

General Inventory. Manuscripts. Volume 2 (MG11-MG16) Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1976.

This is the fourth volume to be published in the PAC's new multi-volume *Inventory of Manuscripts*.¹ It supercedes the earlier *Preliminary Inventories*, which appeared between 1951 and 1967. In general the present series provides more information about manuscript collections, while supplying references both to the appropriate finding aids available in the PAC, and, where needed to microfilm reel numbers. This last point is of particular interest as such reels, in most cases, can be borrowed through the inter-library loan system. All this material in the first four volumes has been acquired by gift, purchase or by copying from originals elsewhere.

Copying material in foreign repositories constitutes the most rapidly growing element in the pre-1867 manuscript group collection; and Volume 2 is wholly concerned with such material. It contains manuscripts copied from the Public Record Office in London. Each group of documents is introduced by a long explanatory essay by the archivists responsible: Colonial Office by Peter Bower, Admiralty and War Office by Dr. Carl Christie, Audit Office and Treasury by J. Patricia Birkett and Foreign Office by Gary Maunder. These excellent essays, providing the administrative history of the departments, ought to be read first before the papers themselves are consulted. The editors provide as well detailed descriptions of each class of documents included under these departmental headings, and make special references to individual volumes. As an example, for CO221 (Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, Miscellanea), Bower notes that vols. 28-35 include shipping returns for Nova Scotia, 1730-65, 1811-20 and for Cape Breton, 1785-1815, but that the returns for Nova Scotia in 1766 are found elsewhere in CO217/44. Such refinements are of considerable value.

Eighteenth century Nova Scotia and Cape Breton scholars should note that this *Inventory* makes no reference to material collected largely at the PRO in London for the Fortress Louisbourg project, under the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. This large collection of material is available on microfilm both at Louisbourg and at the PAC, and for the most part is different from the MSS included here. At the moment these Louisbourg MSS are being reclassified and probably will become part of the new manuscript group MG40.

From this volume it is clear that the heavy emphasis has been to copy Colonial Office, Admiralty and War Office material, while the other departments have been rather neglected. Certainly there is much 'Canadian' material to be found in such series as AO1 and T1 as well as BT6, and their neglect cannot really be understood, unless the whole policy of copying abroad is raised for discussion.

With historians now having at their disposal adequate research funds to undertake research abroad and anywhere in Canada, the wisdom of the PAC's collecting abroad should perhaps be reconsidered. For instance, might it be more useful to have the PAC take the initiative and prepare a *Guide to Canadian Manuscripts in Foreign Repositories*? Such a guide would obviously focus especially on France, Great Britain, Ireland and the USA, but it need not stop there. Recent work has shown that Spanish and the Vatican archives as well as the archives of religious orders in Rome have much of interest to Canadian historians. Canadian

¹ Vol. 1 (1971) listed MSS copied in French archives; Vol. 3 (1974) contained ecclesiastical archives, pre-1760 papers, fur trade and Indian documents, Hudson's Bay company papers, as well as transcripts and microfilms from the British Library (formerly Museum), Vol. 4 (1972) included autograph and genealogical collections and documents between 1760 and 1867.

immigration history could profit greatly from guides to 'Canadian' material in those European countries from which so-called 'ethnic' Canadians have come. For Great Britain is it still wise to concentrate so heavily on the PRO? A perusal of the collections indexed by the National Registry of Archives (London) shows at once how much fascinating materials outside the PRO largely remains unused by Canadian scholars. Such a guide might also at last induce historians of Canada to make far greater use of repositories in the USA, a rich and still largely neglected resource despite the proximity of so many of the best archives. If such a guide is contemplated or if an expanded collecting policy is decided upon interested historians should be prepared, if consulted, to lend their advice and support.

Julian GWYN,
University of Ottawa.

* * *

Inventory of Manuscripts in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. Halifax: 1976.

The province of Nova Scotia, with a records commissioner first appointed in 1857, boasts the longest continuous archival organization in Canada. With this inventory it becomes the first provincial archives to publish a modern one-volume guide to its holdings. It is in every way an excellent publication; and students of Nova Scotia history are very much in the debt of the provincial archivist and his colleagues, named in the preface, for their enormous labour.

The P.A.N.S. collection is broadly divided into Record Groups and Manuscript Groups, each introduced briefly and followed by a detailed volume-by-volume description of the contents. For instance, MG1 (Papers of Families and Individuals) lists alphabetically all the families for whom papers exist, describes the contents of each collection, notes its length and supplies the reference. This occupies pp. 403-568, or almost one-quarter of the entire guide. Doubtless this is justified by the numerous genealogical inquiries made at the archives by the general public. In addition, very usefully, this inventory identifies which volumes of documents have been published, as is the case, for instance, of certain eighteenth century census returns and executive council minutes. Equally valuable are the references to finding aids, not published here, but available at the P.A.N.S. itself. It should be noted that the material in this inventory includes documents either transcribed or microfilmed elsewhere, especially from the Public Archives in London, but also occasionally in USA archives.

It is perhaps unfortunate that a general index was not prepared. Let me illustrate this by making reference to the 'poor.' Only after a time was I able to discover that RG 35 (Elective Municipal Government) contains the relevant series, entitled 'Charities and the Poor including County Hospitals.' Once there it was simple to discover that such records survive only for the counties of Halifax, Hants (East), Kings and Shelburne (pp. 252-315).

We can now hope that the P.A.N.S. will prepare a general guide to the manuscripts relating to Nova Scotia history in Canada, Great Britain, Ireland and the USA. In view of the current renaissance in Nova Scotia historiography, such a project would be as valuable as this excellent inventory now available.

Julian GWYN,
University of Ottawa.