward a recognition of the applicability of

archival principles to photographic fonds comprises the objective of Chapter Three. Chapter Four will deal with the impact of automation and the drive toward the standardization of descriptive practices in the intellectual control of archives, textual and nontextual. Chapter Five, unlike the previous chapters, will not be based on theory and case studies as presented in the professional literature but will describe field work undertaken at local archival repositories, libraries and historical societies. This field work involved interviewing individuals in charge of photographs at the Vancouver Public Library, Historical Photographs Section, the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Visual Records Division, the Vancouver City Archives, the New Westminster Public Library, the Simon Fraser University Archives, and the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia. The purpose was to uncover specific problems faced by professionals dealing with the arrangement and description of photographs and to discover the methods or tactics used in overcoming obstacles. A short conclusion, found in Chapter Six, will attempt to summarize the findings contained in the body of this thesis.

Throughout this thesis, the term fonds is used to delineate "the whole of the documents of any nature that every administrative body, every physical or corporate entity, automatically and organically accumulates by reason of its function or of its activities." Thus, a fonds refers to the totality of the documents in any form or on any medium created by an agency or person acting in a public or private capacity.<sup>28</sup> A photographic fonds might also contain some textual material generated by the creator, such as ledgers kept by a commercial photographer. Photographs that are a part of a

largely textual fonds or where photographs have been removed from a textual fonds and maintained and administered separately, are best described as bodies of photographs as opposed to photographic fonds. Collections of documents, textual or nontextual, are distinguishable from fonds d'archives in that they were artificially brought together and are usually, therefore, not organic in nature. This said, it must be borne in mind that in many institutions, the term collection may refer to either an artificially accumulated or organically generated body of documents. The Phillip Timms Collection, held by the Vancouver Public Library, Historical Photographs Section, for instance, was organically generated by the photographer Phillip Timms. In some libraries and archival repositories, "photographic collection" is used to refer to the entire photographic holdings of the institution. To avoid confusion, the term collection will be used here to indicate an artificial group of documents or in conformity with an institution's use of the word to mean the holdings, organic or artificial, of the institution. A photograph, herein, is defined as a chemically fixed image holding a lens-produced pattern of light, an aggregate of space and a finite amount of time.<sup>29</sup>

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## CHAPTER TWO: LIBRARY TECHNIQUES FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Schellenberg considered photographs, as discrete items, to be "of nearly equal concern to librarians and archivists."<sup>1</sup> Librarians, however, have intimated that they have been "delegated" the task of handling photographs and, increasingly, have assumed the job of archivist.<sup>2</sup> In North America, libraries and archival repositories began collecting photographs in the late 1800s and early 1900s;<sup>3</sup> specialized custodians of this record medium were, and in many cases still are, picture or photographic librarians, not photographic archivists.

In the course of this chapter, the basic and most common means of organizing and describing photographs in accordance with skills derived from librarianship will be examined. It will become apparent that the item-level classification and cataloguing of photographs has presented curators with a formidable challenge. Most picture librarians and archivists would agree that photographs are one of the most difficult types of historical documents to administer. Similar to other media specialists, curators of photographs have felt cutoff from the mainstream of their professions. Moreover, as a small and geographically scattered group they have often found themselves isolated from one another. As the lines of communication have been strengthened over the years, advances in the standardization of methodology have been achieved. Although the approach of archivists and some librarians toward the organization and description of photographs is now changing and moving away from item-level control, the groundwork accomplished in recent

decades cannot be dismissed as outdated. In many libraries, historical societies and archival repositories, the methods developed by picture librarians are still in use either as the sole system of control or as a complementary system to an archivally-based system.

At first, working in small autonomous units within various institutions, picture librarians sought to develop methods of cataloguing, classifying and indexing the images under their care. To encourage the pooling of information, workshops and study sessions were convened periodically. As early as 1946, an informal conference was held at the National Archives in Washington with twenty-five photographic librarians, representing eleven agencies, in attendance.<sup>4</sup> In 1953, the Picture Division of the Special Libraries Association was formed and several years later began publishing a quarterly newsletter, Picturescope. Other channels for the exchange of information, including the publication of manuals dealing with various aspects of the administration of nontextual materials, continued to appear. Yet by 1965, picture librarians still felt "forced into self-training, problem-solving and invention."<sup>5</sup> To evaluate the current situation as it applied to photographs as well as to other nonprint materials, the United States Office of Education media institute organized three conferences to be held between August of 1969 and April of 1970. Specialists from Canada, Britain and the United States attended these meetings and concluded that "non-print media is not presently organized for its intelligent selection and utilization" and that there had been a general failure, on the part of professionals, to establish suitable standards for the control of nonprint media.<sup>6</sup>



In retrospect, it is really neither very surprising nor alarming that members of the library profession have faced years of indecision and experimentation in the organization and description of nonprint material. After all, photographs, for instance, have only been in existence since 1826.<sup>7</sup> By comparison, methods for the cataloguing, classification and indexing of printed materials have evolved over centuries. In 1697, after books had existed for approximately 250 years, the curators of the Bodleian Library were advised that "a dozen or more Learned men, who are likewise supposed to know books better than others, met so many times a week....To consult whether books with gilt backs should stand with the backs out or not;...whether Authors should be placed in Alphabetical order as to their names or not;...whether when a book contains many different Tracts of several Authors, under one general Title, every Author and Tract ought not to be expressed in the Catalogue."<sup>8</sup> In reference to the control of nonprint material, one library school professor has pointed out that "Today we do things more quickly,"<sup>9</sup> or, at least, we would like to do things more quickly.

It also must be remembered that current standards and rules for the control of both print and nonprint material cannot be considered static or absolute. Technology, particularly the introduction of computers, will continue to render obsolete what has already been accomplished. Economic realities and the sometimes impossible task of applying general rules to specific situations have led to the conclusion that the physical and intellectual control of library materials must remain an art, not a science.<sup>10</sup> This does not mean that standards and rules are unimportant or

unnecessary, only that they should be relatively flexible. Expectations for the interinstitutional exchange of bibliographic information is one important reason for the ongoing development and adoption of standards. User expectations regarding uniformity in methodology amongst institutions is yet another reason.

The creation and application of bibliographic standards or any comprehensive form of organizing and describing photographs has been retarded due to several factors. One important consideration is the various physical forms which photographs may take, from daguerreotypes to glass-plate negatives to the standard black-and-white print. The conservation needs of different types of photographs often seems to defy the creation of one method of physical arrangement. The sheer volume of photographs accumulated by libraries and the resulting costs involved in making the images intellectually accessible has stymied the best laid plans and schemes. Libraries are also user-oriented and ultimately the perceived needs of patrons have influenced and even dictated the methods used in the organization and description of photographs. The evolution of methods of control over photographic images more often reflects, rather than precedes the changing needs of users.

## ORGANIZATION

### VERTICAL FILES

Until recent years and in "most places photographs, if not loosely filed in drawers or boxes, attain[ed] their zenith of attention when simply dropped in a vertical file, which to appease conscience...[was] usually subdivided on a chronological, geographical, or name basis."<sup>11</sup> Deemed as being "far too primitive"<sup>12</sup> by one author, the vertical file, or self-indexing picture file, remains the favorite means of organizing photographic prints in many libraries and archival repositories. Robert Weinstein and Larry Booth have promoted the use of a vertical file as a starting point upon which a more elaborate system can be built as funds and staff time become available.<sup>13</sup>

The contents of a vertical file can be arranged according to subject term or classified subject term. Subject term filing is far more common and involves producing a list of subject terms or subject headings against which photographs can be arranged in the appropriate files, cabinets or binders. Classes such as portraits, geographic locations, historic events and a large, general subject class are usually created and then subdivided to reflect in greater detail the subject content of the photographs.<sup>14</sup> Cross referencing can be accomplished by making duplicate copies of original images and then filing the duplicates under numerous subject headings.

Large company libraries, such as those at the Mobil Oil, Wells Fargo Bank, Life Incorporated and Shell Oil have all adopted the self-indexing

file as a means of arranging their photographs. At Mobil Oil, the librarian admitted that "'the age of illustrated communication' had caught most of us unprepared." In an effort to respond more effectively to in-house requests and public enquiries for visual documentation, the company's photographs were reorganized. Portraits were arranged alphabetically, while photographs of plants and offices, geographic locations and products and processes were arranged by subject.<sup>15</sup> At Wells Fargo, some fifteen subjects were arbitrarily established within which all photographs could be filed.<sup>16</sup> In 1960, the individual put in charge of organizing the photographs held by Shell Oil began his task with an investigation of different filing systems only to discover "there were none." He therefore decided he would have to "play it by ear." In the end, Shell Oil photographs were physically organized within two different systems, but each system was based on subject classification. Five black albums containing select photographs were organized under the following headings: exploration and production; manufacturing; transportation; storage laboratories; and research. These albums were designed for "window shoppers" with no fixed idea regarding the type of image sought. Researchers with specific requests were to be directed to a twenty-four drawer cabinet containing photographs organized into more precise subject categories.<sup>17</sup>

Classified subject term filing is a more structured system. Using this method, each subject term is assigned a number between 1 and 9 or 1 and 999 and after each photograph is analyzed and numbered it is placed in a container bearing the identical number.<sup>18</sup> This approach is highly recommended by Paul Vanderbilt of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

for other historical societies who are "seeking some easily executed formula" for dealing with their photographs.<sup>19</sup> Vanderbilt, originally trained as an art historian, has worked in several libraries, including the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, and specializes in "the extension of library type reference and research into...less well-organized areas" such as photographs. In advising historical societies and other custodians of photographs, Vanderbilt suggests that the material to be filed be handled randomly until one is familiar enough with the collection to create an outline of its contents. Each class in the outline should then be numbered, for example: 1 Early maps and views; 30 Persons and Families, A-E, F-L, M-R, S-Z; 60 Churches and religious affairs; 90 Farms.<sup>20</sup> While a list of classes and their corresponding numbers must be supplied to researchers, Vanderbilt feels that no further description is necessary.

To Vanderbilt, the use of the classified subject term system resembles, in theory, the system of arrangement and description used by archivists dealing with manuscript and record groups. Researchers in archival repositories, like patrons using photographs organized by classified subject term in libraries must "deal with significant large masses, known by their position in the structure of accumulated records, and...deal with the individual details of information."<sup>21</sup> In a very general sense, Vanderbilt's analogy holds true. However, in an archival setting the provenance of a fonds is retained whereas the type of photograph collection to which Vanderbilt refers is an accumulation of images brought together from various sources to create one large collection. As a consequence, subject term classification is a wholly artificial scheme and the photographs contained

within the system gain little significance when viewed vis-à-vis other images in the same class.

Vanderbilt's picture classification scheme inspired W.J. Burke of the Look magazine photograph library to adopt a similar system. Burke and his staff divided the company's photographs into nine major categories: 1 Nature; 2 Man-Physical; 3 Man-Economic; 4 Man-Social; 5 Man-Political; 6 Man-Intellectual and Spiritual; 7 Recreational; 8 War; 9 Miscellaneous. Working from the general to the more specific, the librarians at Look then further subdivided the nine main classes. For instance, 1.50 is Nature-Animals and within this class photographs are organized alphabetically, from Birds to Zebras. In writing about his experience, Burke cautioned that classification is not an exact science and thus each library must create a system to suit the particular needs of its photograph collection.<sup>22</sup>

At the University of Illinois, Frederick Korn, a former student in the university's Graduate School of Library Science designed a unique classified subject term filing system based on photographic process or apparatus. The classification schedule was created to correlate with the lesson plan of a course in photography. Notation was alphanumeric with decimal expansion. Classes included such topics as Cameras, Camera accessories, Camera lenses, Black-and White, Colour and so on.<sup>23</sup>

Although numerous classification schemes have been devised for use in organizing textual materials, few of these schemes are easily adapted to photographs. Paul Vanderbilt and others have suggested that a Cutter code, originally designed for use with monographs, be used where the photographer's name is the most important fact about a picture, for example

B4 for Bemis and B5 for Billings and so on.<sup>24</sup> Other general classification schemes which were also devised for monographs, such as the Dewey Decimal System, the Library of Congress system, the Colon Classification System, the Bliss Classification scheme and the Universal Decimal Classification System have not been found to be particularly suitable or appropriate for photographs.<sup>25</sup> They are usually academic and discipline-oriented and therefore new classes would have to be created by the librarian to cover some subjects found in photographs while other large designated classes, such as philosophy, would go unused in a picture library.<sup>26</sup>

Vertical files, organized by subject term or classified subject term, do have several advantages over other systems. The prime advantage emphasized by librarians is that a vertical file is, to an extent, self-indexing and may be used as a substitute for cataloguing or cross-indexing. In bypassing detailed description, the library can reduce its backlog of photographs which would otherwise be awaiting cataloguing. Vertical files are also capable of expansion through the addition of new subheadings or classes. The fact that vertical files are usually open-access and simple to use means that patrons can conduct their research with minimal guidance from staff members. For patrons with only a general idea of what they are looking for, a vertical file facilitates browsing.<sup>27</sup>

There are also disadvantages associated with vertical files. If original prints are used, open access results in wear and tear and even theft. Misfiling by patrons is, of course, inevitable. One of the greatest difficulties arising from the use of this system is that vertical files tend to grow at a phenomenal rate and eventually become unwieldy. This can be a

particular problem where strict overall control has not been maintained in choosing subject and classification headings. As mentioned, published classification schemes, such as the Dewey Decimal system are not suited for use with photographs. Standard authorities on subject headings, such as the Library of Congress Subject Headings, are also viewed as being inadequate because they contain intellectual terms intended for books.<sup>28</sup> Picture librarians, therefore, are usually forced to develop their own subject headings, a difficult task at best.

Hermine M. Baumhoffer, an authority in the field of picture librarianship, feels that a "sparkling classification" can only be "produced where the librarian has complete intellectual mastery over the contents of the files, sees it in the perspective of generations, and regards it with something like devotion."<sup>29</sup> This ideal might be attainable if only one librarian were placed in charge of creating a subject-heading list, remains at his or her post indefinitely to guard it, or if the system rarely requires the addition of new classes. More typical is the situation faced by Alma Eggleston, Chief, Picture Library of Life magazine in New York. A schedule of subject headings was originally created for the Life photograph collection but each member of the department maintained a "loose-leaf transcript of subject headings, and each week new additions are dittoed and handed out for inclusion."<sup>30</sup> Chances are, then, that several librarians will change and develop a system. Often additions will be created in response to a specific reference question rather than with an eye to long-range organizational planning.<sup>31</sup>

In a 1978 article appearing in Picturescope, Mary Jirgensons, then a



student of the Pratt Institute Graduate School of Library and Information Science, stresses the need to consider the user first and logic and convenience second in creating subject headings for a vertical file of photographs. She feels that in fulfilling the needs of the user, subject headings must reflect current language usage and social trends.<sup>32</sup> As the resulting terms become obsolete, one would assume that the subject headings would have to be revised, deleted or "see" and "see also" references added. From Jirgensons' point of view, the few published subject-heading guides are of little use. For instance, even though the Newark Public Library originally published its list of subject headings as The Picture Collection in response to requests received from other libraries,<sup>33</sup> Jirgensons feels that that work can only aid other librarians on a very basic level.<sup>34</sup> Other evidence would support this stance. Richard Staub, for one, generally found that the Newark scheme provided an organizational framework and that it acted as a reminder to librarians to work from the general to the specific in creating headings.<sup>35</sup> Broad classes might be borrowed from The Picture Collection but more specific, local classes must be devised by librarians seeing with "subject eyes."<sup>36</sup>

#### NUMERICAL ARRANGEMENT (NOT BASED ON CLASSIFIED SUBJECT TERMS)

The organization of individual photographs by accession number, chronologically or through the use of any numerical designator, other than classified subject term organization, is usually considered "fatal" in

libraries.<sup>37</sup> Prints arranged numerically require extensive indexing or cataloguing and therefore only valuable items or small collections can be controlled in this manner. George Bowditch of the Adirondack Museum recommends filing prints by accession number and making them accessible through descriptive and subject cataloguing but he concedes that the system is best suited to collections containing no more than 1500 images.<sup>38</sup> Original prints can be easily maintained by accession number when copy prints or photocopies have been made and are accessible in vertical files in the reference room. In a similar manner, where images have been reproduced on microfiche or microfilm, the originals can be organized numerically. The subject content of the microfiche or microfilm is usually described in indexes.

Negatives, on the other hand, are most often organized numerically, especially in the case where their corresponding prints are housed in subject files. Prints placed in vertical files are assigned an accession number which is also inscribed on the jacket of the negative or, using a special ink, on the edge of the negative. The organization of negatives by accession number and the organization of prints by subject is preferred by numerous professionals including Helen Davidson, archivist at the Eli Lilly Company, and Camilla P. Luecke, Chief, Photographic Library, United States Information Agency, Washington, D.C.<sup>39</sup> At the Ford Motor Company library, only negatives are kept on hand for reference and research. Organization is numerical and by the size of the negative, 4 by 5 inch or 8 by 10 inch. Intellectual access is gained through the use of a subject index.<sup>40</sup>

Few journal articles or manuals dealing with the organization and

description of photographs go into great detail when discussing negatives. There are several likely reasons for this. In many cases, institutions acquire only prints, while the negatives remain with the donor or were lost or misplaced by the donor years before. Some photographic processes produce no negative, such as daguerreotypes which are direct positive images.<sup>41</sup> When vertical files contain photographs as well as other pictorial material, such as magazine clippings, all images in the file are considered to be of little value and replaceable with similar images; having or knowing the whereabouts of the negatives becomes unimportant. Hence, while some librarians and archivists would consider the negative to be the "heart of any photo operation", others attach little import to the original negative.<sup>42</sup>

## DESCRIPTION

### ACCESSION REGISTERS OR LOGS

Recording an accession is both the first step in gaining physical control over photographs and the beginning of the descriptive process. In archives, an accession register usually describes incoming acquisitions at the fonds or group level but in libraries there is a natural tendency to record the accession number, subject content and other information available on each item. Weinstein and Booth suggest that the log be as detailed as possible. In this way, it can be used for reference in writing captions or

to locate photographs not yet assimilated into the institution's photograph library. Moreover, a log can be used to reassemble fonds previously dispersed and interfiled with other photographs.<sup>43</sup> From the literature, it would appear that very few libraries actually maintain an accession log. It may be that logs for photographs are considered of little use or, conversely, that they are so basic they need not be discussed in articles written on the description of photographs.

## CAPTIONS

In libraries, archival repositories and museums where photographs are maintained in vertical files the caption usually will provide the main source of information available on an image. Custodians of photographs therefore agree that each image must carry enough data to make it of use to patrons and to make it possible for staff members to find and retrieve the image. At the same time, the caption need not include everything that could possibly be said for "who can know in advance what information about a picture is likely to be required...."<sup>44</sup> Basically, it is suggested that the caption answer the questions who, what, where and when and supply the name of the photographer, if known.<sup>45</sup>

It can be difficult to caption a photograph accurately and fully so it is recommended that users be provided with information files or identification directories corresponding to the subject content of the collection. The creation of an identification directory involves compiling

lists of dates, people, places and events relevant to the photographs held by an institution.<sup>46</sup> Much of this type of information is similar to that found in the introductory comments of an archival inventory for a single fonds.

#### IMAGE-BEARING CATALOGUES

The image-bearing catalogue is a step up from the vertical file and simple captioning. It also involves the reproduction of images and as a consequence, an image-bearing catalogue is an expensive and time consuming project. Using this method of description, original prints and negatives can be organized by accession number or in any other manner which provides for efficient retrieval. Small copy prints are made of original images and then attached to catalogue cards containing either caption information or, more likely, a full descriptive catalogue entry. In turn, the cards are arranged by subject, as at the National Photography Collection of the Public Archives of Canada (the NPC no longer exists as a distinct Division but has been merged with the Picture Division to form the Documentary Art and Photograph Division; as of June 1987, the PAC became the National Archives of Canada), or by call-number and accessible through an index as at the UCLA Library Department of Special Collections.<sup>47</sup>

The costs involved in this descriptive method has proven prohibitive to all but the larger archival repositories and libraries. Even where it is in use, only a fraction of the images held by the institutions are included in an image-bearing catalogue. The UCLA Library selected only its "most

valuable and important...vintage images" for its visible file.<sup>48</sup> At the National Photography Collection (Documentary Art and Photograph Division), a selection process is also used in determining which images will be described in the picture catalogue. Every time a patron requests the reproduction of an original print, several copies are made, one of which goes to the patron and one which goes into the catalogue. At the National Photography Collection (DAPD) whole fonds or series within photographic fonds are also reproduced for the picture catalogue if they are considered to be of potential research value. In all institutions, photographs not described in the image-bearing catalogue should be intellectually accessible through some other descriptive tool.

#### DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUING

In 1950 Hermine Baumhofer informed custodians of photographs that they likely would have to do without a catalogue of their pictorial holdings. She felt that financial considerations made it impossible to catalogue all but a very small and select number of photographs.<sup>49</sup> One of the most problematic aspects of cataloguing photographs and the one which results in a significant expenditure of time and money is attribution, that is, the identification of the photograph. Photographs, unlike books, do not have a title page from which a transcription of information can be taken. If research is conducted until identification is complete, the librarian may be led on a "modern treasure hunt" through various secondary sources.<sup>50</sup> At the

very least, the descriptive cataloguing of photographs requires that the cataloguer have some knowledge of local history and national history, as well as some grounding in other specialized area such as social or agricultural history, historical geography, literature and so on. For the most part, librarians feel that where photographs are accessible to users and properly displayed, in a vertical file, for instance, there is no need for cataloguing.

Despite all the inherent problems, limitations and frustrations associated with the cataloguing of photographs, there has been a long and sometimes controversial search for a comprehensive and usable standard for the bibliographic control of pictorial material. In part, this quest was spurred on by librarians in charge of all manner of nonbook material. Yet specialists in the area of photographs have also participated in the process.

Prior to 1950, picture librarians and other individuals in charge of various nontextual media forms were quite willing to create their own cataloging rules. After 1950, the acquisitioning of audiovisual records and other nonbook materials increased in many libraries. In an attempt to establish control over these materials, new media specialists found that conventional rules of bibliographic control could not always be transferred to nonbook materials without difficulty or extreme modifications. As an indication of the resulting "bibliographic anarchy", the Bibliographic Control of Nonprint Media recorded over 600 references in 1972 and another bibliographic work, Nonprint Media in Academic Libraries, contained over 400 references in 1975.<sup>51</sup> Under these conditions, user needs could not be met

fully. In school libraries, for example, nonprint items were not included in central catalogues because varying formats for textual and nontextual materials would make the catalogue difficult to use. Ultimately this hindered user access to nonprint records. Simplistic or ad hoc cataloguing in academic and public libraries also limited the potential use of nonprint materials; current bibliographic formats were doing justice neither to the materials nor to the user who would benefit from more and better information. The promise of interinstitutional resource sharing, which would also benefit the user, is difficult if not impossible to achieve, when libraries each use a different bibliographic format for the cataloguing of nonprint items. Networking, particularly through electronic means, requires a standard form of description for all media types.<sup>52</sup>

In response to the need to standardize the cataloguing of nonprint material, numerous publications appeared, several of which had a significant impact. The first, Eunice Keen's Manual for Use in the Cataloging and Classification of Audiovisual Materials for a High School Library was issued in a preliminary mimeographed edition in 1949 and revised and published in 1955.<sup>53</sup> As one of the first attempts to deal systematically with nonprint material, Keen's book found a large audience.<sup>54</sup> However, Keen restricted her scope strictly to audiovisual material and excluded photographs or any other static form of pictorial record. Picture librarians would have to continue to rely on their own resources until 1959 when the American Library Association in conjunction with the Library of Congress published a supplement to their print-oriented cataloguing rules, Pictures, Designs and other Two Dimensional Representations. This supplement along with other



supplements dealing with phonograph records and films were revised and the rules appeared in 1967 in Part III of the first edition of Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (hereafter AACR1).<sup>55</sup> Initially, Part III of AACR1 was welcomed, but attempts to apply these cataloging rules to nonbook items proved difficult.<sup>56</sup> Revisions of sections of Part III were issued in the following years but Chapter 15 of Part III, dealing with pictures, was not revised prior to the publication of the second edition of Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (hereafter AACR2) in 1978.<sup>57</sup>

In the interim, there were more attempts to provide picture librarians and other media specialists with usable cataloging rules. A Canadian publication, Non-book Materials: The Organization of Integrated Collections, written by Jean Riddle (Weihs), Shirley Lewis and Janet Macdonald, first appeared in 1970 and was later revised and reissued in 1973 and 1979.<sup>58</sup> Adopted by many school libraries, the second edition of Nonbook Materials also met the requirements of many academic libraries for the documentation of audiovisual resources.<sup>59</sup> However, a survey of the literature does not reveal the extent to which Nonbook Materials has contributed to the bibliographic control of photographs in public libraries or in archival repositories, historical societies and museums.

In the 1970s Elisabeth Betz of the Library of Congress put together a working paper on the cataloging of graphic materials. Chapter 15 of AACR1 formed the basis for Betz's work but she also modified and expanded on AACR1 to accommodate the original and unpublished material held in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress.<sup>60</sup> Betz's paper was a helpful addition to existing literature on the description of photographs,

but its lack of detail and the fact that it was never published meant that its impact was not great.

A step forward was taken in the standardization of bibliographic description in the 1970s with the creation of the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) under the auspices of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). IFLA also published a version of the ISBD for nonbook materials ISBD(NBM).<sup>61</sup> These standards were not to be used for cataloguing but to delimit elements of description, establish an order of presentation and standardize punctuation.<sup>62</sup> Following the release of ISBD(NBM) in 1977, cataloguers in the Special Collections Division of the Main Library of the University of British Columbia undertook the development of a cataloguing system for approximately two hundred photographs. It was agreed that ISBD(NBM) would work but only if adjustments were made. To this end, the cataloguers reversed the publication, distribution, manufacture area and the physical description area. They also treated the notes area and standard number area as part of the physical description and manufacture area.<sup>63</sup> This experiment may have suited the specific needs of the photographs held by the University of British Columbia, but it runs counter to the intended use of the ISBD standards. Apparently, other libraries also experienced problems in attempting to manipulate or superimpose ISBD rules.<sup>64</sup>

In 1978 a second edition of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2) was published. The bibliographic formats presented for all media types reconciled many of the previous difficulties encountered with AACR1 while also conforming to ISBD standards. Chapter 8, Part I of AACR2 deals

with graphic materials such as photographs, art originals, plus a wide range of other two-dimensional objects. The rules, which focus almost exclusively on the discrete item, were constructed to allow for indepth or a less detailed description of graphic materials.

The second edition of AACR2 met the needs of most but not all custodians of photograph collections. By the time AACR2 was published, many librarians and archivists who had already established a means of cataloguing photographs were unwilling to close their catalogues and begin using AACR2 or to superimpose its rules on existing descriptive work. Moreover, throughout the 1960s and 1970s the use of computers and the ability to tailor software programs to the specific needs of individual institutions muddled the waters and initially encouraged a shift away from standardization. Of great consequence was the realization that many bodies of photographs housed in archival repositories, libraries, historical societies and museums could and should be treated in the same manner as any other archival fonds. The rules in AACR2 were not designed to meet these new and specific descriptive requirements. Indeed, AACR2 states in its general introduction that its rules are "not specifically intended for specialist and archival libraries." At the same time, archivists and librarians appreciated the advantages of using a standard format, like that of AACR2. Clearly, some method of describing photographs and photographic fonds which merged and reconciled library cataloguing methods with the principles of archives and museum documentation was required.<sup>65</sup> Elisabeth Betz and her colleagues at the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress filled this need with the publication of Graphic

Materials in 1982. The impact of this manual will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

## SUBJECT ANALYSIS

Subject cataloguing and the subject indexing of photographs present many of the same problems encountered in the area of subject organization described above on pages 16 to 22. The main stumbling block is subject analysis and the subsequent choice of appropriate classes, access points and index terms. Specialists in the field of visual records have recognized the "necessity of developing a flexible, multidimensional verbal system to assist research into visual forms," but work in this area has only just begun.<sup>66</sup> In the meantime, the subject analysis of photographs for the purpose of subject cataloguing and indexing is left to the librarian or archivist who may or may not be able to analyze an image fully and accurately depending on individual capabilities.

When using AACR2 in the cataloguing of print or nonprint material, the principle access point should be the name of the individual chiefly responsible for intellectual and/or artistic content. In archival repositories, this usually relates to information regarding provenance which is rarely useful in describing subject content. In cataloguing photographs the name of the individual chiefly responsible for intellectual content and/or artistic content could be used to refer to the name of the photographer. Until recently, the name of the photographer has been

considered relatively unimportant. As certain photographers became well known and examples of their work were requested by users many institutions created indexes to identify the work of particular photographers, but the photographer's name does not seem to be used in subject cataloguing. Moreover, in the majority of cases, the name of the individual who took the photograph is unrecorded and unknown. As a consequence, the norm is to use the title of a photograph in determining the main access point and added entries. The number of subject headings created for photographs is usually only limited by staff time, financial considerations and the nature of the items being analyzed.

Subject indexing, like subject cataloguing and subject classification also requires subject analysis. Certain criteria must also be established in determining the indexable contents of a photograph and index terms to be used. Criteria can relate to the tangible and intangible elements in the image, the stated or unstated intent of the photographer, the indexer's knowledge in a particular area and his or her judgment regarding the significance of the content, the character of the collection and the nature of other descriptive tools in use.<sup>67</sup> It is no surprise that the subject indexing of photographs is viewed as a nearly impossible task. Instead, the memory of an experienced staff member is often considered far more effective than any attempted printed index.<sup>68</sup>

Very few articles have appeared in professional journals describing the indexing of photographs. More often, passing references to indexing are embedded in general publications on the overall organization and description of pictorial records or in philosophical discussions regarding language

usage. One article which did appear on the indexing of photographs suggests the use of index cards arranged by subject and displaying the accession numbers of all images relating to each subject. When a request for a photograph involves two or more subjects, the appropriate index cards are compared for a coincidence of accession numbers.<sup>69</sup> As a manual system, one would suspect it would begin to break down when the number of photograph to be indexed went above five hundred or one thousand. Only through the use of computer technology does the type of postcoordinate indexing described above become practical especially when indexing large bodies of documents. Whether one is dealing with textual or nontextual materials, subject indexing is a complicated matter and in any manual system of bibliographic control, subject indexing is the weakest link.<sup>70</sup>

The techniques developed by librarians for the organization and description of photographs filled what otherwise might have been a void. In recent years, as archivists and librarians began searching for ways of applying archival methodologies to photographic fonds, it has appeared that they were hampered in their efforts because of their earlier reliance on and acceptance of library techniques. In reality, it was not until photographs were accepted as true archival records that the application of provenance and original order became possible. This revolution in thought did not result in a complete disregard for the advances made by librarians and today members of both professions are involved in a loose alliance aimed at creating standardized methods of describing and indexing photographs and photographic fonds.

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### CHAPTER THREE: ARCHIVAL PRACTICES FOR THE ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

While archivists and picture librarians continued to grapple with the control of photographs as discrete items, they found the landscape changing around them. Starting in the 1970s, the institutions in which these professionals worked began acquiring large groups of photographs from government offices, commercial photograph studios, news photograph morgues and other sources. In archival repositories, in particular, users began conducting research projects which involved the examination of aggregates of photographs. In all institutions, users required some form of physical and intellectual access to recently acquired, voluminous photographic bodies or collections. Out of expediency, librarians resorted to organizing and describing incoming photographs on a "lot" basis. For the same reason, archivists also moved toward group-level control. James Anderson, an archivist at the University of Louisville, claimed that members of his profession had "held all along the key to...their dilemma" concerning the physical and intellectual control of photographs. "That key...surprisingly and simply, is the application of traditional archival methodology to photograph collections."<sup>1</sup>

As will become evident throughout this chapter, having found "the key" to the arrangement and description of photographic archives has not solved all the problems faced by archivists and, indeed, has led to new problems. The scope and nature of some of these problems will also be covered in the

following pages. In theory, provenance as a guiding principle should have allowed for the efficient handling of photographs and for the creation of descriptive tools, such as inventories, which would provide researchers with the basic information necessary in the study of historical photographs. At first, however, provenance was applied but its corollary, original order was not, nor were series or equivalent units established which reflected the organic nature of a fonds or body of photographs. The images within a fonds were most often classed by subject and described at the item level. This seemed the best way to capture and reflect informational value. The idea that the informational value of individual photographs could be enhanced through the maintenance of original order was slow in gaining acceptance. Similar to textual records, photographs do gain additional meaning when viewed within the original series in which they were created. That original order should be retained to protect the evidential value of photographic fonds is an even newer concept. Thus, the early application of provenance was incomplete and inadequate. The professional literature would indicate that the use of library techniques for organizing photographs within a fonds maintained by provenance is still in practice. There does appear, however, to be a growing number of archivists and librarians who have accepted photographs as archival documents and are arranging and describing them as such.

In many respects, the transition away from arranging and describing photographs using techniques derived from librarianship toward the utilization of archival methodology closely resembles a similar evolution regarding the physical and intellectual control of public and private

textual fonds. For this reason, it is instructive to review the development of the archival profession and to place the handling of photographs within this larger context.

Antecedents to Western European archives can be traced to ancient times, but the modern history of the profession dates from the French Revolution and the founding of the Archives Nationales in 1794.<sup>2</sup> The first directors of the Archives Nationales were librarians and they naturally adopted a subject arrangement for all the documents under their care. As a consequence, the contents of whole bodies of documents were dispersed and filed under the appropriate subject class. By 1841, it had become apparent that this artificial arrangement was destroying the integrity of the documents and in that same year, the Minister of the Interior issued a circular in which the basic principle of respect des fonds was articulated. In accordance with the circular, records of an administrative body, corporation or family were to be maintained as fonds. However, within each fonds the documents were to be arranged by subject content and within these larger classes arrangement could be either chronological, geographic, or alphabetical, depending on circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

It was in Prussia where the principle of Provenienzprinzip, or respect des fonds, was to be carried to its logical conclusion: Registraturprinzip, or respect for the original order. Regulations formulated in 1881 stressed that records of every government agency in Prussia should be maintained in the order given them by the registry office of the agency which created them and should not be reorganized by subject or any other artificial scheme. Under this system, provenance and original order were developed to meet the

administrative needs of government offices. In France, by contrast, the physical arrangement of documents within a fonds were to meet the subject inquires of researchers.<sup>4</sup>

The concepts of provenance and original order were further elaborated upon and given theoretical justification in a manual published in 1898 by three Dutch archivists, S. Muller, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin.<sup>5</sup> To these archivists, preserving the original order of registry records ensured that the organization and function of the creating administrative body would be reflected in the arrangement. Moreover, and more importantly, original order would relate each transaction or activity documented in a single record to the whole of the records. Recognizing the organic nature of archives and the need to arrange records so as to reveal the relationship of the parts to the whole, is the essence of archival work. Descriptive tools reflecting the original order of records and the framework, process and function to which the records are organically connected provides a suitable basis for making searches under an innumerable variety of topics and subjects. The physical arrangement and classification of records by subject, however, was dismissed by Muller, Feith and Fruin because they believed that it would force the archival group into "an alien mold." While subject classification might help some researchers, it might also hinder others since a single archival record may be classified by subject in more than one way. Only in situations where the original order of record groups had been destroyed or obscured before reaching the archival repository did Muller, Feith and Fruin recommend organization based on subject matter.<sup>6</sup>

Similar to the Prussians and Dutch, archivists in England also focused

on registry records. Sir Hilary Jenkinson gives a rather complete description of English archival practices in his Manual of Archive Administration published in 1922 and revised in 1937.<sup>7</sup> Jenkinson states that public records are to be organized into "archive groups" which he defines as records "resulting from the work of an Administration which was an organic whole, complete in itself...." Within these "archive groups", original order is to be maintained. Jenkinson also discussed the idea of establishing series within fonds with series representing the skeleton of the body which created the records. Having determined series, loose documents found within a fonds could readily be placed in the appropriate file. To Jenkinson, original order should only be broken up "on paper", that is, in finding aids. The actual physical arrangement must remain intact.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, early methods for the physical and intellectual control of public records in England and Europe had been based on library-type classification schemes. As the archival profession matured and a clear set of guiding principles were enunciated, practices began to change. Over time, manuscripts originating in the private sector and nontextual materials, such as photographic fonds, were also dealt with in the same manner as public records. The situation in North America evolved differently and in the United States, in particular, the process was somewhat tumultuous.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in both Canada and the United States, government records and manuscript materials were dealt with by librarians or archivists applying library techniques. This meant that documents were treated as discrete items, arranged chronologically or



classified according to a predetermined scheme and catalogued using rules originally formulated for the description of books. In the late 1800s, the Library of Congress, for instance, removed manuscript papers from their original context and merged them into large classes organized on a geographic-chronological basis.<sup>9</sup> Other classification schemes based on subject content were also devised in various American libraries and archival institutions. Douglas Brymner of the Public Archives of Canada arranged public records and private papers chronologically and by subject. As late as 1911, Brymner's system was lauded by archivists and librarians throughout Canada and the United States.<sup>10</sup> During the same time period in British Columbia, staff at the provincial archival repository were also using a subject classification schemes with little or no thought given to the idea of maintaining an original filing system.<sup>11</sup>

In Canada, the principle of provenance was endorsed, if not for the first time then most forcefully, by David W. Parker, Chief Manuscript Division, Public Archives of Canada, 1912-1923. Parker condemned the earlier disregard for provenance and "the disgraceful mixture that formed the old classification" system in use at the PAC. Parker's concerns reached the ear of the new Dominion Archivist, Arthur Doughty, and eventually Doughty was convinced of the necessity of adopting archival practices in the handling of public records. Before Parker left the employ of the PAC, he did much to reverse the chaotic arrangement and classification imposed by his predecessors.<sup>12</sup> However, it was not until Kaye Lamb's tenure as Dominion Archivist, 1934-1939, that subject classification within public record fonds was completely overcome.

The extent to which the Public Archives of Canada has served as a model for other Canadian archival repositories in regards to the use of provenance has not been explored in the literature. Moreover, one would assume that once European archival principles had been accepted they would have been applied to both public records and private papers; the majority of Canadian repositories, at the federal, provincial and local levels, traditionally have acquired official records and manuscripts, thereby bringing both types of historical materials under the control of one group of professionals. Gordon Dodds of the National Archives of Canada has suggested that the library hegemony in Canada has not generally been strong outside of university archives,<sup>13</sup> yet even while Kaye Lamb was presiding over the archival arrangement and description of public records he developed a classification scheme based on Cutter for manuscripts. The manuscript collections were kept together but shelved using a library classification scheme. In the United States, archivists tended to concentrate on public records while librarians collected historic manuscripts and this division of labour and eventual attempts to enforce conformity to archival standards led to a protracted controversy involving members of both professions. Echoes of this battle could be heard in Canada through professional literature produced by Americans and read by Canadians and many of the problems encountered in the United States were also experienced in Canada, albeit in a less intense manner.

In the United States, the Public Archives Commission held the first Conference of Archivists in 1909. At that time, Waldo G. Leland recommended that all historic records, public and private, be handled in accordance with

"the principle enunciated by the Dutch," that is, provenance. Opposition was voiced immediately by librarians and other manuscript curators who were committed to subject classification. Nearly thirty State archives eventually did adopt the methods proposed by Leland but in the majority of State libraries and State historical societies, subject classification schemes were retained.<sup>14</sup>

During the period between the outbreak of World War I and the end of the Great Depression, little progress was made in terms of adapting and applying European archival theory in American archival repositories. The National Archives was established in the 1930s and several classification schemes were developed for the arrangement of public records including one which was based upon the rigid application of an agency's organizational pattern. In essence, this scheme was "wholly unlike the French system of rationalization" and actually violated the principle of provenance.<sup>15</sup> The founding of the National Archives and its subsequent experimentation with different arrangement schemes prompted a renewal of the debate over library classification versus archival theory.

In 1941 the National Archives adopted a system of arrangement and description based on record groups. These record groups were defined as major archival units established somewhat arbitrarily but with due regard to provenance. Arrangement practices and techniques were further refined and eventually respect pour l'ordre primitif was also accepted by American archivists.<sup>16</sup> In applying provenance and original order, American archivists distinguished at least five levels of arrangement necessary in bringing the holdings of a repository under control: arrangement at the

repository level; arrangement at the record group level; arrangement at the series level; arrangement at the file level; arrangement at the document level.<sup>17</sup> Only after establishing these five levels of arrangement could descriptive work begin. The most basic and typical type of finding aid produced for in-house use is an inventory. Inventories usually include "a brief history of the organization and functions of the agency whose records are being described; a descriptive list of each record series giving as a minimum such data as title, inclusive dates, quantity, arrangement, relationships to other series, and a description of significant subject content...."<sup>18</sup> An inventory of public records normally describes the records at the series level and occasionally at the file level. Item-level description is rare for two reasons: the character and organic nature of a record group is best expressed at the series level; the sheer volume of records accessioned by archival repositories throughout the course of the twentieth century has made item-level control virtually impossible except for very small and historically significant fonds. The production of calendars, a standard descriptive tool of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which involved producing a list of every document in a record group and giving a synopsis of the content, is now nearly obsolete.

While American archivists working with public records became acquainted with the concepts and practical application of provenance and original order, manuscript curators generally continued to classify and catalogue private papers on an item-level basis. Richard C. Berner contends that Schellenberg's 1965 publication The Management of Archives was written as a means of convincing librarians that they ought to apply archival principles

to manuscripts.<sup>19</sup> Schellenberg, like other archivists, could see where manuscripts often possessed the same organic characteristics of corporate and public records and that they therefore possessed evidential as well as informational value. Through his book, Schellenberg was attempting to get librarians to do what the National Archives had done in 1941, abolish its division of classification and cataloguing.<sup>20</sup> In providing a suitable model for manuscript curators, Schellenberg noted the then recent program at the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. By 1965, the Library of Congress was arranging its manuscripts along the lines prescribed by public record archivists and describing these fonds in inventories, called registers.<sup>21</sup> As Berner put it, the Library of Congress Manuscript Division had acknowledged the "contribution of archivists toward the solution of one of the most frustrating problems that had confronted the librarian," that being the problem of controlling large masses of papers.<sup>22</sup>

Difficulties encountered in dealing with a large volume of material was perhaps one of the most compelling reasons for the adoption of European archival theory in Canada and the United States but debate over the practical application of provenance is still heard. This is particularly true in regards to maintaining the original order of public records and private papers. In all manuals on the arrangement and description of archives, including that of Muller, Feith and Fruin, archivists are advised that where an original order no longer exists or where a filing system obscures the evidential value of the records, the archivist should first attempt to re-establish the original order or, as a last resort, impose a suitable artificial order on the records. The problem of finding and

preserving an original order is an even more daunting task for archivists and curators handling manuscripts. Several articles have appeared in professional journals in Canada, the United States and Australia arguing against original order and in favor of the adoption of some simple and usable arrangement scheme for manuscripts.<sup>23</sup> Rebuttals stress that although original order is not applicable in all instance and to all public and private bodies of documents, abandoning the principle on these grounds would be inappropriate. As C. Hurley, an Australian archivist has argued, in the majority of cases, an original order will exist and maintaining that order is preferable because

other arrangements destroy the evidential value imparted to individual documents or groups of documents by their association and relationship with each other and within the whole;...other arrangements destroy the total sum of the meaning of the whole--the evidential value of the arrangement itself both as to the intention of the creator and as to the last practical use to which the records were put;...original order provides a standard form of presentation on the only principle that can be justified to all users;...original order allows depositors to refer to the records;...original order will ensure that original internal cross-referencing remains operative.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, the most likely alternative to original order is the creation of some artificial scheme of arrangement based on subject content. Once original order is undermined or ignored the principle of provenance also begins to break down. The ultimate and most extreme result might be a reversion to the classification schemes of an earlier time and the description of archives as discrete items.

In the case of photographs, archivists and curators in Canada and the United States have failed to recognize evidential value when and where it

exists. Nor have they seen where the informational value of photographs can be enhanced through the maintenance of original order within a fonds. In concentrating on the informational value possessed by individual photograph, provenance and original order become unimportant. As a consequence, archivists such as Schellenberg and David B. Gracy II, who have taken great pains to reconcile librarians to the use of archival principles in the arrangement and description of manuscripts, have relegated the physical and intellectual control of photographs to the librarian's court. In the process they have given some attention to the maintenance of provenance and original order in special cases, but archivists and librarians were to feel free to choose whichever approach best suited the nature of the photographs under their care and the character of usership at each institution.

Schellenberg recommends that the majority of photographs held by a library or archival institution be arranged and described on an item-level basis. Physical attributes or characteristic such as size and format would inform arrangement practices. Paper prints, celluloid or glass-plate negatives, daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and so on should be arranged separately and within these larger classes items should be arranged numerically. Intellectual access should be through indexes or item-level descriptive and subject cataloguing.<sup>25</sup> It would appear that Schellenberg believed that only in dealing with negatives and prints produced by a government agency should an archivist preserve provenance and strive to maintain the original order. Description should be through inventories similar to those used in describing textual fonds. In all, Schellenberg dedicated over twenty pages in his The Management of Archives to the

arrangement and description of photographs; approximately one-and-a-half of these pages discuss arrangement and description by provenance.<sup>26</sup> He did not, therefore, go into a detailed discussion on the application of archival principles to photographic archives or focus on the knotty problems archivists would likely encounter in adapting these principles to nontextual material. This stands quite in contrast to many of the other chapters in The Management of Archives which seek to illustrate the process involved in arranging and describing public and private textual fonds.

David B. Gracy II, in his manual Archives and Manuscripts: Arrangement and Description published in 1977 by the Society of American Archivists, also adapts archival theory to the treatment of manuscripts but considers photographs and other "special record materials" to be ephemeral. Although Gracy conceded that photographs, maps, motion pictures, sound recordings and discrete printed items had, in some cases, "gained a research value in their own right,"<sup>27</sup> the best means of arranging and describing them was through some self-indexing system. An alternative, to which Gracy gives scant attention, is the maintenance of special records, including photographs, in groups as received. Gracy suggests that where provenance is important, the individual photographs in the collection should be assigned a symbol to identify their source and then "housed in archives cases or vertical files."<sup>28</sup> The details of how photographs were to be arranged within these "archives cases" is not discussed in any detail. The stress is definitely on the use of self-indexing files. Since Gracy feels that every still picture requires a complete caption, description would have to extend to the item level. The ultimate solution which Gracy offers is the creation



of a visual photograph catalogue with copies of all images placed on catalogue cards bearing full descriptions.<sup>29</sup>

In the era in which Gracy wrote his manual, archivists and librarians were only beginning to face the problems posed by huge accumulations of photographs and other pictorial material. Thus, Gracy geared his suggestions "to those curators and archivists who must shepherd collections of special record items until the volume has mushroomed to the size that a separate professional is required for their management."<sup>30</sup> Who this professional might be and the methodology he or she might employ is also left unstated.

Another influential manual attempting to assist curators in the archival arrangement and description of manuscripts, and which also touches on photographs, is Kenneth Duckett's Modern Manuscripts. Duckett's intended audience is the novice curator working within special collections in private or academic libraries or in historical societies. As an historian and curator of manuscripts himself, Duckett's approach is a very practical one but lacks a firm grounding in archival theory.<sup>31</sup> Apart from acknowledging the principle of provenance and that series do exist within a collection or fonds, Duckett stresses item-level control. Richard Berner has criticized Duckett for failing to discuss series, an omission which would lead a "cataloguer to seek items and clusters for [a descriptive] entry independent of their series relationships." In effect, description would be of "trees first, not the forest."<sup>32</sup> Duckett carries this approach through to the arrangement and description of photographs. He advises that photographs maintained by provenance should be described as discrete items; he does not

mention the need for an inventory or other form of control device noting the relationships between series or units within a body or fonds of photographs. Duckett only recommends unit or group cataloguing for unimportant or less valuable collections with a common theme.<sup>33</sup> His true appreciation for the organizational principle of provenance is called into question when he paraphrases a colleague: "because photograph researchers are usually interested in subject, source, photographer, and date of photographs, and rarely in the creating agency, arrangement by provenance only creates unnecessary work for the researchers."<sup>34</sup> The notion that photographic fonds, or any other archival material be arranged and described on the basis of usability is best summed up by Sir Hilary Jenkinson who said "to define archives by the research use made of them is like producing a rabbit from a hat and then saying that that is what hats are for...."<sup>35</sup>

A breakdown in the holistic approach to archival material is also in evidence when Hugh Taylor discusses photographs in his 1980 publication, The Arrangement and Description of Archival Materials. In the general introduction, Taylor stresses the idea that librarians wishing to understand archival arrangement and description must abandon their tendency toward classification and fragmentation for a more broad and all-encompassing approach. The arrangement of archival units must maintain essential relationships between documents and files of documents. In Taylor's view to describe is to control and to inform. Finding aids produced by archivists, such as inventories, are like a "street map which reveals the shape of the city, how to enter it and how to get from point A to point B." These finding aids are not "always and necessarily different from the finding aids

required by researchers. They are often combined."<sup>36</sup> After such an eloquent summary of the nature of archival work, Taylor enters a grey area between librarianship and archival theory in discussing the arrangement and description of photographs.

In theory, the description of archival units should reflect arrangement, but in arranging and describing photographs, Taylor alienates the two processes. He advises that photographs be arranged by provenance and original order, when a valid original order exists. Where an original order does not exist or where it is unusable, a rational grouping can be imposed: negatives numbered consecutively and prints arranged numerically, by subject or physical format. However, Taylor contends that groups of photographs do not lend themselves to accurate general or even particular description as do textual archives. He therefore suggests item-level cataloguing or the creation of a visual catalogue as means of describing photographs. In a paragraph which begins with "Group cataloguing is...adequate for a collection of no great value...", Taylor briefly discusses description at the file level and the appropriateness of including group and/or file descriptions in a general catalogue.<sup>37</sup> In effect, the usual approach of archivists is stood on its head; archives being described as discrete items but artificial collections and fonds deemed to be of little value being described as groups or as bodies.

Taylor wrote The Arrangement and Description of Archival Materials while he was the Director of the Archives Branch of the Public Archives of Canada. The examples of finding aids used throughout his work were drawn from the various Divisions within the PAC. His discussion on photographs

very much reflects the work that went on at the National Photography Collection of the PAC and which continues in the Documentary Art and Photograph Division of the National Archives of Canada. As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, the NPC/DAPD puts a major emphasis on its visual catalogue; detailed finding aids, such as inventories, cover only a fraction of the Division's holdings.<sup>38</sup> Taylor, like the staff of the NPC/DAPD, considers the item-level treatment of photographs and a visual catalogue to be of greatest use to the public. He considers inventories, to be appropriate in meeting the needs of users and staff working with textual archives, but inappropriate for photographs.

Librarians and archivists consulting the work of Schellenberg, Duckett, Gracy or Taylor would receive a somewhat mixed signal: provenance and original order are important, but not too important and subject access at the item level should precede or inform description at a higher level. The resulting confusion in adopting an archival approach to photographs can be seen in attempts by librarians to arrange and describe photographs by "lots". Confronted with the task of controlling large numbers of photographs, the Library of Congress, for example, began identifying groups or bodies of material in the manner "practiced in archives and manuscript repositories," that is, the retention of "material in record groups or individual collections."<sup>39</sup> Criteria to be used in designating lots include a common format and size, the creative work of one photographer, inherent unity of a group accession, or the personal collection of a donor. Lots also may be formed on the basis of unique topic or several thematically related subjects. A group accession containing numerous subjects is

perceived as a problem as is a large accession. In either case, the accessions are subdivided "into more manageable chunks" determined by subject or physical form.<sup>40</sup> Lots are described at the collection level but because the divisions within each lot are artificial creations, notes on the relation between divisions is unnecessary. During the completion of a control form on each lot at the Library of Congress, emphasis is on items and their subject content; the control form is then used to produce the catalogue card entry.<sup>41</sup> In effect, the catalogue entry describes important items within the collection or fonds.

It is interesting to note that, during the 1950s, two archivists working at the National Archives in Washington had recognized the evidential and informational value of government photographs and had hinted at arrangement and description by provenance and original order. Josephine Cobb found that government records often contained distinct series made up of photographs. These series reflected the function of the government department which created the photographs and contained historical information of value to researchers. She admitted, however, that the National Archives had not devised an overall method of controlling these series.<sup>42</sup> While employed at the National Archives, Hermine Baumhofer also noted that modern photograph collections were more homogeneous than earlier collections and that "their content is predicable from the knowledge of the agency's function."<sup>43</sup> She went on to discuss item-level arrangement and description of important photographs but suggested that when a lack of personnel prevents such detailed work, "at least a checklist of photographic series might be feasible." This type of finding aid might not meet the

"highest standards of library and archival training" but she "firmly believe[d] that we should surrender the ideal and lower our standards to the practical."<sup>44</sup>

These voices in the wilderness, even if weak and unsure, apparently had little immediate impact within the National Archives. In the 1980s, archivists at the National Archives were still attempting to meld archival and library techniques in the arrangement and description of photographs by lots. In one article which appeared in Picturescope in 1981, Nancy Malan, an archivist at the National Archives, prepared a list of questions which should be asked in determining whether groups of photographs constitute lots:

Are the photos the work of one photographer? Were they created by one individual or firm? Are they a common size or physical type? Do they depict the same subject, time period, or geographic area? Are they linked physically, as albums, 35-mm negatives, and contact sheets are? Are there caption lists, indexes, or other papers that would be difficult to match with the photographs if they were not kept as a unit? Does keeping them together aid identification? Has the donor requested that they remain together? Do they have an authenticity or special meaning that would be lost if they were separated (like a series showing progress on the construction of a building)? Do they have an internal order, an arrangement by subject, number, date or some other sequence? Are they a sizeable addition to your holdings?<sup>45</sup>

It is clear that provenance and original order are not the only deciding factors or criteria which Malan focuses on in deciding a method of physical arrangement. In terms of description, she mentions that item-level cataloguing is often the most effective means of retrieval but that it is

expensive and time consuming.<sup>46</sup> She makes no practical suggestions regarding fonds or unit-level description.

During the 1970s and 1980s, archivists and librarians working outside of the Library of Congress and the National Archives were also experimenting with the group arrangement and description of photographs. Max J. Evans, librarian-archivist with the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was one of the first to publish the results of a test case in which provenance was applied to photograph collections. Reporting in 1977 in the American Archivist, Evans explained that while some collections in the archives were artificial and based on a common theme, most had a common source, such as being the work of a prominent, pioneer Utah photographer, or resulting from the activities of twentieth-century LDS Church administrative departments. Where groups of photographs had a common origin, provenance was maintained. Each collection, artificial or of an organic nature, was described at the collection level in the card catalogue. Important collections were also described in a "register or calendar, which lists the photographs folder-by-folder or item-by-item..."<sup>47</sup>

Evans does not go into great detail on the internal arrangement of the collections or fonds under his care. The reader cannot ascertain whether series were established and if they were, whether they were based on original order or some form of subject classification. The nature of arrangement within file folders is also unexplained. In turn, it is impossible to know whether emphasis was on the subject content of individual items within a collection or file folder. Since Evans did not mention original order as a guiding concept, we can likely assume that arrangement

was by subject or some other criteria, such as physical form. Without the establishment of series or similar units to provide the skeletal constructs of the whole, arrangement and description tends to revolve around artificially classed items.

Other archivists and librarians who have accepted both provenance and original order as appropriate means of arranging photographs also have had difficulties when it comes to description. In fact, while they wholly accept archival principles in arranging photographs, they seem ambivalent and even reluctant about describing fonds or series or units within fonds as opposed to items. For example, Shelley Arlen of the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, stresses that "Each donor's collection of photographs is kept intact regardless of the subjects it contains..." and that the internal order is also maintained when possible. Yet each collection is catalogued item-by-item. Only a serious backlog has prompted the archivists at the University of Oklahoma to consider cataloguing at the collection or fonds level.<sup>48</sup> At the New York State Archives in Albany, Judith Felsten arranged one fonds in particular in which provenance was maintained and within which subgroups, series and subseries could be identified. She arranged only to the subseries level leaving researchers the task of identifying and correlating items within each subseries. The means by which a researcher would intellectually access the fonds is unstated. Felsten mentions only that, upon completing arrangement, she was able to select those images which best reflected the themes found in the fonds. These specific images were then added to a visual catalogue arranged by subject.<sup>49</sup>



The idea that photographs possess informational value as discrete items and are not really archives in the full sense, is best exemplified in the 1984 Society of American Archivists' publication Archives and Manuscripts: Administration of Photographic Collections. The chapter in this manual on the arrangement and description of photographs, written by Gerald J. Munoff, begins with a discussion of provenance and original order as suitable means of dealing with photographic fonds but Munoff stresses that photographs are more often "sought for purposes more numerous and often very different from the original reasons for creating them." Therefore, one can make "compromises on the extent to which provenance is applied...."<sup>50</sup> Further, as one completes a preliminary inventory of a photographic collection or fonds the existing original order must be evaluated in light of whether it will "serve the research demands placed on it." The examination for original order should "involve subject experts."<sup>51</sup> Munoff's discussion on description centers around item-level cataloguing and the creation of self-indexing files.<sup>52</sup> For those interested in describing photographic fonds in the same manner as textual fonds, Munoff directs them to a manual prepared by the Society of American Archivists, Inventories and Registers: A Handbook of Techniques and Examples (Chicago 1976).<sup>53</sup> Inventories and Registers, however, is geared exclusively toward the description of textual archives and makes no allowances for nor discusses the problems inherent in describing photographic fonds.

Recognition of the fact that preserving provenance and original order enhances informational value is a new idea in North America. Instead of describing discrete items for use by patrons, some archivists and librarians

have found the user better served if a group or body of photographs is described as a whole and the nature of the subgroups, series and subseries explained in an inventory or register.<sup>54</sup> Captions, which are often misleading when hastily prepared or not fully researched by the archivist, become unnecessary when series are established and described. Researchers are able to make their own interpretations of images found in photographic fonds, as they do when dealing with public records and manuscript material.

That photographs possess evidential value worthy of preservation through provenance and original order is an even newer concept. Underlying Schellenberg's earlier quoted statement that the provenance of photographs is unimportant, is the assumption that even photographs produced by government agencies contain little or no long-term administrative or evidential value. William Leary echoes the same views in his recent study on the appraisal of photographs. To Leary "photographs that show official activities and nothing else are likely to be very boring and insignificant images."<sup>55</sup> He later contradicts himself by stating that governments have long recognized the effectiveness of photographs in documenting...their activities".<sup>56</sup> If governments recognize the administrative value of photographs, it is incumbent upon archivists to protect that value.

Debra Barr, in her Master of Archival Studies thesis entitled "Analyzing Photographs in Archival Terms", argues that many photographic fonds do indeed possess evidential value. Her focus is on public photographic archives which have been shown to possess administrative and legal value and therefore evidential value. Barr supplies several examples where still photographs were employed in legal disputes<sup>57</sup> and emphasizes that archivists

not only must protect original order but become involved in the entire life cycle of public photographic records. In this way, legal requirements, as defined in the evidence acts regarding assurances of the official origin of business records, will be met.<sup>58</sup> Barr touches on the fact that nontextual fonds produced by photographers, for example, also possess evidential value by virtue of the fact that they reflect the artistic and business practices of the creator.<sup>59</sup>

Similar to manuscripts, then, photographic archives produced in the private sector also reflect the functions and activities of the persons or bodies which created them. Who would be interested in or would benefit from the maintenance of the evidential value of this type of photographic fonds? The answer, increasingly, is the academic world. James Anderson, Curator of Photographs, at the University of Louisville, believes that the arrangement and description of photographic records according to provenance and original order is important in preserving and reflecting the functioning, organization and activities of amateur and professional photographers and photographic firms. Anderson was led to this conclusion after studying the changing needs of researchers. He found that historians, for example, wished to examine whole bodies of images produced by one photographer and that only two other items of information were required: the dates and locations of images contained in the fonds. The maintenance of provenance provided the answer to the researcher's first query regarding the work of one individual. The series and subseries within each fonds enabled the researcher to determine the date and location.<sup>60</sup> Anderson found that inventories reflecting provenance and original order met the needs of

academics and if those same inventories were subject indexed, patrons in search of a special or more narrowly defined image could also be served effectively.<sup>61</sup>

Anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists have recently turned to photographs to document social and familial patterns. To these academics and practitioners, discrete items will sometimes suffice but more often bodies of photographs produced by individuals or families are required. To understand the lives and activities of these individuals or families, the records which they created should be maintained as created. Interesting examples of the use of photographs in this manner can be found in the journal Studies in Visual Communications and its predecessor Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communications.<sup>62</sup>

Merely recognizing that photographs possess informational and evidential value which must be preserved through the application of archival principles governing arrangement and description, does not solve all of the problems of archivists and librarians and, in fact, creates new stumbling blocks. Some of these stumbling blocks are specific to photographs, others are common to the arrangement and description of all archives.

The most difficult problem which often confounds archivists and librarians working with textual or nontextual materials is that of creating series within a fonds when an original filing order is nonexistent or not worthy of retention. Establishing series is one of the most important steps in physical arrangement because series express the actual character of the fonds. Gracy offers some suggestions to archivists and manuscript curators who must create their own series within a textual fonds. He advises that

series may be developed using one of four systems: chronology, topics, functions of the creator, and types of material.<sup>63</sup>

To some extent these guidelines are applicable to photographic fonds as well. Series based on chronology might reveal much about an individual, family or organization, particularly the work of a photographic studio. Too often, however, the accurate dating of photographs becomes a difficult and time-consuming chore. Series arranged around topics are, as Gracy states in reference to textual collections, least advisable simply because each document in the series may deal with one or more subjects, as is the case with photographs. Arrangement by function or activity of the creator is recommended for textual collections because it will most likely reflect the original manner of creation of the documents, thereby preserving evidential value.<sup>64</sup> This would also seem to be the most appropriate means of establishing series within a photographic fonds when the various activities of the creator can be identified. Arrangement by type of material or by physical characteristics is recommended for textual fonds because series of diaries, ledgers, and scrapbooks, for instance, will each contain certain kinds of information. For conservation purposes, series arranged by physical format are often imposed on bodies or groups of photographs. It is difficult and sometimes hazardous to store paper prints along with glass-plate negatives, for example, but a series description of "cellulose negatives" is of relatively little use to anyone except perhaps a researcher interested in photographic processes. In fonds where various types of photographic formats are represented, physical arrangement might have to be by type of material but the finding aid should describe the original series

or series based on different criteria. It is obvious that more work needs to be done in this area and the results published for the benefit of others working with photographs. Archivists have, as noted in this chapter, successfully identified series within photographic fonds yet in many cases series may be a difficult concept to apply. It may well be that archivists will have to find some other means to arrange and describe the overall structure of bodies of photographs and to relate the parts to the whole. That some type of internal order will exist and allow for the arrangement and description of units seems likely since archives, textual and nontextual, were first preserved for reference by the creator and therefore an order or filing scheme should be discernible. Determining this order within photographic fonds will be the challenge. In the future, as archivists become better acquainted with the application of provenance and original order to photographic fonds, guidelines, like those produced by Gracy and others for the arrangement and description of textual materials, should begin to appear.

In the meantime, the acquisition of photographs will continue to present archivists with interesting situations. For instance, more and more archival repositories are acquiring newspaper photographs which tend to be voluminous in scope and arranged in various ways. In 1982 Judith Felsten undertook a survey of twenty-nine news photograph collections still housed in newspaper offices and found a wide assortment of arrangements, all invariably based on organizational schemes devised and applied by librarians. During her survey Felsten encountered the following types of negative file arrangements: alphabetical self-indexing; number-keyed

subject-access; chronological; chronological by "bag" or assignment number; chronological by library processing date; chronological and by subject.<sup>65</sup> Felsten suggests that once archivists acquire news photographs, the images are best maintained according to original order but only if the access-control tools created during the active life of the records are acquired as well. These control tools will allow users access to the photographs. Otherwise, she advises that a chronological or subject organized system should be imposed.<sup>66</sup> Felsten seems most concerned with providing users with item-level access, yet the original file arrangement, in most cases, will resemble the classification schemes used by record managers to control textual documents. It should be possible, therefore, to identify series or other units. As Felsten points out, it is advantageous for the archivist to supervise the transfer of news photographs to ensure that original order is maintained and that all indexes, log books and staff handbooks are included in the acquisition.<sup>67</sup> However, control documents are as important in identifying and establishing series and other describable units as they are for item-level control.

The identification of series within bodies of photographs removed from textual fonds can also become a problem. In the 1979-80 winter issue of Archivaria, Terry Cook of the Public Records Division of the Public Archives of Canada argues that the provenance of manuscripts and record groups is eroded or destroyed when nontextual materials are removed from these collections and turned over to the custody of media specialists; not only is the integrity of the parent fonds impaired, but the provenance and original order of the transferred material can be lost as well.<sup>68</sup> In making his

point, Cook was particularly critical of the National Photography Collection of the Public Archives of Canada which routinely acquired photographs from other divisions within the PAC and continues to do so as part of the Documentary Art and Photograph Division of the National Archives of Canada. Andrew Birrell, at that time the Chief of the NPC, answered Cook in the subsequent issue of Archivaria. In that article Birrell stresses that the creation of finding aids by specialists ensures that the provenance of transferred materials is safeguarded.<sup>69</sup> In the same breath he betrays the isolation engendered by media separation, and feared by Cook, when he contends that these finding aids can be produced without one archivist having intellectual control over the entire record or manuscript fonds.<sup>70</sup> This would suggest that archivists in media divisions create inventories and other finding aids without reference to the arrangement of the parent fonds. If this is the case, the original series to which nontextual items belonged will be lost and the media specialist will be forced into establishing artificial series if he or she cannot detect the original order. It is evident that in large repositories where media divisions exist, greater cooperation, consultation and communication between divisions is necessary. In dealing specifically with photographs, adequate documentation is required whenever a transfer takes place. The inventory created by the manuscript or record archivist should indicate that photographs have been removed from a fonds and the location of where they can now be found noted. The inventory or finding aid produced by the photograph specialist should provide necessary information on the provenance of the images being described. The ideal, as Cook suggests, would be an inter-divisional or cross-media finding



aid.<sup>71</sup>

Fragmentation by media can also occur in small manuscript libraries and archival repositories where photographs are actually maintained within the textual fonds in which they are found. Within a single manuscript fonds, for instance, photographs are normally arranged and described as a distinct series as prescribed by archivists such as Gracy.<sup>72</sup> If there are only a few photographs in a textual fonds or where the images truly comprise a series of family photograph albums, for example, this may well be an appropriate approach. It is questionable, though, whether all photographs should be removed from the series in which they originated. A photograph of a person or event enclosed in a letter loses its significance once removed. From the standpoint of conservation, it has been deemed advisable to group all photographs in one folder or one box. With adequate care and the use of print and negative sleeves, it should be possible to leave photographs where they originate particularly if they are integral to the interpretation of textual documents. When this is not possible, a note regarding the removal of photographs from various series should be included in the finding aid.

The establishment of an archival fonds can occasionally present more of a problem than determining series when dealing with government photographic records. Some governments have, at different times, centralized photograph activities.<sup>73</sup> The office which transfers the photographs to the archives is not necessarily the agency which caused the photographs to be taken. As with textual archives, the provenance of photographs can also be obscured when an agency contains a number of internal divisions, goes through a succession of name changes or amalgamates with other agencies. When

confronted by any one of the above situations, archivists accessioning photographs might want to consider the advantages of abandoning the record group concept in favor of a "series system" where the series is the primary level of arrangement. Archivists at the Australian National Archives have adopted this system and archivists in North America are currently discussing the merits and drawbacks of applying the series system to textual government records.<sup>74</sup>

One problem which concerns archivists and librarians applying archival principles to textual and nontextual collections is how to provide all users with adequate intellectual access to the records under their care. Solving this problem would particularly ease the consciences of librarians and archivists working with photographic material. Archivists generally do tend to divide users into two groups: the serious researcher and, by logical extension, the not-so-serious researcher. Manuscript and government record archivists have focused on the serious researcher but archivists and librarians working with photographs have never been able to ignore the needs of the browser. This partially accounts for the creation of dual systems of describing photographs: inventories plus visual or self-indexing files. A solution to this problem which conceivably could do away with the need for vertical files and item-level descriptive and subject cataloguing is the creation of an index based on the subject content of fonds, series, or units within fonds, or, if necessary, items. Indexes could be provided for each inventory or centralized and covering the holdings of the institution.

Archivists and manuscript curators are also considering improved subject access through the use of indexes as recent user studies continue to

indicate that the majority of users do begin their research with a subject request.<sup>75</sup> Given the volume of historical records acquired or accessioned each year by archival and manuscript repositories , reference personnel cannot possibly continue to make the necessary mental connections between subject requests and provenance-based information. Mary Jo Pugh has suggested that both content-indexing, as derived for librarianship, and provenance-indexing, devised from archival practices, are necessary in satisfying the needs of users.<sup>76</sup>

The formulation of standards and guidelines for indexing, the creation of standard formats for the description of archives and the automation of both processes are major goals currently attracting the interest of most, if not all, archivists as well as librarians charged with the care of archival materials.

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#### CHAPTER FOUR: STANDARDIZATION AND AUTOMATION

By the time of his retirement in the 1960s as Assistant Archivist of the United States, T.R. Schellenberg was advising archivists that two things must be done to develop the profession: the first was to define archival principles and techniques; the second was to standardize those principles and techniques.<sup>1</sup> Without first addressing these issues, Schellenberg warned, archivists would be unable to take advantage of "modern gadgetry," such as computers, in the control of archival material. Other benefits, such as the development of national information networks, would also be lost if members of the profession failed to define and standardize its principles and practices. At the same time, Schellenberg cautioned archivists that the strengthening of the profession could not be accomplished within a vacuum but must involve all persons charged with the care of archival materials, including librarians and manuscript curators.<sup>2</sup>

Over the years archivists have given some consideration to their methods of arrangement and description in relation to the need to formulate standards, but it has only been in the last ten years that standardization has become a central theme. From 1978 until 1982 the Society of American Archivists' National Information Systems Task Force (NISTF) dealt with defining the data elements required in an archival information system. A similar investigation was carried out by the Archival Description Project of the University Archives of Liverpool University. In 1985 the Canadian

Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards of the Bureau of Canadian Archivists published its first report regarding the Canadian archival scene.<sup>3</sup> There are several factors which account for this recent and intense interest in archival descriptive standards: the increasing volume of documents acquired by archival repositories and the need for better, more refined access; the desire to establish national archival networks similar to library bibliographic networks; the realization that Schellenberg was right in that automation, with its promise of in-depth indexing and networking capabilities, could not answer the needs of archivists until descriptive standards were established.

Throughout this chapter, the move toward descriptive standards and the automation of finding aids will be discussed. This will involve reviewing past attempts in automating descriptive tools, the problems which arose and the corrective steps taken. In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s and 1970s, use of mainframe computers by archivists spawned a number of software programs, some of which were presented to the profession as standard formats for the description of archival material. In the late 1970s and the 1980s, the availability and relative inexpense of microcomputers coupled with a disenchantment with mainframe software programs, resulted in the multiplication of word-processing and data base management programs aimed at satisfying the descriptive needs of individual institutions. The growth of independent systems and programs was somewhat eclipsed by the introduction of NISTF's MARC AMC (MACHine-Readable Cataloging, Archives and Manuscript Control) format in the mid 1980s. Through these trial and error experiments with various computer software programs, archivists have been forced into

re-examining their descriptive practices. Moreover, in attempting to establish automated systems, archivists have found themselves collaborating with and also borrowing ideas and bibliographic formats from the library profession. In so doing, archivists have been further spurred to clarify, define and analyze their own principles and methodologies vis-à-vis library practices. Common ground can and has been identified, but in some areas differences in approach still exist concerning the formulation of descriptive standards.

Descriptive methods and descriptive standards for photographs have been developed both in conjunction with and separately from formats for textual archival materials. This aptly reflects the changing appreciation of the archival nature of photographs and clearly demonstrates that archivists and librarians must come to some understanding regarding a uniform approach toward the control of nontextual archives. In terms of both textual and nontextual archives much remains to be done in achieving a full range of standardized control tools.

At this point, it would be appropriate to define some of the terms found in this chapter which refer to the use of computers. A record, for instance, is a collection of related items of data treated as a unit. Within a record, data is usually contained within fields. A field is a specified area with a clearly defined function and used to enter a specific category of data. Software refers to a set of programs, procedures, rules and associated documentation concerned with the operation of the hardware, or of the computer itself. Programs are detailed and explicit sets of instructions presented in a form that can be interpreted by the computer.

Boolean logic refers to a method of information retrieval that restricts responses to "yes" or "no" and includes logical operators "and," "or," "not," "except," "if," and "then" which may be combined in a variety of ways.<sup>4</sup> Other terms found in this chapter that relate to the use of computers are generally familiar and therefore need not be defined here. For further reference, definition of terms and a general introduction to the use of computers in archival repositories see H. Thomas Hickerson's Archives and Manuscripts: An Introduction to Automated Access published in 1981 or Michael Cook's Archives and the Computer, published in a second edition in 1986.<sup>5</sup>

The advent of automation was at first hailed by archivists and manuscript curators as a panacea for information retrieval, particularly in the areas of indexing and the creation of guides and union lists. Indexing, however, was the main and immediate attraction of automation and some professionals looked to computers as a means of satisfying the old urge to analyze and index every document in a fonds. Given the volume of modern archives, indexing had become impossible because of the time involved in preparing, filing and cross-filing index cards; computers promised "a quick and simple fix that could bring curators back to their habit without the deleterious side effects, namely growing backlogs."<sup>6</sup> As Dr. Rita Campbell, archivist at the Herbert Hoover Archives, summed up the situation in 1967, "archivists are subject to the opposing pressures of mounds of paper and continuously increasing research demands. The way out of the dilemma may be found in more intensive indexing of archival materials by machine."<sup>7</sup> It is no surprise, therefore, that the first major projects involving powerful

mainframe computers focused on item-level description and indexing.

In 1958 the Library of Congress Manuscripts Division initiated a project to index its backlog of presidential papers. The 2,500,000 documents were arranged chronologically and an indexing record was created for each document using 80-column punch cards. At the National Archives in Washington the first use of automation was to produce an item index to the 50,000 documents in the Papers of the Continental Congress.<sup>9</sup> Item indexing was undertaken at the Public Archives of Canada in 1965 to deal with the papers of prime ministers. In the latter project, the finding aids produced included an "author index, secondarily sorted by subject, and then by date; a subject index, secondarily sorted chronologically, and then by author; and a chronological index, secondarily sorted by author."<sup>9</sup> All of these projects proved to be extremely time consuming and expensive. After reviewing the final products, archivists and curators also realized that item indexes were useful only to researchers with extremely specialized needs, that many documents were singularly insignificant when viewed out of context and that an index was useful only when used in conjunction with finding aids which described aggregates, such a fonds or series. In short, item indexes proved to be "unarchival" and even "antiarchival" in nature.<sup>10</sup> A Canadian historian, T.D. Regehr, has commented that the Public Archives of Canada's computer index to prime ministers' papers "can produce myriad disconnected factual bits and pieces at a moments notice." However, Regehr continues, "the scholar must understand the entire collection..." and that looking up a narrowly defined subject in the prime ministers' index would be as useful as a literary critic "consulting the word 'love' in a concordance

of the works of Shakespeare."<sup>11</sup>

The lessons to be learned from these early attempts at automation did not immediately and fully impress themselves on all archivists and manuscript curators. In the late 1960s, the Library of Congress Manuscripts Division developed SPINDEX (Selected Permutation INDEX), a software program based on modified forms of KWIC (key-word-in-context) and word-author indexing. In one sense, the Library of Congress' use of SPINDEX came closer to traditional archival methodology because indexing was at the file-folder level, not the item level. However, problems with the vagaries and inconsistencies of natural language, folder titles which did not accurately describe contents and other limitations regarding data fields and editing capabilities severely limited the acceptance and use of SPINDEX. The Library of Congress abandoned the program, but the National Archives and Record Service (NARS) opted to develop SPINDEX. By 1974 SPINDEX II was on the market. Unfortunately, this program was most often perceived and used as another indexing tool despite the ability of SPINDEX II to take an entire register or inventory and provide hierarchical relationships.<sup>12</sup> At the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, for instance, SPINDEX II was used to produce a series-level descriptive guide but this work proceeded more slowly than a separate project using SPINDEX II to create item-level indexes to 64,000 documents in selected series.<sup>13</sup>

Enhancements to SPINDEX II, known as SPINDEX III, have been available since 1978. As of the early 1980s, SPINDEX software was in use in over two dozen institutions in the United States and Canada making it one of the most popular automated systems for archival use.<sup>14</sup> SPINDEX users are offered a

one-week training course and can join the SPINDEX Users' Network (SUN) which acts as a forum for the exchange of technical information about the system. The training course and SUN program are important because although a "so-called standard data base design was provided by the original designers, it unfortunately remains embedded today in the language of the system's user instructions...."<sup>15</sup> Each institution using SPINDEX must also create its own controlled vocabulary for indexing purposes as no widely accepted thesaurus of indexing terms exists for archives. Free-text searching and the use of Boolean logic are not possible with SPINDEX. The main drawback to SPINDEX is that it will operate only on IBM 360/370 mainframes.<sup>16</sup> The expense of investing in a mainframe puts SPINDEX beyond the financial reach of most archival repositories, manuscript libraries, and historical societies.

SELGEM (SELF-Generating Master) is a package of software programs developed by the Smithsonian Institute for use in museum cataloging but which has also been used by archivists. Originally oriented toward item-level control, SELGEM has been adapted by the Smithsonian Institute Archives for the production of archival guides and subject indexes at the fonds level. The National Collection of Fine Arts (NCFA) of the Smithsonian Institute, however, was attracted to SELGEM specifically because of the program's capacity for item-level indexing. NCFA collects American works of art and then produces photographs and slides of these works for use by researchers. It also collects and maintains over 127,000 rare photographic negatives documenting American art from 1897 to 1975. It can be argued that the photographs held by the NCFA are not archival in nature but, as noted in Chapter Three of this thesis, photographs are rarely perceived as being

archival, even when organically generated by a body or individual. The NCFA's use of SELGEM could be taken as a model by other custodians of photographs particularly since the most recent discussion of NCFA's use of SELGEM appears in the 1980 publication Automating the Archives.

In Automating the Archives Eleanor E. Fink of NCFA discusses the problems encountered in using SELGEM. More specifically, she looks at how the fields comprising the record were established and how name and subject authorities for use in indexing were created. There is no mention of whether AACR2 was consulted in determining the fields and in the case of the name and subject authority, it was found that no existing standard sufficed and therefore NCFA created its own authority records. The fact that SELGEM can be searched using Boolean logic eases some of the indexing problems associated with manual or automated indexing. However, as discovered by other archivists and curators attempting item-level indexing, entry time was substantially slower than the staff at the NCFA had anticipated.<sup>17</sup> The fact that SELGEM must be run on a mainframe computer has made its merits and drawbacks merely an academic matter to professionals in smaller, financially strapped repositories.

A similar project to that undertaken by NCFA was that of the Corning Glass Works Archives. The Corning Archives developed a computer program, run on an IBM mainframe, for the item-level indexing of its collection of 150,000 negatives dating from 1851. There are three fields used in describing each photograph, one for accession number, one for date and one for subject indexing. Indexing terms are drawn from a "category list" designed specifically for the project. Unlike SPINDEX or SELGEM, this



program is unable to produce other finding aids such as guides.<sup>18</sup>

One of the most unusual and institution-specific uses of a mainframe computer for subject indexing of individual photographs was that of the Dupre Library of the University of Southwestern Louisiana. In the mid-1970s, a project was undertaken by library staff which involved the use of the university's Multics System and the subject indexing of photographs through the use of five-digit, mnemonic descriptors; for example, if a photograph showed a seated female, the code entered in the subject field was SEFEM, HUNTD would indicate a hunting dog and so on. The original, manual classification scheme had not been developed systematically, however, and the result was confusion and slow data input time. The system was revised to include two subfields as well as the original subject-indexing field. In the original subject-indexing field, the indexer would choose, for example, the letter A for adult, C for child, E for elderly, V for varied group of adults and children or O for scenic shots. In the first subfield, two letters could be chosen from a list including A for animal, C for clothing, E for ethnic, O for occupation, S for social event or V for views of buildings. The second subfield was a further elaboration, for instance PK for position/kneeling, PT for position/standing and so on. Thus CEBRA meant a child (C), black (EB), in or near an automobile (RA).<sup>19</sup> Although it was offered as a case study and possible model, there is nothing in the literature to indicate the system was favourably received or duplicated elsewhere.

In the mid 1970s, Mildred Simpson, the librarian at the Atlantic Richfield Company, worked with the company's computer programmers to create

a data base management system that allowed for the subject indexing of "groups" of photographs. The photographs in the library had been created in response to specific requests by the company for images to illustrate annual reports, brochures, press releases or for other purposes. Although Mildred Simpson does not define what a "group" is, we can likely assume that a group of photographs resulted from the execution of one of the above mentioned photographic assignments. Using an IBM software package known as STAIRS (STorage And Information Retrieval Systems/Virtual Storage), Simpson and the computing staff created a system called PMIS (Photographic Management Information System). Each record in PMIS contains thirteen fields, the majority of which are for administrative control purposes. The two most important fields for intellectual access are the abstract field, in which a short description of each group of photographs is given, and the subject field containing subject terms chosen from a specially designed authority list.<sup>20</sup> Of the projects undertaken in the 1960s and 1970s involving mainframes, the experiment at the Atlantic Richfield Company library is one of very few in which photographs are described and indexed at any level other than item, or, at the other extreme, at the fonds level, as in guides.

While curators of photographs continued primarily to develop or adopt computer programs allowing for item-level control, other professionals dealing with textual archives began moving toward indexing at the file and series levels. The ARCHON (ARCHives ON-line) system designed and used by the Baltimore Region Institutional Studies Center (BRISC) provides folder-level access to BRISC textual holdings. It can also generate registers and file-heading inventories. Developed under the directions of an historian

and a librarian , ARCHON is user oriented and allows for interactive, on-line searches by name, subject, date and geographic location. KWOC (key-word-out-of-context) indexing further enhances the flexibility of ARCHON. Similar to other computer projects, the staff inputting data into the ARCHON system soon found that some form of name and subject authority control was required. The result was the production of the Urban Information Thesaurus which contains indexing terms unique to BRISC archives and was compiled by a fulltime reference specialist hired specifically for the task.<sup>21</sup>

ARCHON was developed in the 1970s as was PARADIGM (Programmed Annual Report And Digital Information Generation Matrix), created for the archives at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A mainframe program, PARADIGM provides for series descriptions and includes information on series numbers, type and status of material, value, inclusive dates, acquisition and processing dates, length of finding aids, short series title, and subject coding. In the original program subject indexing was limited by the short record length and therefore the system was used primarily for management purposes. As of 1977, enhancements to the program have allowed for any number of subject descriptors. Subject descriptors are chosen for an authority list compiled especially for use in the university archives. It was not until the indexing capacity of PARADIGM was enhanced that the program was considered a real contribution to archival automation.<sup>22</sup>

The computer system developed by the National Archives and Record Service, NARS A-1, was poorly received by the archival community in part because it was created to facilitate administrative control, not subject indexing. For instance, NARS A-1, which runs on a minicomputer (a digital

computer which can function independently or as a component of a larger mainframe), will produce location registers, statistics on the volume of records at the series level and finding aids such as series and file lists. Programming for subject access was deferred because of the costs involved and because of difficulties foreseen in indexing series titles over which there was no authority control.<sup>23</sup> In 1980, Charles Dollar of the National Archives conceded that NARS A-1, with its emphasis on access by provenance, seems antiquated and that in future serious consideration would be given to establishing a means to provide subject access.<sup>24</sup>

Mainframes, minicomputers and even microcomputers, along with various software programs, have been linked to visual systems to provide users with intellectual access to textual and nontextual archives. The use of automated visual systems has been particularly attractive to photographic librarians and archivists who have never relinquished the idea that written information alone on photographs is insufficient in conveying the nature of the institution's holdings to users. The automated visual cataloguing and indexing of graphic materials began in the late 1960s and initially involved the use of microfilm and microfiche. In these experimental pilot projects, the cost factor often limited the reproduction on film and the indexing of images to several hundred. These images were invariably chosen on the basis of historical value and repeated use by patrons.<sup>25</sup> The random access retrieval capabilities of the computer systems in use meant that search requirements were fulfilled with speed and ease. Users were able to search the indexes and having decided on a particular image, could see that image and a more detailed description of it on the computer or microfilm reader

screen.<sup>26</sup> These experiments, as far as they went, were deemed successful, but the introduction of videodiscs has made earlier work with microfilm and microfiche seem obsolete.

The advantages of videodiscs, particularly in an archival setting, are data storage capacity, random access and durability. Depending on the type of disc utilized, thousands and even millions of images can be stored on one disc. Discs are relatively durable especially in comparison to microfilm and microfiche which have proven to be physically unstable. Moreover, linked to the appropriate computer program, each frame on a disc can be accessed directly.<sup>27</sup> The main drawback, of course, is heavy front end costs incurred in purchasing the necessary equipment, including a computer if one is not readily available.

Literature appearing in professional journals would indicate that projects using videodiscs share a similar goal to other computer projects: subject indexing, especially of discrete items. For example, in 1982 the Library of Congress initiated an Optical Disk Pilot Program and by 1984 had put 40,000 photographs, posters, architectural drawings and other graphic items from the Library's Prints and Photographs collection on videodiscs. Using the Library of Congress computer indexing and abstracting systems, users can view images at a rate of several per second or they can manually control the rate at which the images appear.<sup>28</sup> The National Air and Space Museum has also used videodiscs in storing and retrieving photographic images. As of 1986, three videodiscs had been completed, the first two containing 100,000 images and the third containing 50,000 images. Offered for sale to interested repositories, the discs come with an automated and

hardcopy index.<sup>29</sup>

Archivists and librarians have also considered the use of optical discs for images considered unworthy of item indexing. At the Time Incorporated Picture Collection, Betsy G. Young, Chief Librarian, has speculated that "lots" of photographs could be placed on videodiscs and, presumably, accessed by a subject index which would point to groups within the lots or the entire lot itself if of a homogeneous nature. Important photographs extracted from lots as the best examples of particular subjects could still be catalogued and indexed at the item level and included in a manual picture file.<sup>30</sup>

While some institutions have been pleased with the results of their videodisc pilot projects, others have met with less success. The Smithsonian Institute, for example, conducted a two-year study of the potential value of videodisc technology and found it unsuitable for use in its library and archival divisions. The major complaints of the Smithsonian Institute were that videodiscs are not far enough developed to be a reliable replacement for microfilm, the expense is too great and, generally, that more research and development are required.<sup>31</sup> For these same reasons, most archival repositories will not have to consider the option of videodiscs for some time to come.

In Canada, mainframe systems have also been used to produce union guides such as the Union List of Manuscripts (ULM) and the Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives (GCPA).<sup>32</sup> Work on the ULM began in the 1960s and a database was created in which descriptions of manuscript units could be maintained. Three types of output were produced: alphabetical by title of

each entry with a print of the textual description; alphabetical by title for each contributing repository with a print of titles and corresponding identification numbers; an alphabetical list of subjects and proper names referring users to the appropriate unit description in the first two sections of the ULM. The system was developed to produce only one product, the ULM, and the data cannot be manipulated for other purposes. The system also lacks the capacity for on-line searches or updating on a day-to-day basis.<sup>33</sup>

Work on an automated version of the Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives began in the late 1970s. Using a database system known as TEAMS/MITS developed by Alphatext, a service bureau in Ottawa, the system was used to alphabetically sort and index over 9,000 photographic archival fonds and item descriptions. An earlier, manually compiled version of the GCPA had met with criticism because the subject index was considered inadequate; the second edition redressed the problem by expanding the subject index and by including an index by photographer's name as well. In the Explanatory Notes sent to participating institutions, the compilers of the GCPA designed and included a form to be used in describing bodies of photographs.<sup>34</sup> The compilers hoped that the form, based loosely on AACR1 and AARC2, would encourage standard descriptive practices for photographs.<sup>35</sup> In the end, though, the compilers had to accept photocopies of accession forms, catalogue cards, inventories or other finding aids and then use the information contained therein to fill out the form themselves before inputting data into the computer.

Both the Union List of Manuscripts and the Guide to Canadian

Photographic Archives are important contributions to the archival profession and to the users of archival repositories. At the same time, they are indicative of automated projects undertaken with a narrow goal in mind, such as using computers to ease manual sorting processes associated with indexing and compiling guides. More basic issues involving information retrieval and information management were often ignored by the individuals participating in early automation projects. The computer systems used in creating the ULM and the GCPA, along with most other mainframe systems of the 1960s and 1970s were developed in isolation and without the collaboration of other interested professionals and institutions. The net result is that the exchange of information via networks is virtually impossible because database systems and authority files are incompatible.<sup>36</sup> In the case of the ULM and the GCPA, there is the added dimension of fragmentation by media. To some archivists, such as Terry Cook, for example, it is inexcusable that a researcher cannot find full descriptions of all media forms in one union list.<sup>37</sup> Thus, although some progress was made in the early phase of using mainframe computers, the final products did not always meet original expectations or the expectations of the profession at large nor foster great hope for the future of automating the archives.

Smaller institutions interested in automation could find very little which they wished or could possibly duplicate in projects carried out on large mainframe computers. Until recently, it looked as if these smaller repositories would never be able to contemplate automation and the undertaking of their own projects without access to a centralized mainframe system. As late as 1981, archivists were warned that microcomputers were



not acceptable alternatives for multipurpose archival use because they lacked the powerful capabilities of mainframes.<sup>38</sup> Rapid developments and improvements in microcomputer technology, the relative inexpense of microcomputers compared to minicomputers and mainframes and imaginative experimentation with microcomputers by pioneering archivists has led to a new situation where microcomputers are considered the way of the future. In the last few years, the use of microcomputers has given a greater number of archivists hands-on experience and it would appear that users of microcomputers did learn some valuable lessons by observing their predecessors working with mainframes. However, the introduction of microcomputers into archival repositories could not overcome problems which had their origin in the approach and methodology of the archival profession itself.

Richard Kesner, a strong proponent of the use of microcomputers, has stressed that archivists should move gradually toward fully automating the archives. He believes that microcomputers should first be used to handle daily routine matters such as general administrative chores, financial management, collection development and fund raising before moving into the area of intellectual control of holdings. This approach will give staff time to evaluate the capabilities of the microcomputer and its software and to consider which descriptive tools will be automated and how to tackle the situation.<sup>39</sup> Before an institution moves into automating information retrieval and before considering information networks, Kesner warns that manual descriptive practices must be evaluated, rationalized and, preferably, standardized.<sup>40</sup>

Kesner's advice regarding the establishment of priorities and the need to analyze manual descriptive tools before automating echoed the sentiments of archivists who had experienced less than satisfactory results in the early use of computers. Lydia Lucas of the Minnesota Historical Society's Division of Archives and Manuscripts, for example, sent out a very clear message to archivists in her 1981 article in the American Archivist. In that article she recounts the Historical Society's encounter with SPINDEX and the reasons why she and her colleagues "bowed out of the...project." Apart from a problem with lack of funds and frustrations involved in debugging a program with inherent insufficiencies, the staff of the Historical Society found that they really did not know what their needs were nor did they have any clear idea of what realistically could be expected of SPINDEX.<sup>41</sup> The most valuable thing learned was that a poor manual system of descriptive tools cannot be converted into a good automated system. An automated system could neither compensate for deficiencies in manual finding aids nor tolerate idiosyncrasies.<sup>42</sup> In short, Lucas and her colleagues confirmed the old dictum, "garbage in, garbage out."

A microcomputer project launched by the National Photography Collection of the Public Archives of Canada in 1983 benefited from the advice of Kesner, Lucas and other cautionary voices. Initially, the microcomputers purchased by the NPC were to be used by staff members to perform a variety of office functions such as producing letters, memoranda, and reports. Over time, additional applications were discovered including cataloguing and finding aid production.<sup>43</sup>

In creating finding aids such as inventories, the staff of the National

Photography Collection use the microcomputer as a word processor but the cataloguing of individual photographs is a more structured and standardized process using dBase II, a data base management system. To ensure uniformity in cataloguing, the NPC devised a procedures manual consisting of two sections: one on descriptive cataloguing of photographs which clearly articulates how the title, physical description, notes, and control and location numbers are to be entered; the second section contains a subject thesaurus used in selecting subject headings. Output can be in the form of card catalogue entries or lists. The creators of the procedures manual recognize that the rules and subject headings "are not the definitive word on cataloguing photographs" but hope that in making their manual available, other professionals might benefit from the work done at the National Photography Collection.<sup>44</sup> While the manual itself may or may not be of use to others, the automated cataloguing project undertaken by the NPC again underlines the trend of working in isolation from other professionals in other repositories. Moreover, in this particular case, the NPC also developed its data base management system in isolation from archivists working in other divisions of the Public Archives of Canada.

Microcomputers and word-processing packages have also been used by archivists whose requirements are limited to a system that will allow for the production of inventories, guides and/or subject indexes. The Delaware State Archives Guide Project, for instance, has transferred its SPINDEX data to a microcomputer employing Word Perfect, a word processing program.<sup>45</sup> At the library of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington D.C. the entire catalogue of photographs was entered into a

computer using a word processing program which allows for search and access by subject, proper name and location.<sup>46</sup> The author of an article describing this project, David A. Murdock, does not mention whether he had communicated with or was otherwise aware of the work done by the Baltimore Region Institutional Studies Center (BRISC) which, using ARCHON, deals with archival materials of a similar nature and origin to those of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Murdock also does not discuss whether or not he created an subject and/or name authority file(s) for his project, but if he did, he may have found BRISC's Urban Information Thesaurus of value.

The Microcomputer Archives and Records Management System (MARS) at the Archives of Appalachia grew out of a desire to investigate and experiment with microcomputers in an archival setting. Using an Apple computer and BASIC software, the staff at the Archives of Appalachia created programs to deal with accession information, administrative duties as well as a program for inputting guide entries describing the holdings of the repository. The guide entries are searchable by staff and users through Boolean logic operands. Before entering fonds descriptions, the archivists involved realized that a modicum of in-house standardization was essential. To this end, a specially designed finding aid format was devised which structures the descriptive process and the input of data into the computer. The ultimate objective of this project is to provide other local archivists with a model worthy of adoption and, once adopted, make possible the idea of information networking. Microcomputers, in fact, can be used to form networks through the use of telephone line connections. As the staff at the

Archives of Appalachia anticipate, certain changes in their computer software package will be necessary in transforming it from one type of microcomputer to another and formats may require alteration to bring them into conformity with the formats created in other repositories.<sup>47</sup> Whether or not other institutions will adopt MARS and whether the participating repositories will be able to devise standard formats for the exchange of information will determine the real success of the MARS program.

In-house computer programs developed by archivists are now vying for attention alongside programs created by commercial firms and aimed at capturing the new market in microcomputer application in archival repositories. Computer programs such as MARCON, written exclusively for archives, allow for the entering and editing of descriptions at the item, file, series or fonds levels, online searches using Boolean logic, the production of subject indexes, authority control through the use of optional thesaurus systems and flexibility in report generation.<sup>48</sup> GENCAT (GENeric CATaloguing) developed by Eloquent Systems Incorporated of North Vancouver is very similar to MARCON and possesses many of the same features.<sup>49</sup> Both of these data base management programs require that the archivist define the fields to be used in describing archival material and determine his or her own subject headings and proper name authorities. This makes both programs very flexible, but obviously it does not relieve the archivist of having to address the issue of standardizing descriptive elements and creating fields before inputting data. If an institution hopes to share information on its holdings with other institutions, some thought must also be given to the use of descriptive elements for communication purposes.

In 1978 the Society of American Archivists established a Task Force on National Information Systems (NISTF) to study information systems and their relationship to the descriptive process and to make recommendations regarding the development of a unified national information system for archives and manuscript resources.<sup>50</sup> After analyzing the descriptive tools used in archives and manuscript repositories the members of NISTF found that although the physical appearance of these tools varied widely, most contained common elements of information, such as collection title, date span, volume, access restrictions and the like.<sup>51</sup> The Task Force decided, therefore, that what was needed was some form of reference dictionary to standardize definitions of archival description and provide a common language. The Task Force also realized that a standard descriptive format for the exchange of archival information amongst repositories should be designed. The final outcome was the creation of a "Data Elements Dictionary" and the MARC AMC (MACHine-Readable Cataloging, Archives and Manuscript Control) format, both of which can be found in Nancy Sahli's MARC for Archives and Manuscripts. The AMC Format published in Chicago by the Society of American Archivists in 1985.

The MARC format has a lengthy history. Originally developed by the Library of Congress in the late 1960s for cataloguing printed monographic publications, MARC formats for other types of library holdings, such as serials, maps, visual materials, music and manuscripts were also developed over the years. The first MARC format for manuscript control was not well suited for use in archival repositories because of its emphasis on the cataloguing of individual items. However, the MARC format for manuscripts

was compatible with the Anglo American Cataloguing Rules and with International Standard Bibliographic Description practices which made it attractive to the members of NISTF. Knowing that the Library of Congress was considering the revision of its MARC format for manuscripts, NISTF invited representatives from the Library of Congress, along with representatives from the Research Libraries Group, National Archives and Record Service, and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, to join together in a working group to consider the formulation of a standard format for the exchange of archival information. The working group eventually decided on adopting and modifying the original MARC format for manuscripts.<sup>52</sup> The result was MARC AMC.

MARC AMC is similar to other bibliographic formats in that it acts as a container to hold data and to indicate the location within the record of each data element or field comprising a description. The format can be used in the description of any type of archival material, textual or nontextual, and at any level, from item to fonds. When a bibliographic record is created using MARC AMC, the information in the fields can be easily identified and manipulated by the computer to generate a number of descriptive tools. Although designed as a standard for the automated exchange of information, MARC AMC can also be used as an in-house manual format. Further, the data element dictionary and the field format of MARC AMC are flexible enough to meet local needs while not precluding national exchange networks.<sup>53</sup>

The MARC AMC format is already in use in archival repositories for the purpose of describing bodies of photographs. At Stanford University, for

example, MARC AMC has been used to describe the photographs found in the University's News and Publications Service Collection. These photographs were first described as a group in one record and in separate records as individual series.<sup>54</sup> The hierarchical structure of the MARC AMC format makes it possible to link into a meaningful whole all the series descriptions pertaining to one fonds or body of material. The existence of MARC Visual and MARC Audio-Visual formats, designed for use in libraries, but also suitable for use in museums and art galleries, should mean that these institutions and archival repositories will be able to exchange information on photographic holdings since all the MARC formats are basically compatible with one another. In Washington, the National Gallery of Art Photographic Archives has described the discrete items in its collection using the MARC Audio-Visual format.<sup>55</sup> However, with the participation of various library networks, such as the Research Libraries Group, in the development and/or use of MARC AMC, the most logical route for libraries having archival photographs will also be to use the AMC format.

The MARC AMC format was designed for use with a mainframe computer which would mean that smaller repositories with microcomputers would be excluded from possible networks based on MARC. To remedy this situation, MicroMARC:AMC was developed in 1986 for use with IBM PCs (personal computers) or IBM compatibles. In general, MicroMARC works well except that some functions such as updating indexes are slower on a microcomputer than when using a mainframe and the standard MARC AMC format.<sup>56</sup> Another alternative discussed by Ronald Zboray is the use of a microcomputer with dBase III Plus and the MARC AMC format. While there is no inherent



incompatibility between dBase and the MARC format, the use of a dBase-MARC system does require some programming to overcome the maximum dBase record size of 4,000 bytes. The MARC format contains seventy-seven fields and filling these fields might exceed the dBase byte limit. One method of dealing with this problem is to link two dBase data files together through a common field and divide the MARC fields between them.<sup>57</sup> Institutions with computer enthusiasts or their own programmers will experience no difficulties here, but other institutions may have to enlist the aid of a computer consultant to install MARC AMC. Further research into the use of dBase and MARC is warranted given the commercial popularity of dBase and the growing desire of archivists to become involved with the MARC AMC format. For example, in 1986 the archivists at the Medical College of Pennsylvania reported having considered the possibility of using dBase III and the MARC format together in describing the photographic holdings of the College.<sup>58</sup> Whether or not they eventually launched an experimental project in this regard is not revealed in subsequent literature.

The members of the Archival Description Project of the University of Liverpool in England have rejected any descriptive system which conforms to AACR2, including MARC, citing incompatibility of library practices with archival traditions as the reason.<sup>59</sup> Instead, the Archival Description Project team has made recommendations of its own concerning the structure of data elements for the manual and automated description of textual archives.<sup>60</sup> Members of the team also feel that their general data standards would not be suitable for specialized forms of documents, such as photographs, unless those specialized documents were contained within a

textual archival entity. Otherwise they recommend that nontextual material be catalogued and indexed as discrete items.<sup>61</sup>

The Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards has been more willing to consider and to recommend descriptive practices based on AARC2, such as MARC. The approach of the Working Group has been much wider in scope than that of the Archival Description Project or NISTF. Members of the Working Group have analyzed and made suggestions regarding all areas of manual or automated descriptive practices, giving equal attention to nontextual as well as textual materials. As Kent Haworth, a member of the Bureau of Canadian Archivists' Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards set up pursuant to the report of the Working Group, has argued, the development of in-house, automated descriptive standards for specific purposes along with dreams of automated communications networks means putting the cart before the horse, the horse being a broad range of manual descriptive standards accepted and used by archivists across the nation.<sup>62</sup>

In all, the Working Group made thirty-five recommendations in its 1985 report Toward Descriptive Standards. As a priority, the Working Group has recommended that Canadian archivists first describe and index all holdings at the fonds level, regardless of form or medium of record.<sup>63</sup> They also recommend that all types of finding aids be defined in standard terms which name each type of finding aid, state its purpose, characterize its contents and establish a format for its presentation.<sup>64</sup> The development of descriptive standards for specific types of archival materials was also considered by the Working Group. For example, the Working Group has suggested that a committee of Canadian archivists should review Steven

Hensen's manual Archives, Personal Papers and Manuscripts<sup>65</sup> as the possible basis for the development of rules for the description of textual archives.<sup>66</sup> Hensen's work is based and expands on Chapter Four on manuscripts in AACR2. In describing bodies of photographs, the Working Group recommends that a committee of Canadian archivists adopt and/or adapt Elisabeth Betz's Graphic Materials for Describing Original Items and Collections.<sup>67</sup> Betz's manual is based and expands on Chapter Eight in AACR2 and therefore like Hensen's manual is also compatible with the various MARC formats, including MARC AMC. The Working Group could see where MARC AMC would likely become widely used for the storage and exchange of archival data and thus recommended that a committee be struck to study the MARC AMC format in light of its adoption or adaptation in Canada.<sup>68</sup> Following the publication of the Working Group's report, a Canadian Committee on MARC (CCM) was created and has already begun to address this issue.<sup>69</sup>

Elisabeth Betz's Graphic Materials was published by the Library of Congress but the rules contained in the manual were intended to meet the needs of archivists and museum curators as well as librarians and to facilitate automation and national networking systems. While Chapter Eight of AACR2 primarily focuses on the cataloguing of commercially-produced visual materials, published and/or documented artists' prints and photographs and reproductions accompanied by printed information, Graphic Materials offers rules more appropriate in the cataloguing of originals and historical graphics.<sup>70</sup> Rules contained in AACR2 are redefined and modified in Graphic Materials to take into account the fact that historical and unpublished graphics can rarely be catalogued with reference to a "chief

source of information" from which to transcribe bibliographic information. Instead, as Betz points out, information must be extracted, interpreted and extrapolated from the visual content and context of unpublished graphic materials.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the terminology, definitions and guidelines in Graphic Materials can be more easily understood and applied by archivists and museum curators than can the rules in AACR2. Unlike AACR2 which stresses item-level cataloguing, Graphic Materials puts equal emphasis on item and group cataloguing. When Graphic Materials was published in 1982 work on the MARC AMC format was not yet complete. In recent years, however, the MARC AMC format has come to inform other projects undertaken at the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Building on Graphic Materials and the MARC AMC format, Betz and her colleagues have created two other tools to be used in standardizing descriptive practices for nontextual archives: LC Thesaurus for Graphic Materials: Topical Terms for Subject Access (LCTGM) and Descriptive Terms for Graphic Materials: Genre and Physical Characteristic Headings (GMGPC). The terms contained in both of these publications are authorized for use in MARC records. LCTGM contains 3,567 postable (authorized) terms to be entered in the 650 field of MARC records and 2,569 nonpostable (cross reference) terms.<sup>72</sup> As with any thesaurus, however, it is expected that indexers in various institutions will find additional terms which should be added. To aid in this process, LCTGM contains guidelines in the introduction on the application of indexing practices to pictorial indexing. These guidelines will also help ensure that the application of LCTGM is consistent.<sup>73</sup> The LC Thesaurus for Graphic Materials should be used in

conjunction with Descriptive Terms for Graphic Materials: Genre and Physical Characteristic Headings. The guidelines in GMGPC and LCTGM make clear when a genre or physical type can be considered a subject heading and used in MARC field 650 and when the same information should be entered in MARC field 655 as a genre heading and/or field 755, as a physical characteristic heading. GMGPC contains 513 authorized terms and 260 cross references.<sup>74</sup> The terms are exhaustive and cover virtually every type of genre or physical format pertaining to pictorial material, including photographs. It is likely, therefore, that new terms will have to be added only on an occasional basis. Given the broad interest in MARC, librarians, archivists and other curators of photographs might be more receptive to the LC Thesaurus for Graphic Materials: Topical Terms for Subject Access and Descriptive Terms for Graphic Materials: Genre and Physical Characteristic Headings than they have been to other authorities created in the past. Like Graphic Materials, LCTGM and GMGPC are also applicable to manual descriptive systems.

The controlled vocabularies in LCTGM and GMGPC were developed by the Library of Congress for indexing purposes and it is in this area, the indexing of archival materials, where archivists have recently come to question the exclusive use of library practices. The mandate of librarians is to facilitate information retrieval and naturally members of the profession think in terms of subject indexing as the best means of achieving this goal. Archivists, conversely, have a mandate to provide documentary accountability, that is, to document organizational activity. Archivists do not exist solely for the purpose of providing access to their holdings nor

to analyze the subject content of those holdings.<sup>75</sup> For this reason, archivists are coming to realize that their approach to indexing must emphasize evidential verification and record authentication. This means a departure from the present focus on access by subject and the development of a controlled vocabulary which reveals mission, mandate, organization, functions and history of the bodies which created the records being described.<sup>76</sup> In Canada, the Bureau of Canadian Archivists' Committee on Descriptive Standards has struck a number of new Working Groups to act on the recommendations of the original Working Group on Descriptive Standards; one of these new Working Groups which has already been appointed and begun its work is charged with the study of the theory and methodology of indexing as applied to archives, existing systems and how they work for archives, and the needs of archivists and researchers. This group plans on submitting its final report by 31 March 1989.<sup>77</sup> The issue of indexing by provenance will likely be discussed by the group and perhaps work on the compilation of a controlled vocabulary to be used in provenance indexing will be begun. Archivists need not abandon subject indexing totally; to provide maximum access to archival materials, both subject indexing and provenance indexing could be employed.

When a method of provenance indexing is developed its conceptual framework should encompass all archives regardless of medium or origin, that is, no distinction should be made in the approach to the provenance indexing of public records, manuscripts or nontextual materials. Resistance to provenance indexing will likely be encountered in professionals who believe that archives and manuscripts are basically different and therefore require

separate indexing solutions. The same situation is likely to occur in applying provenance indexing to photographs. In one sense, Descriptive Terms for Graphic Materials: Genre and Physical Characteristic Headings will aid archivists in describing the form and therefore, in some instances, the function of some photographs and the body which created them. For example, "legal photographs" or "detective camera photographs" could be used in revealing information about the creator(s). However, in the introduction to GMGPC, readers are advised that terms reflecting a particular discipline or function need not be applied if images can be indexed just as well through their subject content.<sup>78</sup> This illustrates the basic dichotomy in the approach taken by archivists and librarians. It also underlines the necessity of further analysis of archival methodology and principles before rushing to automate descriptive systems and to join information networks.

Automation and networks are, of course, not the only reasons that archivists should be working toward the creation of standard descriptive practices. Descriptive standards will result in the more efficient use of the archivist's time; once rules and procedures are established, archivists will not have to waste time in deciding what to do and how to do it. Given the variety of methods employed in the arrangement and description of photographs, standards would be particularly beneficial in this area. The existence of standards will also facilitate the training of new staff. From the user's perspective, consistently formatted inventories, guides or indexes within and between institutions would mean better service and less time spent in learning different systems in different repositories.<sup>79</sup>

One of the largest roadblocks to the development of standards has been

the idea that all archival fonds are unique entities. As a consequence, the application of standard descriptive formats seemed inappropriate. This notion, as it applies to textual archives, has been largely overcome. It remains to be seen if archivists can break away from viewing photographic archives as a special medium for which archival descriptive practices are only partially applicable, if at all.



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## CHAPTER FIVE: FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Many of the problems and issues raised in the professional literature regarding the organization/arrangement and cataloguing/description of photographs were also encountered during field trips to libraries and archival repositories in the Vancouver area and in Victoria. Each institution visited had a different approach or a different system for the physical and intellectual control of photographs. Several factors lay behind the adoption of various methods and practices at these institutions: the mandate of each particular institution; nature of usership; nature of the photographs and their historical and monetary value; volume of photographs held; availability of staff; financial resources and cost efficiency; present or possible access to a computer. Also, curators often inherited a system which they either maintain today or which they closed at some point to begin a new system. It is rare in the library and archival worlds for new systems to be superimposed on the old. Instead, both systems generally run concurrently.

This chapter will describe the means employed in the organization/arrangement and cataloguing/description of photographs held by 1) the New Westminster Public Library, 2) the Historical Photographs Section of the Vancouver Public Library, 3) the Vancouver City Archives, 4) the Visual Records Division of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 5) the Simon Fraser University Archives and 6) the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia. In choosing two libraries, three archival repositories

and one historical society it was hoped that a representative sample of methodologies applied in the physical and intellectual control of photographs would be obtained. Interviews were arranged with individuals in charge of photographs at each of these institutions except at the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia where the author of this thesis worked as an archivist between 1986 and 1988.<sup>1</sup> During the course of the interviews conducted in the libraries and archival repositories, a questionnaire (see Appendix) was to be administered verbally but due to the structure and nature of the questionnaire and the variety of methods encountered in the field, the questionnaire was often abandoned or used as a point of reference during a free-flowing discussion on the systems in use at these institutions. The aim of this chapter is not to expose the shortcomings or extol the virtues of various systems used in dealing with photographs but to examine each system in relation to the theories, methodologies and case studies discussed in Chapters Two through Four.

#### NEW WESTMINSTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

The mandate of the New Westminster Public Library (NWPL), as it relates to photographs, is to document the growth and development of the city. The focus of the library's acquisition and copying policy, therefore, is to obtain images of street scenes, local industries, social, business and religious organizations, prominent individuals, families and so on. To date, the NWPL houses approximately 2400 catalogued images and another 200 to 300 uncatalogued images. The library does collect original prints and



negatives but the emphasis is on copying rather than acquiring photographs. The origin of copy prints varies; they may be reproductions from local museums, local citizens or from the Provincial Archives of British Columbia or the Vancouver City Archives. Original prints and negatives are stored in a closed stack area. The copy prints are catalogued and then incorporated into a self-indexing vertical file system. These images are used for study and reference purposes and are also lent out to patrons. Alan Woodland, Chief Librarian, and Wendy Klein, a staff member, oversee the acquisition, organization and cataloguing of the images held by the New Westminster Public Library.

The methodology employed in the physical organization of the photographic images at the NWPL is based on library practices. When asked about the application of provenance to the photographs, copies or originals, Mr. Woodland replied that the name of the donor of each image was carefully recorded in the accession log, on the catalogue card and on the back of each photograph. In this instance, provenance is interpreted as meaning source. The principle of provenance and its corollary of original order are not observed in the strictest sense but because original prints, negatives and copy negatives are organized by accession number, it is possible to identify groups of photographs acquired from one source. However, photographs contained in albums, for instance, are removed and the albums discarded thereby destroying the original order and the contextual integrity of the photographs previously contained therein. In recent years, archivists and curators have come to question this practice and now carefully consider the nature and contents of photograph albums before deciding on whether or not

to dismantle them.<sup>2</sup>

The organization of copy reference prints is by subject headings in vertical files. The classification scheme was devised after consulting several published tools, such as Sears List of Subject Headings and the Public Archives of Canada Descriptive and Subject Cataloguing at the National Photography Collection.<sup>3</sup> Applicable subject terms were chosen from these lists and others added by the staff of the NWPL to meet local needs. The photographs in the vertical file are contained in manila envelopes and in each envelope there may be one or more images pertaining to a particular subject. The subject headings are marked on the envelopes.

Both physical and descriptive control begins with entries made in the accession log. Information recorded in the log includes the following: an accession number given to each image by the library, the original serial number given to each image by its creator (this usually only applies to photographs acquired or copied from commercial studios) or the accession number given to an image by the institution from which it was copied, such as the Vancouver City Archives; whether the image is a print or negative and whether it has been copied; the name of the donor or source; and a description of each image noting date, inscribed information or, where there is no inscription, a caption is devised by the library staff. The information contained in the accession log is typed onto labels and the labels applied to the back of each copy print in the vertical file.

The vertical file can be browsed or accessed through the card catalogue and indexes. The information from the accession log is also used in creating the descriptive catalogue entries. In fact, catalogue entries are,

basically, a transcription of accession data and are not based on standard cataloguing rules such as AACR2. The entries are arranged in a catalogue which contains more subject headings than those in use in the vertical file. Each entry in the catalogue points users to the appropriate subject term in the vertical file. For each image there may be as many as ten added entries in the descriptive catalogue. There are also two card indexes, one by date and place and another by accession number. Entries in these indexes include the same information as found in the accession log and descriptive card catalogue.

As a security measure, all copy prints and the information contained on the backs of each image are photocopied and the photocopies maintained by accession number in black binders. If a copy print is lost, stolen or in circulation, patrons can refer to the binders. This practice was also undertaken because staff members continue to add more information regarding subject content to the backs of the reference prints. If a copy print disappears, the added information would be lost as well. Much of the data recorded on the backs of copy prints also helps the user to put a particular image within some sort of historical context. This is important if users are unable or disinclined to study other images on the same subject.

The size of the photographic holdings of the NWPL, small by comparison to other institutions, means that item-level control is still feasible. The library's acquisition and copying program cannot be described as aggressive and therefore a growing backlog will likely never be a major problem or cause the staff to think in terms of control at a higher level.

The emphasis at the New Westminster Public Library is on the

informational value contained in discrete, historical photographs. In part, this approach explains the library's preference for copying originals rather than acquiring them. Moreover, the acquisition of original prints and negatives on a large scale requires ample storage area. This storage area, ideally, should feature environmental controls suited to the specific needs of photographs. The allotment of financial resources at most libraries, like the NWPL, means that a separate, environmentally controlled storage area, the purchasing of large bodies of photographs and the copying of these images is an impossibility. Wendy Klein has mentioned that if the library decided to pursue an active acquisition policy and to collect a greater number of originals, the originals would have to be stored in a closed stack and be accessible to users through catalogues and indexes, all of which would require extra staff time to retrieve requested images. Thus, the NWPL prefers its vertical file, open to the public and containing copy prints which can be reproduced as the need arises. This system quite adequately meets the needs of users, the majority of whom are senior citizens who take great pleasure in browsing through the photographs in the vertical file. Other users include school children, college students, antiquarians and members of the media looking for images to illustrate the written or spoken word.

## VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Historical Photographs Section (HPS) of the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) was begun in 1967 under the direction of Ron D'Altroy, now retired. By 1971 the HPS possessed 90,000 images and today there are over 70,000 accessioned and indexed photographs and 60,000 unprocessed photographs, making for a total of some 130,000 images. From the outset, the aim of the HPS has been to provide accurate documentation of as many aspects of life in British Columbia as possible with a special emphasis on the Vancouver area. In fulfilling this mandate, the HPS has purchased large bodies of photographs generated by Vancouver area commercial photographers such as Phillip Timms. Purchases have been augmented by many gifts and donations by private citizens interested in preserving the history of the province.

The original system used to organize and catalogue the holdings of the Historical Photographs Section was devised by Ron D'Altroy. Although D'Altroy stressed the archival nature of his approach and work,<sup>4</sup> the system is based on library practices and the retrieval of discrete items. The system begun by D'Altroy is still in use today although his subject index is no longer added to. After D'Altroy's retirement in the early 1980s, the staff of the HPS abandoned his method of indexing in favor of less detailed index entries and they also devised a new subject authority file. Beginning in the early 1980s, the staff also began identifying and describing bodies or fonds of photographs. Under the direction of Chris Middlemass, the current curator of the HPS, the move toward the adoption of archival

methodology in the arrangement and description of photographs is continuing.

In the 1960s when D'Altroy took up his new position as the head of the Historical Photographs Section he launched a literature search and an investigation of various systems of filing and retrieving photographs in use in other institutions. He then conducted several experiments of his own before settling on a simple system of identifying and then arranging incoming original prints and negatives by accession number. The numbers assigned to originals were then given to copy prints produced by the library for use in the reference room. As D'Altroy put it, original prints and negatives acquired by the Historical Photographs Section "do not necessarily have any relationship to each other although sometimes a related group comes in together."<sup>5</sup> To present day staff, D'Altroy's arrangement of originals by accession number has allowed for the identification of organic bodies and fonds thereby making possible fonds-level description for submission to the Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives. D'Altroy also began the practice of arranging the 8 inch by 10 inch copy or reference prints, routinely made of originals, in looseleaf binders with each binder containing one hundred images. The binders are numbered 0 through 140 based on accession number and the arrangement of the prints within each binder is also based on accession number. For example, a reference print with the accession number of 36 would be image 36 in binder 0, the reference print 11160 would be image 60 in binder 111 and so forth. Intellectual access to the binders can be gained through reference to the accession log, or more often, through the various indexes.

Entries in the accession register list the library's accession number

for each image, the geographic location in which the photograph was taken, subject content, date and the physical form of the image, print or negative, and the name of the donor and the name of the photographer if known or if different from the name of the donor. Until D'Altroy's retirement, this information was then used to create what the staff refer to as index card entries, although these entries are a cross between descriptive cataloguing and indexing. D'Altroy began with an index file arranged by broad subject headings. He then indexed each image by subject, geographic area, people, buildings or whatever else seemed appropriate with as many as twenty added entries. D'Altroy also kept two more card indexes, one by date of photograph and one by acquisition number. During D'Altroy's time, 13,700 images were subject indexed. Shortly after his departure, his subject index was closed and a new place/subject index was opened. D'Altroy's original subject authority file was incorporated into a more detailed supplementary subject term list with other terms drawn from the Library of Congress Subject Headings,<sup>6</sup> the Public Archives of Canada's Descriptive and Subject Cataloguing at the National Photography Collection and subject terms based on local or provincial variations. The specificity of the present authority file makes it possible for staff to index an image under fewer subject headings. The preferred practice now is to index under one primary subject term and up to five or six more if necessary. The chronological index started by D'Altroy is still in use though only for photographs of Vancouver. D'Altroy's accession index is also kept up to date.

The new place/subject index includes entries for copy negatives for which there are no copy prints and therefore a reproduction of the image

cannot be found in the looseleaf binders. In these cases, the users are brought copy negatives to view on a light table in the reference room. The binders are still added to, but not on as routine a basis as in earlier years. Each binder with its 100 copy prints represents an expenditure of approximately five hundred dollars.

The format developed by D'Altroy in creating the index/descriptive catalogue entries does not conform to a standard such as AACR1 or AACR2. Instead a unique format was devised by D'Altroy and his staff. Entries in the D'Altroy subject index include the following information: subject term, accession number, photographer's and/or donor's name, date of the photograph, and a one or two-line description on content. In the 1980s, staff reductions resulted in less detailed descriptions on index cards. Entries in the new place/subject index usually just contain the index term and the accession number of the photograph. As a result, users must often refer to the accession log for a fuller description. To further supplement the information found in either set of subject indexes and to help researchers place an image or group of images within some type of context, an Information File is also maintained by the staff.

The Information File was initiated by Ron D'Altroy and is used for recording facts about specific buildings or people or general information on local history. For instance, the life cycles of important landmarks are noted in the Information File: Jones Building - built 1907 - burnt down 1915 - replaced by Globe Theatre. The File has also expanded since D'Altroy's time and now includes biographical data on donors and photographers. Background information on photographers has become important



recently because users have begun to manifest an interest in the work of particular individuals. Entries in the Information File note the name of a photographer, his/her address, number of years in business and any other pertinent data. In this way the staff of the HPS can provide users with similar information found in the biographical sketches and administrative histories of archival inventories.

In response to a request from the National Photography Collection in Ottawa for fonds-level descriptions of photographs for inclusion in the Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives, the staff of the HPS began another descriptive system to cover its holdings. Organic bodies of photographs were identified and described using the form provided in the Explanatory Notes for the Description of the Holdings and Collections in Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives.<sup>7</sup> Using this form, bodies are described in terms title, that is the name of the individual or organization responsible for the creation of the photographs, dates for the birth and death of the individual or beginning and ending dates of the organization, number of photographs in the fonds, name of the repository holding the images, a brief subject description of the photographs, whether other finding aids are available and the provenance or location of copies. Due to the manner in which photographs were acquired, organized and described at the HPS, the first fonds-level description prepared for the Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives describes the entire photographic holdings of the Historic Photographs Section. Smaller bodies of photographs within the larger conglomerate were then described separately.

The GCPA form has proven very useful to the Historical Photographs

Section in its everyday description of photographic fonds. The form has been reproduced by the HPS in various colours, each colour representing a different stage of arrangement and description. For instance, a grey form is used for bodies of images accessioned (accessioned here means entered in the accession log) and in the place/subject index, dark blue for images accessioned, catalogued (catalogued refers to D'Altroy's subject index) and in the place/subject index, pale blue for images accession and catalogued, yellow for images described only as a body, orange and deep pink for images not accessioned and stored on the third floor or A-Deck, respectively, and awaiting some type of organization and description. As of 1986, the HPS has been using the GCPA form as the exclusive means of describing bodies of photographs. Only rare images or those felt to be of great historical value are now being catalogued and indexed as discrete items.

A growing backlog and financial restraints have combined to make comprehensive item-level control at the HPS virtually impossible but the use of the GCPA form only provides users with a minimum of intellectual access when used as prescribed in the Explanatory Notes. According to the directions in the Explanatory Notes, item 8, "Description of Documents" should emphasize the physical form of the photographs if important, principal subjects and the names of the principal persons, families and institutions portrayed in the fonds. The GCPA form was not designed to replace indexes or other finding aids produced by individual repositories.<sup>6</sup> Other information, such as a note on the arrangement of a body of photographs which in turn would reflect content and help users focus on the part or unit of the fonds of greatest interest to them, is not required for

GCPA descriptions and therefore is absent from the Historical Photographs Section's use of the form. Chris Middlemass has acknowledged that before the HPS comes to rely on the description of bodies of photographs, the staff will have to learn how to identify subgroups, series or other units within a photographic body which will inform arrangement and thus description as well. Middlemass foresees the eventual use of archival inventories instead of the GCPA form.

This said, the staff of the HPS is also looking forward to the day when the indexes can be automated. The impression conveyed by some staff members is that when automation is introduced it will make possible the item indexing of the backlog as well. Unless the HPS can expand its human resources to include extra professional staff to prepare new index entries and clerical staff hired to input data into the computer, the latter goal may prove elusive. On the other hand, it would be possible to automate any inventories that are created and then subject index them or provenance index the inventories by bringing out names and terms to describe the functions for which the records were created. Years may pass before the HPS will be able to invest in a computer and thus the issues automation raises are not of immediate concern. To avoid being caught unprepared, however, Middlemass has begun to consider all the implications involved in automating manual finding aids.

At present, the methods of organizing and describing photographs at the Vancouver Public Library, Historical Photographs Section meet the needs of users. Students, antiquarians, genealogists, publishers, members of the media and browsers have subject access to over 70,000 indexed images.

Academic researchers interested in studying aggregates of images are able to identify organic bodies of photographs using the Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives forms contained in a binder in the reference room. Some of these bodies of photographs have been partially or fully indexed. Bodies of photographs for which there is no physical or descriptive control below the fonds level are also made accessible under certain circumstances to researchers with very specific requests.

#### VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES

The Vancouver City Archives (VCA) specializes in the acquisition of photographic images relating to the Vancouver area or produced by photographers from the city. In the latter instance, this also means that the VCA possesses images taken throughout British Columbia and in other provinces and territories by photographers with their home base in Vancouver. Major James Skitt Matthews founded and operated the Archives for nearly four decades prior to his death in 1970,<sup>9</sup> and during his time the VCA acquired approximately 20,000 historical photographs dating from the 1880s. Of those 20,000, Major Matthews indexed and made copy prints of over 10,000 for reference use. Including Matthews' 20,000 images, the VCA now houses over 100,000 photographs. Like the Vancouver Public Library, Historical Photographs Section, the VCA maintains two systems for the physical and intellectual control of its holdings: the first system covers the 10,000 images in the J.S. Matthews' Collection; the second system covers all the various bodies of photographs that make up The CVA [City of Vancouver]

Collections. Today the archivist in charge of acquiring and arranging and describing the photographs at the VCA is Ken Young.

When Major Matthews acquired new photographic images or borrowed photographs for copying, the original prints and negatives and copy negatives were organized according to subject and within each subject class by accession number. The organizational scheme used by Matthews was his own creation, with new subject heading being added over the years. Some of the headings are quite broad, such as "Clubs" or "Outside Pictures" while others are very specific, "Duke of Connaught" or "Captain Vancouver." Matthews rarely kept an accession log and therefore once photographs had been dispersed into subject classes, it became impossible, not only to identify or reconstruct the order of original bodies of photographs, but to determine who the donor or photographer was, the date on which the material was acquired and so forth. Copy prints routinely made of incoming originals were also arranged, in binders, according to the subject scheme used in organizing originals. Each binder, of which there are over 200, is arranged in alphabetical order by subject heading. Arrangement of copy prints within the binders is in accordance with the accession numbers assigned to the originals.

Intellectual access to the Major Matthews Collection is through a subject index created by Matthews and his staff. The index also uses the same subject headings applied to the original images and the copy prints. Before approaching the index, users are advised to consult the list "Categories and Abbreviations" which gives a summary of the subject terms used by Major Matthews. After locating a subject term that covers the

user's area of interest, the next step is to look in the index file for specific images relating to the chosen subject term. Having found a particular index reference, the user then should consult the "Index Card Guide" to help interpret the information found on the index card. An index card will list the subject term and the caption of an image and give a series of abbreviations and numbers to guide the user to the right binder; it is the series of abbreviation and numbers that requires interpretation. For example, "C.N./N./Dist.1/P.Dist.2 breaks down as follows: C.N. means city of Vancouver and can be ignored when it appears on a card; N. stands for negative number to be used in placing an order for a photographic reproduction; Dist.1 stands for "District" volume 1, "District" being one of the subject classes which points the user to the right binder; P.Dist.2 refers to copy print number 2 in the "District" class.<sup>10</sup> As one researcher summed up Matthews' system "It's easy, that is once you understand how the man's mind worked."

The integration of new images into this system by staff members after Matthews' death in 1970 would have meant fathoming "the man's mind" on a continual basis, thus the Major's index catalogue and reference binders were discontinued and a different system initiated. The arrangement and description of photographs after Major Matthews' time is based on archival and library practices. The work of individual photographers or bodies of photographs acquired or generated by an individual, family or institution are maintained by provenance and arranged, in so far as possible, according to original order. Description first is at the fonds or group level and then the discrete items within each body of photographs are subject indexed.

The staff at the VCA have found the maintenance of the original order within bodies of photographs to present a real challenge. As with textual fonds, photographs often arrive at the repository with no discernible arrangement or lack a usable arrangement. In these cases, series or units of arrangement are devised according to format, function, chronology or subject. Bodies of photographs produced by commercial or amateur photographers are more likely to possess a distinct and usable original order, but not always. The Stuart Thomson Collection, for instance, is comprised of over 10,000 negatives created during Thomson's career as a photographer but when acquired by the VCA the fonds exhibited several methods of arrangement which had been devised by Thomson. Thomson had organized his photographs by format and eventually by number but at some point he abandoned his original numbering system and initiated a new numbering system. After working through the fonds, the staff at the VCA settled on a chronological arrangement further subdivided by format. In the "Photographic Procedures Manual" compiled to aid staff in the physical and intellectual control of photographs, directions regarding arrangement are, understandably, vague: "order as necessary."<sup>11</sup> Once an order has been restored or imposed, each item within a body of photographs is given a number, beginning at 1 and moving sequentially through to the end of the fonds.

The number assigned to original prints and negatives within a fonds is then given to the corresponding photocopies of each image made for use in the reference room. The photocopies are arranged by number in the binders with a separate binder used for each fonds. In this way, the photocopies

reflect provenance and the original order used in arranging the actual fonds.

Physical control and the descriptive process begins as soon as a body of photographs is received by the VCA. The first step involves completing a short descriptive entry in the accession log. After the archivist has completed a preliminary survey or sort of the fonds the first page of an accession control form is filled out noting provenance, collection title, inclusive dates, physical format of the images in the fonds, the extent of each format, and a description of accompanying material, such as manuscript documents or finding aids prepared by the creator. The second page of the accession control form is completed after the fonds has been given its final arrangement and has been described at the fonds level and item indexed. Information required on the second page pertains to restrictions, if they exist, and to administrative chores relating to physical and intellectual control such as the completion of a donor card and sending a letter of acknowledgment to the donor.<sup>12</sup> A two-page worksheet is also filled in after physical arrangement is complete. The worksheet contains information on the entire fonds, such as title, control number, extent, restrictions and provenance as well as detailed information on each item in the fonds. Individual images are described under the following headings: item control number, location at which the photograph was taken, date of image, title (caption), photographer's name, name and address of source and date received, form, colour, size of image, image quality and any relevant additional information.<sup>13</sup> After the binders of photocopied prints are organized, the worksheets are also photocopied and added at the front of the



binders.

The descriptive process continues with the creation of catalogue card entries for each fonds and the preparation of subject index cards for each item within the fonds. The descriptive catalogue card entries follow the rules established in Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules 2. The note area usually focuses on the general subject content of a fonds and/or highlights discrete items of particular historical value within the fonds. The descriptive catalogue cards created by the VCA are photocopied and submitted on a yearly basis to the Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives. This saves the staff from having to transcribe the information from the catalogue cards onto GCPA forms.

Researchers consulting the descriptive card catalogue can narrow their search to a particular fonds and from there can either go to the appropriate binder to browse or further narrow their search by consulting the subject index. The subject headings in use in the index are drawn from various sources such as Sears List of Subject Headings and also from Major Matthews' subject file. In using some of the same subject terms as Major Matthews, the staff of the VCA hoped to provide users with some sense of continuity between the two systems. Subject index entries are kept to a minimum. The "Photographic Procedures Manual" advises staff that the principle of specificity should be borne in mind while indexing. Thus, the most specific heading or headings that accurately describe the subject of the content of an image should be selected.<sup>14</sup> If several photographs within one fonds refer to a single subject, they can be grouped on the same index card.<sup>15</sup> The index cards do not always contain captions, usually just reference

numbers relating to fonds and item(s) and the approximate year(s) of the image(s) listed under each index term. A list of the subject terms used by the staff with "see" and "see also" references is available in the reading room for use by researchers. Instructions on how to approach the CVA Collections are also available in the reading room.

The Vancouver City Archives has a well defined policy regarding photographs contained in manuscript groups. It is recognized that media separation "on an across-the-board basis may create as many problems as it solves" and therefore staff are required to use their own judgment in evaluating particular situations. If a photograph or body of photographs are considered to be of "value beyond the scope of the manuscript group" they are removed and added to the CVA Photograph Collections. These images are then described as a distinct body in the descriptive catalogue, indexed, photocopied and arranged in a binder. Cross references must be made in the manuscript finding aid and the CVA Collections' descriptive catalogue. Photocopies of the images are also inserted in the original manuscript group. Original images retained in manuscript groups are described as pertaining to the policy on the description of textual materials.<sup>16</sup>

The two systems in use at the Vancouver City Archives for the physical and intellectual control of photographs meet the needs of users and have allowed the staff to virtually eliminate backlog. Several images within a number of photographic fonds are not indexed because they defy description under the current list of subject terms in use. For example, a photograph of a legal document would not be indexed. Young has found that these images are of little interest to the majority of users. However, researchers

studying the creator(s) of a fonds and therefore also viewing the originals, would encounter these unindexed images. Young's own criticism of the CVA Collections is that the binders containing photocopies of individual fonds do not also contain an introduction to the fonds, a scope and content note, a series or unit description, and an administrative history or biographical sketch on the creator(s) as included in traditional archival inventories. In future, he hopes to see these features added to the binders. This step will provide researchers with a better grounding in the overall content and structure of each fonds and perhaps reduce the Archives' dependency on the subject index and the labour intensive item-level descriptions created in completing the worksheets.

#### PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Visual Records Division (VRD) or the Provincial Archives of British Columbia (PABC) has acquired over three million photographic images, approximately one-hundred thousand of which are under intellectual control. The present system of arrangement and description is in transition, heading away from item-level treatment toward practices informed by archival principles and methodology. The major drawback to the Visual Records Division's original system of item-level control, apart from encouraging an incredible backlog, was the haphazard way in which the system was created and added to over the years. Consistency was never a watchword of previous curators and thus different approaches have been taken at different times to the indexing of photographs held by the PABC. For the past seven or eight

years, no additional subject headings have been added to the old index file. However, staff of the VRD still maintain and add to the subject-arranged vertical file of copy prints begun decades ago. At the same time, the focus has shifted to providing intellectual access to bodies or fonds of photographs. In this regard, inventories and fonds-level descriptions are now being prepared. The present individual in charge of the Visual Records Division is Jerry Davison and under his direction many of the new finding aids are being automated using a microcomputer and dBase III software.

In the past, photographs arriving at the PABC were physically arranged by subject. Organic bodies of images were therefore dispersed and the relationship between images within fonds destroyed. For years the originals were available for use by patrons. When it became apparent that original prints should not be handled on a continual basis by researchers, the PABC decided to duplicate the images and create a separate vertical file of copy prints for reference purposes. The copies in the vertical file are arranged in the same manner as the originals. Some original prints were also inadvertently or purposefully placed in the vertical file. This has resulted in a certain amount of confusion in recent years as staff attempt to rationalize the two systems.

From the beginning it was contemplated that intellectual access to the original images and then to the copy prints in the vertical file would be through a subject index. By the 1970s there were several indexes: subject, topographical, shipping, biographical, photographer's name and accession number. The index by photographer's name was begun and then abandoned and the subject file was also abandoned due to a lack of consistency in subject

terms. The topographical index is the "core" index and most frequently used by researchers. The standard procedure upon entering the Visual Records Division, however, is to make a verbal request regarding one's area of interest and then allow the reference personnel to retrieve the appropriate images. The vertical file is now restricted from direct access by users. If staff members cannot make a mental connection between the subject request of the user and the images in the vertical file, the user has no recourse; he or she cannot browse through the vertical file itself nor depend on the indexes to point to a more appropriate subject term to use in retrieving images. More often, the staff are able to provide users with images pertaining to a request. All the copy prints contained in the various classes of the vertical file bear captions and other information such as photographer's name, if known, accession number, the number of the original negative, copyright restrictions, credit line and so forth.

Throughout the summer and early autumn of 1980, David Mattison, then working in the Visual Records Division, conducted a project to produce an unspecified number of catalogue records for photographs judged to be of relative importance to the history of the province. Using AACR2 as a standard for descriptive cataloguing and the Library of Congress Subject Headings as a standard for establishing access points, 535 catalogue records and an authority file were completed by the end of the project. Many of the photographs were catalogued as groups, that is, photographs pertaining to a particular subject were catalogued as a group.<sup>17</sup> The amount of time required in creating these 535 catalogue records helped convince the staff of the VRD that item-level and a slightly more expansive unit-level control

would not be a feasible means of gaining intellectual control over the entire holdings of the Division.

As the VRD considered moving toward the application of archival practices to its holdings, an interim step was the creation of "visual inventories" of fonds or organic bodies of photographs. By the late 1970s, researchers had begun evincing an interest in the work of particular photographers and to meet the needs of these users the VRD reconstructed several fonds of photographs, made copy prints and photocopies of the originals and then arranged the copies in binders. Each binder contains the work of one photographer and the arrangement of the copies within each binder follows the numbering system used by the photographer during the active life of the photographs. Recent acquisitions of photographs generated by pioneer photographers are maintained as organic bodies and those fonds considered to be of interest to the public have also had "visual inventories" created for them. Another important prerequisite in deciding which fonds to copy is that there be a pre-existing finding aid, kept by the photographer, that will provide users with intellectual access to the copies and originals. Given the backlog at the VRD, it would be impossible for staff members to attempt to describe every item in a fonds for which a visual inventory existed. At present there are twelve such visual inventories. Selected copies from the inventories are also added to the vertical file for researchers interested in a particular subject as opposed to the work of one photographer.

Incoming and previously acquired but unorganized bodies of photographs are now being arranged and described in such a way as to preserve and

reflect provenance. A new accession record devised by Jerry Davison ensures that information necessary in accurately describing photographic fonds is captured. For instance, a note must be made in the accession record as to whether the original order of a fonds was maintained or whether an artificial order has been imposed. If a new order has been created, the archivist filling out the accession record must state the nature of the new order: by subject, geographic, record type or chronological. If photographs were transferred from another Division within the PABC or if any textual material found in a predominately photographic fonds was transferred elsewhere, detailed information describing the transaction is also required on the accession form. The accession record also contains areas for the recording of information on provenance, the format of the photographs in the fonds and on the overall subject content of the fonds. The information on provenance, which includes the birth and death dates or operation dates of the creator(s), principal occupation or activity and principal residence(s) or locations(s), can later be used in compiling biographical sketches or administrative histories. The description of the fonds should be entered on the accession record according to the rules contained in AACR2. A number of the accession records are now in machine-readable form and in future it should be possible to generate guide entries from the descriptive area of the accession records.

Using a microcomputer and dBase III, the staff of the VRD are also automating biographical sketches and administrative histories which, when combined with accession record information will form the introduction to standard archival inventories on photographic fonds. The subject

description in the accession record will act as the scope and content note to a fonds. The list of contents attached to the inventory will be at the subgroup or series level or at some other filing-unit level. What is missing from this plan is a series, or an equivalent unit, description. There are several possible explanations for this omission, the most likely being that series will, in many cases, be artificially established by the archivist. Thus the series will not shed great light on the activities of the creator nor bear any interrelationship that needs to be expressed in the inventory. The subject content of such photographic fonds and their series can be summarized in the scope and content note.

It is this enduring emphasis on the subject content of photographic fonds which continues to align photographic archivists with the dwindling body of manuscript curators who maintain provenance as a means of dealing with large aggregates of documents, but who feel that informational value or subject content are more relevant to users than provenance-related information. When asked about future plans to index the fonds-level descriptions and inventories at the VRD, Davison stressed that subject indexing was being considered. Provenance indexing, a concept Davison was not fully familiar with, did not seem relevant from his perspective. However, before the VRD creates an authority file or does any more work in preparing to index its holdings, Davison is awaiting the publication of the Canadian Working Group's subcommittee report on indexing. If the subcommittee addresses the issue of provenance indexing, all Canadian archivists, including those in charge of photographic archives, may find themselves reconsidering their approach to indexing. Davison firmly



believes that photographic archives should be arranged and described no differently from textual fonds. This being the case, his possible future adoption of provenance indexing of photographic fonds could provide other archivists with a valuable case-study.

#### SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Through the use of a mainframe computer the subject indexing of its photographic holdings is the prime objective of the Simon Fraser University Archives. The SFU Archives accessions negatives and contact print sheets from three campus agencies, University News Service (UNS), Instructional Media Centre (IMC) and the Peak, the student newspaper. The acquisition of photographs documenting the history of Burnaby, the municipality in which the university is located, is outside of the mandate of the SFU Archives. Provenance and original order are maintained in the physical arrangement of the negatives and contact prints generated by the UNS, IMC, and the Peak, but intellectual access, through the use of the computer, is structured in such a way as to emphasize subject content of items or groups of related frames found on part or on the whole of a roll of camera film. At present the SFU Archives houses over 7000 images dating since the founding of the university in the mid 1960s. At any time there are usually fewer than 300 images described on paper but waiting to have their description input into the computer. The intellectual and physical control of the photographic images held by the SFU Archives is under the direction of the University Archivist, Don Baird.

Photographers for the UNS, IMC and the Peak routinely submit their rolls of film and corresponding contact sheets to the University Archives. The rolls of film are cut to fit negative sleeves and arranged in file cabinets by provenance, that is, there is a separate set of drawers for images generated by each agency. Internal arrangement is chronological based on the date on which the images were taken and by the number of each individual frame. The contact sheets produced by each agency are also maintained separately in black binders and arranged by date and frame number.

Until 1986, the staff of the University Archives filled out a Photographic Subject Inventory Form (PSIF) to describe the subject content of individual frames or groups of frames on incoming rolls of negative; after 1986, the photographers for the UNS, IMC and the Peak have been required to fill out the PSIF themselves. In determining subject content, the photographers of contributing agencies are provided with an updated list of subject headings produced by the University Archives. The authority list is based on the form but not necessarily the content of the Library of Congress Subject Headings.<sup>10</sup> The subject terms chosen by the photographers become the keywords used in indexing the images. A short, descriptive title for an image or group of related images is also created by the photographers but need not conform to any particular standard so long as information on the event and location are included. The numbering system used by each agency varies but the date on which the images were taken must comprise the first few digits of the control number entered on the inventory form. The University Archives uses the numbering system of each agency as an accession

number. This also makes it possible to search for images by date on the computer. Indeed, any of the fields contained in the PSIF is searchable on the computer. Using Report Generator software, the computer can also produce printouts ordered by any of the fields contained in the PSIF. However, the main printout of over six-hundred pages for use in the reference room is alphabetical by subject.

The University Archives has not produced separate printouts by provenance or source; photographs taken by the Peak, UNS and the IMC are intermingled in the printout by subject. Nor has the University Archives prepared any documentation describing the administrative histories of the Peak, UNS and IMC. Staff at the University Archives have never perceived any need for administrative histories because researchers invariably make subject requests. To date, no researcher has entered the University Archives with the aim of studying the activities of the Peak, for instance, or the work of any of the various photographers contributing on behalf of the Peak, IMC or UNS. In the latter instance, the Photographic Subject Inventory Form does not include a field where the photographer can identify him or herself. If the photographer wishes to be acknowledged, he or she must write his or her name on the contact sheets.<sup>19</sup> Should any of the photographers for the various agencies contributing to the University Archives become distinguished later in career, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to identify that person's work held by the Archives.

One of the most important factors considered by the staff of the University Archives in determining a method of describing their photographic holdings was that of cost efficiency. The original computer programming for

the photographic indexing project was undertaken by a student working under the direction of Don Baird and paid, primarily, through a government sponsored Challenge '84 program. Once the photographers of the contributing agencies began filling out their own inventory forms, it was possible for the University Archives to hire more students under Work/Study and Challenge programs to input the data from the inventory forms into the computer. From the standpoint of cost efficiency relative to the item and group indexing of photographs, the system at the Simon Fraser University Archives is successful. Due to the relatively small number of images held by the Archives and the slow but steady increment of new images, it should be possible for the University Archives to continue its indexing program indefinitely.

#### JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The mandate of the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia (JHSBC) is to acquire textual and nontextual archives generated by Jewish individuals or organizations or materials documenting the history of Jews in British Columbia and the Yukon. Following on this, the Society has acquired two separate bodies of photographs: the Leonard Frank-Otto Landauer Collection, generated by two Jewish commercial photographers and covering the general history of the province from the late 1890s up to 1980; and the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia Photograph Collection, an artificial accumulation of prints and negatives focusing on the lives of Jewish pioneers on the Pacific Coast and dating from 1858 to the present.

The way in which these photographic bodies came into being and other factors such as volume have informed the methods used in their arrangement and description. The Leonard Frank-Otto Landauer Collection of approximately 24,000 images was approached in the same manner as an archival textual fonds would be. The 3,000 images in the JHSBC Photograph Collection, many of which have been published, have been arranged and described as discrete items and the descriptive information entered into a microcomputer using GENCAT (GENeric CATaloguing) software. At the time that these projects were undertaken, Barbi Hollenberg was the Executive Director of the JHSBC and the author of this thesis was working as an archivist for the Society. Cyril Leonoff is the current Archivist and Executive Director of the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia.

The Leonard Frank-Otto Landauer Collection was acquired by the JHSBC in November of 1985 but due to space and staff shortages it was not until March of 1986 that work on the physical and intellectual control of the fonds could begin. After a visit from and consultations with Lilly Koltun, then Chief of the Research and Acquisition Section, National Photography Collection, Public Archives of Canada, the JHSBC decided to adopt the methods used by the NPC in describing photographic images at the item level. This work was begun by staff members and taken over by volunteers in the summer of 1986. By the autumn of 1986, however, work on listing individual items on an accession record and the creation of descriptive catalogue entries fell off due to a continual problem with lack of work space for volunteers. A heavy work load prevented staff members from resuming the cataloguing of the Frank-Landauer Collection after the departure of the

volunteers. Having foreseen that the cataloguing of the items in the Frank-Landauer Collection would take over a year to complete, although not foreseeing the virtual abandonment of this project, the JHSBC decided that the Collection should be described at the fonds and series level in the interim. Work on an archival preliminary inventory was therefore also begun in the summer of 1986. Today the preliminary inventory still acts as the main tool providing intellectual access to the Frank-Landauer Collection.

After considering the physical arrangement of the Collection as it arrived at the JHSBC and bearing in mind the available work space in the office and other restraints such as a total lack of archival sleeves for prints and negatives and record boxes for storage, it was deemed temporarily undesirable and even impossible to reconstruct the original order of the Collection. Otto Landauer, who had bought Leonard Frank's photograph studio shortly after Frank's death in 1944, had rearranged Frank's and his own photographs by subject content thereby disregarding Frank's numerical system and even his own numerical system which began with the next number after Frank's last. The images in the Collection were and still are contained in boxes originally used to house unexposed print paper and each of these boxes contains 50 to 100 prints and/or negatives generated by either Frank or Landauer. After Landauer arranged the photographs in these boxes, he labeled the outside according to subject content. The JHSBC office measures approximately two hundred square feet in which four employees, volunteers and the textual and nontextual holdings of the Society must coexist; a project as large as the reorganization of 24,000 photographs would have monopolized the time of the entire staff and taken up all available work

space. Moreover, after the photographs had been restored to their original order based on the numbering system used by Frank and Landauer, they would have had to be returned to their original boxes because funds were not available for proper storage materials. This would have meant the duplication of effort and the rehandling of all the images once storage sleeves and boxes became available. Instead, the hope was that the completion of the item-level accession record would provide a means of identifying where each image could be found, by number, and at a later date, with sleeves and record boxes on hand, the accession record could be used to reassemble the Collection without as much confusion. Two years later, this has yet to pass.

In surveying the contents of each box in the Frank-Landauer Collection it became clear that most boxes contained photographs whose subject content was not included in the subject-title devised by Landauer. Nor did the arrangement of the boxes or their subject content make it possible to spot distinct series. The boxes are, in fact, similar to file-folders contained in a large subject file. This is how they were treated in the preliminary inventory. During the descriptive process, the title of each box was recorded on an index card, the index cards were then arranged alphabetically and each card and corresponding box given a number. A brief description of the contents of each box was then entered on the appropriate card noting inclusive dates, the physical format of the images in each box, the name(s) of the photographer(s) whose work was present in the box (Frank and/or Landauer) and other subjects represented in the images but not covered by the broad subject-title used by Landauer. Before the various subjects were

noted, an authority list of subject headings was devised, based on the subject headings used by the Vancouver Public Library, Historical Photographs Section, so that some consistency would exist in a final subject index. The list of boxes in the preliminary inventory is arranged alphabetically by the subject terms chosen by Landauer and each entry includes the information taken down on the index cards pertaining to box number, inclusive dates of the images, photographer's name and physical format. The subject index following the inventory resembles an index to a book, simply giving a subject term and a reference to one or more boxes. The preliminary inventory also includes an introduction which gives an overview of the Collection, extensive biographies on Leonard Frank and Otto Landauer, an administrative history of Leonard Frank Photos (the studio established by Frank and purchased by Landauer), a scope and content note, and a note on arrangement and description.<sup>20</sup>

The final, practical test, of course, was whether the system would work. Over the past two years the preliminary inventory has allowed staff to locate specific images requested by researchers both quickly and accurately. This is done by linking verbal descriptions of photographs sought by users with possible box titles listed in the inventory. The search can then be further delimited by determining whether the researcher is interested in a Frank or Landauer photograph and the approximate date of the image in question. Researchers interested in broad topics, such as the logging industry in British Columbia, local architectural history, shipping, native life in British Columbia and so forth have also found the preliminary inventory provides adequate intellectual access to the Frank-Landauer



Collection. For instance, the subject index to the preliminary inventory directs researchers interested in Indians to fifteen boxes containing relevant images.

Despite the successful use of the Frank-Landauer Collection inventory, members of the Board of the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia remained skeptical and felt that patrons of the Society should be able to search for and find one particular image without having to undertake research involving the study of aggregates of images. They stressed, therefore, that at least the JHSBC Photograph Collection, in constant use by members of the Jewish community, should be described at the item level. The approximately 3,000 images in this Collection were acquired individually or in groups by Cyril Leonoff during his trips throughout the province. The bulk of the images are originals although a sizeable portion are copy prints. The origin of the images varies: prints, negatives and copy prints may have been acquired from private individuals, families, Jewish organizations or copied from the holdings of other archival repositories such as the Vancouver City Archives. As the Collection was being amassed, it was stored in Mr. Leonoff's home and arranged, to some extent, by subject. Once the Collection arrived at the JHSBC office, lack of space prevented any attempt at re-establishing and expanding on the existing subject classes. When this project was undertaken in the early winter of 1987, the staff knew that the Society would soon be purchasing a microcomputer. This meant that subject access could be achieved through the search capacity of the computer's software, GENCAT, and that the arrangement of the images could be through the arbitrary assignment of numbers from one

to three thousand, making sure that negatives bore the same number as their corresponding prints. Thus, as staff members involved in the project described a photograph, it was assigned the next number in the sequence. The JHSBC Photograph Collection is not a closed collection and therefore items will continue to be added. Sequential numbering allows these images to be added without problem.

Using information supplied by Mr. Leonoff on each photograph, manual descriptions were compiled according to the following fields: item number, caption, description, year, number of prints and negatives held on each image, and subject headings to be used in subject indexing. The description field was used to provide additional information that did not belong in the caption field, such as photographer's name. The year of each photograph was given only when it was known or when an approximate date could be established. Hence, the description field and the date field were not always used. Subject terms to be entered in the subject-indexing field were chosen from an authority file built up during the course of the project. This led, in a number of instances, to inconsistencies and the need to review all the manual records to ensure conformity with the final authority list. After all the images had been described on cards, the information was entered into the computer.

GENCAT software was originally designed for use in libraries and fields within each record can be designed to correspond to any bibliographic standard such as AACR2. The staff did not refer to AACR2 in determining the fields to be used in describing the items in the JHSBC Photograph Collections for several reasons. The overriding factor was that the

majority of the staff members involved in the project had no prior knowledge of or experience in applying AACR2. At the time, moreover, the staff had not recognized the need to follow a standard format in describing the Society's holdings. Thought was given only to the dissemination of hardcopy printouts to other repositories, such as the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives in Montreal. However, since the CJC National Archives also has a microcomputer, laying the groundwork for an automated network, starting with the JHSBC Photograph Collection, would have been feasible.

As can be observed through this look at the methods of organizing/arranging and cataloging/describing photographs in libraries and archival and historical society repositories, each institution has formulated its own system. On occasion, aspects of one system resemble aspects of other systems, but for the most part, any resemblance is purely coincidental. With no accepted standards to be followed, institutions have developed systems in isolation based on user needs, the availability of financial and human resources, the volume of photographs to be controlled and the extent of backlog. Guiding principles and practices from the library and archival professions are abandoned, adapted or adopted, given the particular situation. In the case of the Vancouver Public Library, Historical Photographs Section, the Vancouver City Archives, the Public Archives of British Columbia, Visual Records Division, the Simon Fraser University Archives and the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia, there has been a somewhat uneasy transition or interchange between the use of library and archival practices. On the positive side, all the manual and automated systems in use at the various institutions analyzed here provide

users with a measure of intellectual access, although often at the expense of the integrity of organic bodies of photographic archives.

## ENDNOTES

1. The original interviews took place in the spring of 1986 with subsequent interviews taking place in April and May of 1988.

2. Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler et al., Archives and Manuscripts: Administration of Photographic Archives (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1984), 43.

3. See, Barbara M. Westby, ed., Sears List of Subject Headings, 9th edition (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1965); Public Archives of Canada, Descriptive and Subject Cataloguing at the National Photography Collection (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1984).

4. See, Ron D'Altroy, "An Effective Photographic Archives," Museum Round-up 32 (October 1968): 14-20.

5. Ibid., 17.

6. Library of Congress, Subject Cataloging Division, Library of Congress Subject Headings 2 vols. 10th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1986).

7. Alain Clavet, Explanatory Notes for the Description of the Holdings and Collections in Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1979), 3.

8. Ibid., 10-11.

9. William C. McKee, "Vancouver City Archives: Some Additional Sources for Labour History," Archivaria 4 (Summer 1977): 177.

10. Vancouver City Archives, "Photographic Procedures Manual," (Unpublished manual, Vancouver City Archives, ca. 1981), Part V, 1-3.

11. Ibid., Part I, 1.

12. Ibid., Part I, 5.

13. Ibid., Part I, 6-7.

14. Ibid., Part II, ?.

15. Ibid., Part II, 5.

16. Ibid., Part III, 1.

17. David Mattison, "Cataloguing Historical Photographs: Report," (Unpublished report, Victoria, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1988), 1-2.

18. Paula Yalpani, "The SFU Archives Automated Photographs Index: A Guide to the Inventory, Data Entry, Computer Files and On-line Searching," (Unpublished manual, Burnaby, Simon Fraser University Archives, 1984), 3.

19. Ibid., 2.

20. See, Linda Cobon, "'Professors of the Black Box with the Magic Eye: Leonard Frank and Otto Landauer of Leonard Frank Photos, Vancouver, British Columbia," (Unpublished inventory, Vancouver, Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia, 1986).

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

In 1945, an American archivist by the name of Gaston Litton reviewed an article, written in Spanish for an Argentinian journal, regarding the photographic archives held by the Instituto de Investigaciones Historicas of Buenos Aires. Litton enjoyed the article but felt that, even if translated, the article would generate little interest in North America because of the author's "disproportionate emphasis...given to indexes, registers, and other controls over the [photographic] collections...." Litton felt that what was needed was a lengthier discussion on conservation techniques and on the types and subject content of photographs held by the Instituto. As it was, Litton judged the article as "less than half a loaf and serves more to stimulate than to satiate one's hunger" for information on photographic archives.<sup>1</sup>

Not much has changed in the past forty years. A survey of the professional literature reveals that, until very recently, archivists have either ignored photographs, worried about the conservation aspect, considered photographs in terms of their informational value as discrete items, or concentrated on "visual literacy" and the interpretation of photographs. Journal articles discussing bodies of organically generated photographs as being archival in nature are a phenomenon of the past eight to ten years. The concept of photographs as archives is so new as not to have been accepted by all archivists in North America. From Litton's time

through until today, a large number of archivists have been glad to turn to librarians and library journals for advice on the physical and intellectual control of photographs.

Librarians, for their part, have also viewed photographs as "special" and therefore not amenable to standard arrangement schemes and bibliographic formats used in cataloguing textual materials, such as books. At the same time, it is true that the various physical forms which photographs may take, the fact that they are usually unpublished and therefore bear no identification for descriptive purposes, and the special conservation needs of photographs have made them a difficult resource to organize and catalogue, index and retrieve. Librarians, as a consequence, have preferred to create ad hoc systems for the physical and intellectual control of photographic images. It was also felt that this was the best way to reflect the unique nature of the photographs held by an institution. Since a photograph is considered virtually useless without a caption, the emphasis of librarians and archivists has been on description at the item level.

As archivists and librarians continued to devise various systems based on library practices for the control of discrete photographic images, enormous backlogs and changing research needs of users forced a change in approach. The literature indicates that members of both professions began arranging and describing lots or groups of photographs with similar subject content. From here it was not too far a step to the idea that provenance and original order might be applicable and even useful in arranging and describing organic bodies of photographs. Yet like manuscript curators, archivists and librarians dealing with photographic archives have been



reluctant to abandon the description of fonds by subject content, more particularly, by the subject content of outstanding and historically valuable items found within a body or fonds of photographs. The description of units or series within a photographic fonds and an analysis of how these series or units reflect the activities and functions of the creator(s), thereby also revealing subject content, is not a widespread practice. The reason may well be that archivists have experienced trouble in identifying series or other describable units within bodies of photographs. If they must impose an order, it most likely will be by subject and/or format. The arrangement of photographs using archival principles and practices is one area urgently in need of investigation and discussion in the professional literature.

Another reason for the tendency to describe the subject content of photographic fonds is that bibliographic formats devised by librarians, such as AACR2 and Elisabeth Betz's Graphic Materials encourage this approach. The introduction of automation and its promise of allowing a wholesale return to the item-level control of archives also promoted subject analysis and subject indexing; once an archival document is divorced from its context, it will invariably be described by subject content. The MARC AMC format, developed by librarians and archivists for the automated description of archival fonds retains an emphasis on subject indexing, as well. Archivists and librarians dealing with all forms of archival material, textual and nontextual, will have to address this issue and ensure that some means of describing archives by provenance, particularly indexing by provenance, is devised in the not too distant future for use with manual and

automated systems.

Although photographic archives may require some special attention in the areas of identifying descriptive units within fonds and indexing by provenance to reveal the functions and activities of the creators, this should not mean that the overall approach to photographic archives should be different from the approach to textual archives. When the various subcommittees created to follow up the recommendations of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards submit their final reports, it will be interesting to see whether photographs have retained a special status or whether they have been accepted as part of "the archival family" in every sense.

Through a survey of practices and methodologies used in the organization/arrangement and cataloguing/description of photographs in libraries and archival repositories in the Vancouver area and Victoria one can see that the problems and issues raised in the professional literature are common to all professionals working in this area. As long as librarians and archivists are faced with only a small number of photographs, perhaps up to 10,000 images, they seem quite content to devise any method that allows for item-level control and easy access by researchers. The librarians at the New Westminster Public Library, for example, have no qualms about their methods of organization and description of photographs. The system in use at the NWPL is relatively simple for the librarians to maintain and meets the research needs of users. The methods used in arranging and describing the relatively small number of photographs held by the Simon Fraser University Archives are also derived more from librarianship than archival

theory and practices. The staff of the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia felt compelled to organize and describe their photographs as discrete items whether or not the images belonged to an artificial collection or an organically created fonds. Only volume prevented the JHSBC from arranging and describing the Leonard Frank-Otto Landauer Collection at the item level. Other institutions, such as the Vancouver Public Library, Historical Photographs Section, the Vancouver City Archives, and the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Visual Records Division began with methods of organization and description based on library practices and emphasizing item-level control, but found the volume of photographs acquired over the years meant that their systems had to be altered, tinkered with or finally abandoned. It is unclear whether thoughts about using archival practices in these institutions were entertained because they were perceived as being appropriate or merely expedient. With time, archivists and librarians have, indeed, convinced themselves of the appropriateness of provenance and original order, but the actual application of archival practices has not proven an easy task. Bodies of photographs are different in some respects from textual archives but there is never any guarantee that documents within archival fonds, textual or nontextual, will fall into easily identifiable series or equivalent units of arrangement and description. Finding series or units of description have caused problems for professionals at the Vancouver Public Library, Vancouver City Archives, Provincial Archives of British Columbia and the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia. The result has been that some form of usable unit of description, usually based on subject, is resorted to. It may take a period

of experimentation and trial and error before librarians and archivists are able to find suitable means of applying archival principles to photographic fonds. Archivists and librarians at nearly all the institutions visited were usually self-critical, hesitant and even defensive in discussing their methods of dealing with photographs, but without their pioneering efforts, all progress in this area would be impeded.

The movement toward the use of archival principles and practices in the intellectual and physical control of photographs will not mean the demise or eradication of techniques devised by librarians in organizing and cataloguing photographs at the item level. There will always be a need to deal with some photographs on an item-by-item basis, such as in small artificial collections, used by general members of the public interested in browsing or finding one image in particular. Small, historically important photographic fonds, described first at the fonds level, will, in all likelihood, continue to be described at the item level, as well. The librarians' approach to artificial groups or lots of photographs, stressing organization and cataloguing by subject content, will also remain valid. What has begun to change is the approach toward organically generated bodies of photographs that can truly be identified as being archival. In many institutions, two systems, one based on library methodology, and one based on archival principles and practices, exist side-by-side. The trend seems to be maintaining or even creating a vertical file or visual-card catalogue to service one group of users while also arranging photographic fonds by provenance and original order and describing these fonds in inventories for use by researchers interested in viewing aggregates of photographic images

or in studying the lives or activities of the creators of photographic  
fonds.

#### ENDNOTE

1. Gaston Litton, "Review of Organizacion y Objectives del Archivo Grafico de la Nacion, by Sergio Chiappori, Subdirector of the archivo (Buenos Aires. Talleres S.A. Peuser Lda., 1944, pp.27. Reprint)," American Archivist 8, 2 (April 1945): 150.

## APPENDIX

### THE PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL CONTROL OF PHOTOGRAPHS -A QUESTIONNAIRE-

1. Name of repository/library\_\_\_\_\_
2. Address\_\_\_\_\_
3. Person in charge of photographs\_\_\_\_\_
4. Training\_\_\_\_\_
5. Other staff members in photo section\_\_\_\_\_
6. Size/extent of photographic holdings\_\_\_\_\_
7. Year photo collection/section established (brief history)\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### ARRANGEMENT

1. Rules on provenance\_\_\_\_\_
2. Rules on original order\_\_\_\_\_
3. Rules on creating artificial collections\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Criteria in creating subgroups\_\_\_\_\_
  - series\_\_\_\_\_
  - subseries\_\_\_\_\_
  - files\_\_\_\_\_
  - other filing units\_\_\_\_\_
5. Physical location of negatives\_\_\_\_\_
  - oversized materials\_\_\_\_\_
  - fragile materials\_\_\_\_\_
  - photos found in manuscript collections/record groups\_\_\_\_\_

## PHYSICAL/INTELLECTUAL CONTROL

1. Accession register/log (type of information included) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Worksheets, checklists used \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Nature of pre-existing finding aids \_\_\_\_\_
4. Components of inventories  
Introduction \_\_\_\_\_  
Biographical Sketch/Administrative History \_\_\_\_\_  
Scope and Content Note \_\_\_\_\_  
Series Description \_\_\_\_\_  
Container Listing \_\_\_\_\_  
Series Listing \_\_\_\_\_  
File Listing \_\_\_\_\_  
Item Listing \_\_\_\_\_  
Index \_\_\_\_\_  
Other information included \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Cataloguing (collection, fonds or item level(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
i) Descriptive cataloguing (AACR2?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ii) Subject Headings (Library of Congress Subject Headings?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
iii) Indexing (criteria used, depth of cross referencing etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Other findings aids (descriptions of)  
Microforms \_\_\_\_\_  
Computerized lists \_\_\_\_\_  
Guides \_\_\_\_\_  
Inclusion in Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives \_\_\_\_\_  
Other indexes (accession number, negative number, photographer's name) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Authority files in use and manuals/reference aids consulted in creating these files \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Organization of visual catalogue \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Organization of vertical file \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



10. Literature consulted in creating visual catalogue/vertical file \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

1. Previous methods used in arranging and describing collections, fonds or items \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Extent of images actually under physical and intellectual control \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Problems with exiting system \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Which finding aids are most frequently used by researchers \_\_\_\_\_  
By staff \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Published finding aids \_\_\_\_\_

6. Automation (possibility of, priorities, foreseeable impact on current practices) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. If the repository/library is automated, what kind of hardware and software are in use, which finding aids have been automated, problems encountered, etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
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8. Other comments \_\_\_\_\_  
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