

Archives Notes: Recent Accessions at the Provincial Archives

The Provincial Archives of British Columbia (PABC) has long been recognized as one of the most important sources for the study of the province. The oldest archive in western Canada, it is the principal repository for historical manuscripts, government records and publications relating to B.C. and the Pacific Northwest. The PABC also maintains important collections of maps, architectural drawings, sound recordings, motion picture films and video tapes, as well as historic photographs and art works.

Despite budgetary constraints, the Archives acquired and processed a substantial volume of records in 1982 and 1983. Many of the records which have recently been catalogued will provide scholars with new avenues of research. Other records which have been made available during the past year will provide researchers with the opportunity to re-examine traditional topics within the fields of social, political and economic history.

Among the newly acquired government records, the Premiers' Papers (GP 1222) are especially significant. This unit, which runs to almost forty linear metres, covers the period from 1934 to 1952. It comprises three records series — *viz.* departmental files (consisting of correspondence between the premiers, cabinet ministers and senior civil servants on such topics as education, public works and unemployment); federal files (dealing with Indian affairs, immigration, veterans' programs and other federal-provincial matters); and general files (dealing with topics such as rural electrification and flood relief which were of local concern). GR 1222 also includes records pertaining to the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (1917-1945), cabinet briefs, petitions, press releases and applications for employment. Researchers will find this unit an invaluable source for the study of the Tolmie and Pattullo administrations and the coalition governments of Premiers Hart and Johnson. It will also be of value to those interested in the Depression and organized labour, coast defence, transportation, education and post-war industrial development.

Other notable new accessions include Library Services Branch records (GR 1387), which chronicle the establishment and growth of regional libraries between 1919 and 1979, and the records of the Supreme Court probate division (GR 1052), consisting of all wills probated in British Columbia between 1861 and 1941. Noteworthy, too, are the Survey and Lands Record Branch files (1871-1981) recently transferred to the PABC. Consisting of the 1871, the 1912 and the "O" files series, these records contain a wealth of information on the administration, management, conservation and development of Crown lands and the province's natural resources. Still other government records, previously available at the PABC, have been effectively reorganized and, in some cases, re-catalogued. Such records include inquests (1859-1937) and correspondence files (1902-1937) from the Department of Attorney-General; official despatches of the Lieutenant-Governor (1871-1936), and minutes and correspondence of the Executive Council (1869-1913). Detailed finding aids have now been prepared for all of these records.

In the area of private manuscripts, the PABC has added several important collections which may be of interest to students of forestry and technology. The records of Western Forest Industries, for example, provide a comprehensive picture of a logging company's operations at Cowichan Lake from 1948 to 1981. Over thirty-six metres in extent, this unit may also be of interest to environmentalists, labour historians and business historians. Similarly, the records of Sweeney Cooperage, Labatt's Breweries and the Albert Lumber Company (Vancouver) may provide useful case studies for researchers working in business history and related disciplines. Indeed, business historians have been very well served by the PABC this year, following the acquisition of the K. R. Genn collection (Add. MSS. 1950). This large and diverse collection of accountancy records includes the correspondence and financial statements of the B.C. Cattle Company (1867-1934), the Esquimalt Water Works Company (1887-1930) and literally scores of smaller businesses, ranging from cigar manufacturers in the 1890s to automobile dealers in the 1920s. In addition, the Genn collection contains records of various service clubs, athletic organizations, charitable institutes and schools.

One of the schools documented in the Genn collection is St. Margaret's, Victoria, a girls' school established in 1912. This portion of the Genn collection was particularly welcomed, since the Archives recently acquired a number of other historical papers from St. Margaret's School. The PABC has, in fact, launched a concerted campaign to preserve the records of the province's independent schools — a campaign which last

year led to the acquisition of records from Qualicum College (1935-1970) and Queen Margaret's School, Duncan (1914-1972). The PABC was fortunate, too, in being able to microfilm a large number of records from Shawnigan Lake School for boys (1916-1981). These and other private school records held by the PABC should be of considerable value to sociologists, to those interested in the effects of British immigration and, of course, to students of the history of education in the province.

Architectural historians, in turn, will likely be interested in the Peter Cotton Collection (Add. MSS. 1336). The records of one of B.C.'s most distinguished architects were recently donated to the PABC. A sumptuous collection — visually and intellectually — it includes project files, business and personal correspondence, photographs, technical drawings and sketches relating to Cotton's interest in interior design, preservation technology and heritage conservation. Also acquired were several original drawings by F. M. Rattenbury. The latter (which are to be found in the PABC's Library & Maps Section) depict the Legislative Library and the east and west wings of the parliament buildings.

Smaller, but no less interesting collections, include the papers of A. G. Harvey (1884-1950), the Vancouver alderman and historian, who was a leading authority on the origin of B.C. place names; the Hamilton M. Laing papers (Add. MSS. 1900) concerning natural history; and the papers of B.C.'s Chief Forester, Ian T. Cameron (Add. MSS. 1417). Valuable, too, are the personal and political papers of Robert M. Strachan (Add. MSS. 1291), the provincial CCF/NDP leader and former Minister of Transport and Communications. These papers (presented to the PABC by Strachan's widow) shed considerable light on the organization of the CCF in the 1950s and on the leadership struggles within the provincial New Democratic Party in the 1960s. Notes, correspondence and caucus minutes included in the Strachan papers also provide insights into the operation of the Barrett government in the early 1970s.

In addition to the above, the papers of Allan Klenman were added to the PABC's manuscripts collection. The Klenman papers relate to early radio broadcasting in B.C. and may be regarded as an adjunct to material collected by the Archives' Sound & Moving Image division. This division accessioned a number of broadcast-related records last year, including 1940s transcription disks from radio station CHWK Chilliwack. Also accessioned were tapes recorded for oral history projects on provincial folk-lore (*Tall Tales of British Columbia*), and on guides and outfitters in the Canadian Rockies, along with tapes from the Cominco

Labour Project, the Coal Tye Project (on Nanaimo collieries) and the intriguingly entitled "Behind the Kitchen Door" project (on the history of domestic food preparation in B.C.). The PABC's Sound & Moving Image division has, moreover, been closely involved with Dennis J. Duffy's important filmography — a project which, when completed later this year, will provide researchers with a descriptive inventory of all films produced in British Columbia between 1941 and 1965.

Finally, attention should be drawn to historical material accessioned recently by the Archives' Visual Records division. Notable additions include photographic albums of Victoria businessman and horticulturalist F. B. Pemberton and his sister, the artist Sophia Pemberton, plus a number of Emily Carr-related items. Acquired from the descendants of Hudson's Bay Company Governor Sir George Simpson were several sketches depicting Fort Vancouver, Fort Astoria and other fur posts in the late 1820s. Perhaps the single most outstanding addition to the PABC's documentary art collection, though, is a painting by William Ellis entitled "The Entrance into Ship-Cove, King George's Sound, N.W. Coast of America, 1778." Ellis' painting depicts Bligh Island in Nootka Sound, visited by Captain Cook during his third voyage of discovery around the world. This very rare watercolour is the earliest original image of the British Columbia coast in the Provincial Archives.

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