

Suggestions for Organization and Description of Archival Holdings of Local Historical Societies

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ONE of the major untapped sources of historical evidence are the archival holdings of the various historical societies throughout Canada. Little is known about these holdings; there are few published guides, calendars, or inventories. Because of their physical inaccessibility and the lack of adequate finding aids the professional historians tend to bypass them. Perhaps the most serious handicap to a researcher attempting to find his way through these papers is the lack of a uniform, logical, systematical, and detailed arrangement. Because of a widespread and ever-growing interest in local archival holdings the custodians, by necessity, had to devise systems of their own, often surprisingly competent. In cases where guides have been prepared, however, the lack of a uniform system, ambiguities in terminology, and unreliable description materially detract from their practical value. Unfortunately only a very few local archives have any sort of finding aids. Most of them rely on the memory, experience, and intuition of their archivists. As long as the archivist continues to take interest in the material in his custody researchers can be assured of fairly competent service. But even the most durable archivists come to an end. They become incapacitated, resign, move elsewhere, or otherwise lose their usefulness. Seldom can their replacements duplicate their intimate knowledge of the material and the intricacies of its arrangement without a lengthy period of training. More than often no suitable replacement can be found, perhaps because of a temporary lack of interest in things historical, sometimes because the office of the archivist is honorary and carries no remuneration. There is abundant evidence of local societies' being virtually carried, as it were, on the shoulders of a single public-spirited person. With the passing away of

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such a person the society tends to slip into a period of inactivity until another selfless historian will undertake to reactivate it and to carry on the torch.

It is during such periods of interregnum that the local archives are virtually inaccessible. With the dedicated and experienced custodian gone, the papers of the society are often relegated to someone's attic or basement and exposed to the damaging elements of weather. Dust, dryness, too great humidity, or the lack of proper containers brings about their rapid deterioration. Rodents and other vermin take their toll, and the ever-present fire hazard menaces their safety.

For some time now the Public Archives of Canada and the various provincial archives have expressed concern over this deplorable state of affairs. Time and again there was brought to the attention of the public in general and the historical profession in particular the unique value of local collections of documents as well as the high order of their historical importance. In response to such pleas steps are being taken to preserve these papers for posterity; one after another the collections are being microfilmed; inventories, calendars, and other finding aids are being prepared.

Before these collections are ready for microfilming they must be properly arranged. As it stands now, every local archivist follows his own system of organization. Some of these systems are remarkably efficient. Others are faulty. Taken as a whole, however, they are ambiguous, conflict with each other, and are confusing to researchers. For this and for other reasons it was decided to develop a uniform set of rules of organization and description, and to offer these to practicing local archivists and custodians as guides in their archival work. Most of these rules have been accepted as the standard practice at the Public Archives, and time and experience proved them sound.

MAIN DIVISIONS OF HOLDINGS

The archival holdings of local historical societies could properly be divided into three basic categories: (1) papers of individuals, (2) papers of corporate bodies, and (3) official files of the society.

The first category, as the title implies, includes papers of private persons, acquired from individual sources. They form small or large units, varying from collections as small as two or three items to sizable holdings of several thousand pages.

The second category comprises the papers of corporate bodies.

They are the records of the various branches and agencies of the provincial and local government, including the county, township, and municipal offices. They are also the records of various organizations, institutions and societies, business corporations, schools, churches, and courts of law. They consist of office files such as correspondence, petitions, inquiries, memoranda, letter books, minutes of meetings, resolutions, reports and returns, all sorts of account books, financial statements, circulars, printed matter, legal papers, notebooks, and other papers created in the process of official business. They are kept in the custody of an official of the corporate body in question, and remain in his offices prior to their transfer to the archives of the society. Official papers that leave the custody of the corporate body, and for one or another reason come into the possession of private individuals, lose their corporate status and for practical purposes become the papers of the individual who acquired them. A continuity of official custody is therefore the deciding factor of the status of corporate material.

The third category is especially created so as to separate the official files of the historical society from its archival holdings. Ordinarily such papers would be included in Category 2 with the papers of other societies. However, as they are the official papers of the historical society itself, they merit a separate grouping. They are also the type of papers which will expand as the society grows.

Natural Units

A close examination of manuscripts taken at random will reveal the existence of certain natural units. Because of their unique character they are easily recognizable. Ordinarily they consist of papers belonging to one individual. They were acquired by the archives through the good offices of that person, by donation or purchase, and they carry his name. The papers of John Seymour Bell, for example, form such a unit. They were created as the result of Bell's various private, public, and business activities. They were accumulated by him and remained in his custody prior to their transfer to the archives. They consist of such items as letters received, copies or drafts of letters sent, letter books, personal papers, business records, diaries and journals, accounts and receipts, printed matter, and land and legal papers. There are also items difficult to classify, or defying description, which could be called sundries or miscellaneous papers.

In the case of the papers referred to as the natural units

are the files of various organizations, institutions, government agencies, churches, schools, business firms, and similar autonomous bodies. They were created in the process of official business and were preserved in the custody of the corporate body prior to their transfer to the archives.

Natural units are the basis for organization of archival holdings. They must not be broken up under any circumstances. Interference with their natural order causes confusion and mistakes.

Artificial Units

Artificial units consist of papers taken out of their original groups and set up as separate collections. They come from different sources, chiefly from various individuals' papers. The purpose for bringing them together is to create a unit of papers with similar characteristics. A collection of autographs acquired from different persons is a typical artificial unit. So is a collection of land deeds, militia commissions, testamentary documents, postal cancellations, seals, and so on. All these units are created by breaking up various individual collections of papers and removing from them the items of interest to the collector. Thus, instead of having units named after individuals and consisting of their private papers, we have artificial collections which will derive names from the common-denominating subject matter. The papers of James A. Anderson, John S. Bell, Andrew Corrigan, for example, could be arranged by subject so as to yield such new units as letters, diaries, certificates, land deeds, account books, and printed matter.

Such procedure, however, is contrary to the accepted archival practice. Natural units must never be broken up. If archivists, for one reason or another, favor a subject-matter arrangement this may be accomplished in guides when the material comes up for description.

Unfortunately many archival acquisitions are artificial collections to begin with. They come from amateur collectors of historical documents, who invariably arrange their holdings according to types of papers. After a while collections of this type become synonymous with the names of collectors, and retain those names even when the papers themselves have passed into the custody of archives. Today archives throughout the country have scores of sizable artificial collections most of which are known to the public under the names of the people who collected them. Such are the Casey papers in the archives of the Lennox and

Addington Historical Society and the Northcliffe collection in the Public Archives, just to mention two obvious cases. It serves no practical purpose to break up these units. The task is arduous and time-consuming, and the restoration of the original units is often impossible. Archivists are fully justified in retaining the established order.

Something should be said about those papers of corporate bodies that resemble artificial units but actually are natural units. Collections of, say, the oath-of-office certificates of the Algoma County Council, the teachers' contracts of the Board of Education, and the statutory declarations of supporters of separate schools form natural units. They were created—not collected—in the course of official business of the institution in question. They must not be broken up and transferred to individual papers.

ORGANIZATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PAPERS OF INDIVIDUALS

Let us assume that the local archives has received 50 donations of private papers from individual sources. The papers vary in volume from two or three documents to collections of several thousand pages. Most of them are the papers of individuals but some include papers of several members of the same family. A preliminary inventory should be prepared, with the names of individuals arranged in alphabetical order. The inclusive dates and the number of pages should also be listed. Family papers should be listed as a unit under the name of the head of the family, with the individual members listed as subtitles, and their papers preserved as units. Cross-references should also be inserted in their nominal alphabetical context. (See Table 1.)

The papers of each person form a natural unit. On closer inspection, however, it will be found that they consist of several clearly defined types. A glance at the fictional John Seymour Bell papers, for example, will reveal the existence of the following kinds of papers: correspondence, personal papers, land papers, legal papers, occupational papers, civil and military office papers, accounts and receipts, printed matter, and miscellaneous papers.

At this stage the archivist may find it advantageous to prepare an inventory of the various kinds of papers composing the individual unit. (See Table 2.)

The archivist should start arranging the papers by segregating them into the various classes. Each item should be examined carefully; the date, name, and subject should be checked and noted; and the document should be included in its proper group.

Table 1

ALGOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PAPERS OF INDIVIDUALS

<i>Name of Individual</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Pages</i>
Anderson, Rev. James Ansley	1791-1848	237
Bell, John Seymour	1812-1863	2,745
Corrigan, Sir Andrew VanNorman	1867-1909	1,004
Martin Family Papers	1769-1910	9,769
a. Martin, Hon. Grew	1769-1811	13
b. Martin, Sir William Grew	1784-1837	99
c. Martin, Col. Leslie Grew	1809-1900	7,987
d. Ogilvy, Rev. John Leroy	1811-1888	1,243
e. Martin, Robert Ogilvy	1873-1910	437
Norton, Capt. James	1808-1871	34
Ogilvy, Rev. John Leroy (See Martin Family Papers)		
VanAllen, Hon. John McD.	1833-1834	2

To classify the document correctly it will be helpful to examine the various types in some detail.

Correspondence

We define this as letters received, copies or drafts of letters sent, and letter books. Generally it is practical to separate letters

Table 2

JOHN SEYMOUR BELL PAPERS
GENERAL INVENTORY

<i>Type of Material</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Pages</i>
Correspondence:		
a. Letters Received (Including copies of Letters Sent)	1812-1863	1,737
b. Letter Books	1837-1839	245
Personal Papers	1817-1863	73
Occupational Papers	1833-1863	1,004
Land Papers	1829-1857	42
Legal Papers:		
a. Agreements, contracts, etc.	1837-1857	209
b. Lawsuits	1839-1851	73
Civil and Military Offices	1812-1860	203
Societies and Organizations	1819-1860	177
Accounts and Receipts	1819-1863	112
Printed Matter	1827-1863	123
Miscellaneous	1833-1837	33

received (including the copies and drafts of letters sent) from letter books. These loose papers might be arranged chronologically or alphabetically, depending on the type of correspondence, its historical importance, and the time available for the task. The chronological arrangement is more thorough, more detailed, and therefore applicable to papers of some significance. It offers minimal information on every letter, however unimportant. It lists the date, place, name of writer, subject of letter, and the consecutive numbers of pages. The respective entries should be made in the form of columns under the headings outlined above, and the forms for entries are indicated below.

Date & Place

The entry here denotes the date and place at which the letter was written. Undated letters should precede the dated. The same principle should be observed with incomplete dates. Thus a letter dated January 1837 must be placed before a letter of 17 January, 1837. By the same rule a letter of 1838 (no day or month available) should be placed before any other letter of 1838. Thus:

No date
—, —, 1837.
—, Jan., 1837.
17 Jan., 1837.

If a date is not readily ascertainable the archivist is invited to make an intelligent guess. Often the text will reveal the date. The postmark, the watermark on the paper, the texture of papers, the ink, as well as other characteristics may be of help. The date arrived at in this manner should be placed in square brackets and, if doubtful, a question mark should be added to it. If the letterhead contains more than one date, the latest date should be chosen for the entry. If additional text was added to the letter at a later date, the first and the last dates should be given.

The name of place from which the letter was written, usually on the letterhead, should be entered under the date. The place name should be in conformity with contemporary historical and political nomenclature. Thus a letter written from York in 1807 should be described:

10 July, 1807
York, Upper Canada.

Thirty years later a letter written from the same place would read:

10 July, 1837
Toronto, Upper Canada.

And another 30 years later the letter would be entered:

10 July, 1867
Toronto, Ont.

The description of location is important and should be carefully observed, especially in the case of the names of places prominent in several provinces, states, and countries. London, Ont., for instance, should not be confused with London, England, nor Kingston, Ont., with Kingston, B. W. I.

If the old place name has been changed and cannot easily be identified, the present name should be added in parentheses. Thus:

Gastown (Vancouver, B. C.)
Cataraqui (Kingston, Ont.)
Fort Camosum (Victoria, B. C.)
Pau-wa-ting (Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.)
Town Plot (Woodstock, Ont.)

This will not be necessary in the case of well-known former names of places. Thus:

York, U. C.
Bytown, U. C.

Likewise if the name was known under several spellings in the past, the name as currently spelled should be added in parentheses after the name actually appearing on the document. Thus:

Manitoualin Island (Manitoulin Island)
Kisikatchewin River (Saskatchewan River)
Mesipskoik County (Missisquoi County)

Name of Writer

This column should contain the names of persons who wrote the letters. (Names of persons to whom letters were addressed have no place here.) The family name should be given first, then first names. Initials should be used only where full names cannot be ascertained. Religious, professional, and academic titles, titles of honor, and military ranks should be placed before the first names. Thus:

Adams, Rev. Richard Powell
Appleby, Lt. Col. John Stanley
Robinson, Sir Wm. Watt
Thomas, Dr. James

If the name of the writer is indecipherable, the archivists should list it as "unreadable." Often an intelligent guess can be made, but the name thus arrived at must be placed in square brackets. In the case of variations in the spelling of the same name appearing in various places in the letter (on the envelope, in text, as signature, and as endorsement), the name in the writer's own handwriting should be chosen for the entry.

If the writer of the letter is an obscure official of a company writing on official business, the name of the company should be entered, rather than that of the person actually writing. This applies to bank clerks, private secretaries, and other minor corporate personnel, whose names are not easily associated with the company they serve.

Enclosures to letters should not be listed separately but must be included with the entry for the original letter. They may be described in the subject column.

Subject

A summary of the contents of letters should be given as briefly as possible. The extent of description—from a phrase to several sentences—will depend on the importance of the papers. It is advisable, however, to be brief, to avoid bias, and to eschew subjective, interpretative, and superlative adjectives. Words like significant, important, valuable, and revealing should be used with utmost caution and reserve. Short, single-word descriptions often serve a good purpose. Words describing the subject—such as political, financial, military, banking, business, patronage, personal, and the like—give a broad and general idea of the contents, and by their use the archivist can cover marginal collections without too much waste of time and space. Brief headings are also useful in singling out specific topics; for example: Rebellion in Lower Canada, Clergy Reserves, Elections of 1873, War of 1812. When the subject merits it the entry should be more detailed and exhaustive and may take up one or several sentences. In the latter case it would approximate a calendar entry. No important topic should be neglected, and it takes skill and experience to cover the whole contents of a letter in the minimum of words.

Pages

This column will be the last to be completed. After the arrangement of the papers is done, the pages of manuscript in the collection will be numbered consecutively. Only then will the page numbers of each letter be entered. This entry will assure proper reference to the papers, will safeguard their numerical order and may serve to deter theft or other loss.

Chronological vs. Alphabetical Arrangement

The chronological arrangement, as pointed out earlier, is still the best answer to the problem of organization of correspondence. A guide to it lists every letter and gives basic information on it. Its detailed, exhaustive, and ultimate form is a calendar; and calendaring was the standard descriptive practice at the Public Archives for many years. Even today, in some respect the most important and useful of archival finding aids are calendars provided with indexes. Chronological entries, with shorter descriptions, are shown in Table 3.

The alphabetical arrangement of correspondence, on the other hand, is suitable for bulky and relatively unimportant papers. It calls for grouping together in one entry all letters written by one person, giving his name, the inclusive years of the letters, describing briefly and in general terms the common subject, and giving the page numbers. If the correspondence consists of, say,

Table 3
JOHN SEYMOUR BELL PAPERS
Letters Received (Chronological Arrangement)

<i>Date & Place</i>	<i>Name of Writer</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Pages</i>
10 May, 1814 York, U. C.	Adams, Lt. Col. John	War of 1812	347-356
22 Feb., 1822 London, Eng.	Appleby, Rev. Peter	Personal	457-459
23 Feb., 1837 Toronto, U. C.	Robinson, Wm. Thomas	Agitation for reforms	555-556
21 Nov., 1837 Montreal	O'Callaghan, E. B.	Rebellion in L.C.	557-567
23 Jan., 1841 London, U. C.	Hincks, Francis	Union of the Provinces	645-666
5 May, 1856 Hamilton, U. C.	Buchanan, Isaac	Railways	772-773
18 Jan., 1869 Winnipeg, N. W. T.	Dunn, Richard	Hudson's Bay Company	843-847
14 March, 1875 Ottawa, Ont.	Hayes, Angus	Political Patronage	891-894

Table 4

JOHN SEYMOUR BELL PAPERS
Letters Received (Alphabetical Arrangement)

<i>Name of Writer</i>	<i>No. of Letters</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Pages</i>
Abbott, Rev. Donald Reginald	52	1824-1857	Religious	476-551
Adair, Col. James	3	1851-1852	Military	552-559
Alverstone, Hon. Charles Gordon	12	1844-1849	Political	560-599
Angus, (Dr.) Duncan	2	1821-1822	Medical	600-606
Appleby, Sir John Donegal	20	1841-1844	Financial	607-644
Blair, William	10	1851-1855	Personal	645-676
Blake, Hon. Ross Gerald	9	1857-1858	Elections	677-689
Blondin, Maurice	4	1819-1821	Lumbering	690-701
Brekke, Ven. Zebulon	1	1813	S.P.G.F.P.	702-703
Buchanan, Hon. Isaac	31	1866-1877	Railways	704-768

2,000 items written by some 20 different people, the guide under the alphabetical arrangement will show exactly 20 entries. There will be only one entry for each writer, whatever the number of his letters, whereas under a chronological arrangement 2,000 letters would be listed separately in 2,000 entries. Table 4 gives a sample of the alphabetical entries used for several letters by the same writers.

A table describing the alphabetical arrangement will consist of five columns. The name column, coming first, will determine the order of the entries. The last names of individuals will be listed first, followed by titles, ranks, and first names. Here again it is advisable to write out all names in full. The names of individuals should precede the names of companies, with the names of places—if they are used as entries—following the latter. Thus:

Hamilton, Col. Wm. Thomas
(Messrs.) Hamilton, Anderson & Co.
Hamilton, Ont.

The second column enters the actual number of letters, and because many of these entries include more than one letter, it will be advisable to list in the dates column the first and the last years of the letters in question. Only in cases of single letters is there any necessity to enter the full date. The names of places should be given only if all the letters were written from the same place. The entry for the subject column should be brief and general. The archivist will need skill and editorial adroitness to choose an adequate description of the contents of letters. His task will be com-

plicated if an entry consists of several, perhaps even several hundred letters. One-word descriptions are by far the most practical, and may be as general as, for example: Personal, Political, Business, and Financial. Often it will be impossible to find a description general enough to do justice to all topics mentioned in the letters. In such case an omission of the subject entry may be in order. With respect to the number of pages, the same rule will apply here as in the case of the chronological arrangement.

Copies and/or Drafts of Letters Sent—Letter Books

Original letters sent have no place among the papers of the individual writing them except for such letters sent as were returned, for one or another reason, to the sender. Letters written by John S. Bell, for example, should not in principle be regarded as part of his papers. They should be placed with the papers of persons to whom they were addressed.

Copies and/or drafts of letters sent should be filed together with letters received from the same person. For all practical purposes they may be considered as enclosures.

Letter books, as was stressed earlier, should form a separate group. Most of them are bound and could not be integrated with the rest of the correspondence. Whatever arrangement already exists must be preserved. Generally there is a register or an index with each letter book. If none is available an alphabetical and/or a subject index should be prepared. The choice here would depend on the nature and importance of the material.

With the invention of the typewriter the habit of copying letters into bound books began to fall into disuse, and by the turn of the century letter books were becoming rare. Gradually there developed what is now the accepted practice—to file copies of letters sent, including drafts, together with letters received.

Personal Papers

Personal papers consist of material which has direct and intimate relation to the individual. Here belong such personal items as, for example:

Birth certificate.

School reports, certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

Appointments, commissions, titles, honors, and citations.

Diaries, travel journals, personal notebooks.

Scrapbooks, photograph albums.

Marriage certificate.

Death certificate, wills, obituaries.

Estate papers.

Other personal documents.

These are the type of papers one would examine when looking for vital and personal information on the individual. Great care should be exercised when selecting material for this group. Many a document may qualify for this group and at the same time may fit into another category. Militia commissions, for example, are of this type. They should be with the personal papers of the individual, yet at the same time may logically belong with militia records. Legal papers relating to the estate provide another example. In both cases the choice is comparatively clear. Other cases are more doubtful, and definite criteria of judgment must be observed. Here is a sample from the personal papers of the fictional John Seymour Bell. (See Table 5.) Chronological arrangement is recommended for this category.

Here again four columns will be in order. Since this is a chronological arrangement the dates will form the first entry. The second column should be headed "Title" and may be used for entering the official name of the document in question. The third column, "Subject," should give the content or the meaning of the item. "Pages" will head the column for the consecutive page numbers.

Table 5
JOHN SEYMOUR BELL PAPERS
Personal Papers

<i>Date & Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Pages</i>
14 May, 1812, Kingston	Certificate	Primary School	1,134-1,136
1 June, 1812, Kingston	Commission	Ensign, Frontenac Militia Reg.	1,137-1,140
1812-1814	Diary	War of 1812	1,141-1,189
1815-1819, York, U. C.	Commission	Road Overseer	1,190-2,001
1 Apr., 1818, York, U. C.	Commission	Justice of the Peace	2,002-2,004
4 May, 1821, York, U. C.	Certificate	Marriage to Jane Price	2,005-2,009
1 July, 1821, York, U. C.	Commission	Coroner	2,010-2,014
21 Aug., 1821, York, U. C.	Commission	Captain in the Militia	2,015-2,019
1822-1847	Diary	Personal	2,020-2,446
1 Nov., 1825, London, U. C.	Commission	County Sheriff	2,447-2,449
7 Jan., 1829, Toronto	Appointm't	Returning Officer	2,450-2,455
1 Dec., 1837, Toronto	Commission	Lieutenant Colonel, Militia	2,456-2,460
12 May, 1847, Toronto	Appointm't	Trustee, School Board	2,461-2,466
3 Aug., 1863, Toronto	Certificate	Death, John S. Bell	2,467-2,470
5 Aug., 1863, Toronto	Obituaries	John S. Bell	2,471-2,499
	Will	Probate	2,500-2,507

Occupational Papers

Occupational papers form an important group. Here belong all papers which relate to the business of earning a living. Occupations of individuals vary and the method of organization must of necessity remain flexible. Here are a few samples of occupations and the corresponding type of material which belongs in this group:

Land surveyor: Maps and plans, sketches and descriptions of concessions, notebooks, accounts, etc.

Newspaper editor: Drafts of articles, editorials, manuscripts of articles, stories, and fiction; newspaper clippings, galley proofs; notebooks, reference files.

General contractor: Inventories of assets (buildings, machinery, material, bank deposits), legal papers (contracts, indentures), bids on tenders, construction plans, estimates, returns; financial statements, accounts, vouchers; lists of employees, pay lists, personnel files.

General merchant: Lists of assets, inventories of goods; accounts receivable, accounts payable; order books, sales records, account books; financial statements, loss and profit statements; shop licenses, insurance policies.

Shipbuilder: Lists of installations, machinery, and equipment; inventory of materials, other assets; indentures and bonds involving the ownership of ships; blueprints and plans for ships, estimates of cost; accounts and financial statements.

The arrangement of occupational papers will depend on the nature of the business, profession, or calling of the individual. No overall pattern can be given to suit all types of occupations. The archivist will have to exercise a great deal of ingenuity and commonsense to devise an appropriate arrangement for this type of papers. A sample may be of help. Assuming that the principal occupation of John Seymour Bell was lumbering and sawmilling, then the following arrangement might be used:

Assets: List of holdings:

Land and timber
Sawmill
Installations
Equipment
Other holdings

Legal Papers:

Charter, articles of agreement,
act of incorporation, etc.

Bonds, agreements
Leases
Contracts to deliver
Mortgages

Lawsuits:

Summonses
Affidavits
Statements of witnesses
Judgments

Business Books:

Ledgers, journals, account books,
other commercial books

Financial Statements:

Profit and loss statements
Balance sheets
Returns

Personnel Files

Miscellaneous

This arrangement is by no means final even for the type of business described above. The size of operations will determine the variety and class of papers. Flexibility must remain the key to the organization of occupational papers. One other item needs repeating here. All correspondence—personal, political, or business—will remain together as one unit.

Land Papers

Land papers include all documents pertaining to ownership and transfer of land. Crown grants, deeds of sale, mortgages, leases, and various types of bonds relating to land belong to this category. They should be arranged in chronological order indicating the date, the location of land, the title of document, the names of parties involved in the transfer, and the page numbers. (See Table 6.)

Table 6
JOHN SEYMOUR BELL PAPERS
LAND PAPERS

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Pages</i>
1 May, 1829	Lot 7, 12th Concession Prince Twp.	Grant	The Crown	John S. Bell	3,214-3,219
5 Aug., 1831	Lot 3, 5th Concession Graden River Twp.	Sale	Rufus Ross	John S. Bell	3,220-3,222
7 Dec., 1833	Lot 2, 3d Concession Tarentorus Twp.	Lease	James S. Bell	Angus Brown	3,223-3,229
8 Jan., 1834	Lot 9, 2d Concession Gros Cap	Settlement	R. B. Price	John S. Bell	3,230-3,231

The entries should be specific. The date should include the day, month, and year; the location should include the number of lot and of concession and name of the township; the other entries should give the names of parties involved and the page numbers in the collection.

Legal Papers

This group consists of two types of papers:

Legal agreements. These involve two or more parties and are such instruments as contractual obligations, deeds, and bonds. Excluded from this grouping are legal papers relating to land, for which a separate group is set up. For legal agreements, a chronological arrangement is recommended. Four entries for each item will suffice.

Date/Place: Day, month, and year; location.

Title & Subject: Title of document such as bond, deed, etc., with a brief description of the subject.

Names of parties involved.

Pages: Consecutive numbers of pages.

Lawsuits. This category includes papers pertaining to lawsuits and related litigations. Chronological arrangement is again recommended. At least four entries for each item are essential, though it may be advantageous to add a column for the subject or the nature of the charge.

Date/Place: Same as above.

Name of Plaintiff: Last name, and first names in full.
Include also title or rank.

Name of Defendant: Same as above.

Nature of Charge: May be omitted unless the information is of historical importance.

Pages: As above.

Court records do not belong with legal papers. They should be included with the records of corporate bodies. Court papers pertaining to a judicial office occupied by an individual, however, and remaining in his possession should be arranged with his papers under the title of his judicial office. This will often apply to the court papers of individuals holding such offices, for example, as Justice of the Peace, or Police Magistrate.

Civil and Military Offices

This category includes papers relating to various civil and military offices: voluntary, elective, or appointed. There was, and still is, little or no remuneration for these offices, and they seldom constitute the chief occupation of the holder of the papers. As such they stand apart from the occupations from which the individual derived his livelihood. To illustrate, the fictional John Seymour Bell, whose main occupation was lumbering and saw-milling, held a variety of civil and military offices. During his tenure of these offices he accumulated and retained a considerable body of office records. Theoretically these should be set up as records of corporate bodies in question. But the custom under which local public offices were held allowed the official to remove the files from the office when he retired. Frequently, too, the home of the officeholder was his office, and upon retirement he simply kept the papers where they were. Indeed the opposite practice was rare. But the very fact that John Seymour Bell retained custody of the papers of (say) the office of the Warden of the County of Algoma, after his retirement from the office, deprived the papers of their official status as records of the Warden's office. For practical purposes these records became the private papers of John Bell and should be arranged as such.

Only those office files that remain continuously in the custody of successive holders of the office until their transfer to an archives merit the designation as the official records of a corporate body.

Under the main heading the various offices should be arranged chronologically. For example:

Table 7
CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICES

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Name of Office</i>	<i>Pages</i>
1812-1821	Captain in the Militia	
1815-1819	Road Overseer	
1818-1860	Justice of the Peace	
1820-1842	Coroner	
1821-1837	Major in the Militia	
1825-1836	Warden of the County	
1827	Returning Officer	
1831-1833	Reeve of the Alasdair Township	
1837-1860	Lieutenant-Colonel in the Militia	
1847-1855	Trustee of the School Board	

The chronological arrangement is also recommended for the papers of each office. The method of organization should follow closely the pattern set up for the papers of corporate bodies.

Societies and Organizations

This group resembles the one above. It consists of office papers relating to the various societies and organizations in which the individual held a voluntary, elective, or honorary office. Again the remuneration for his services was of no consequence; the office did not provide his means of livelihood. The papers are similar to the ones described above, and their arrangement should be patterned after that of the corporate material. The chronological order is recommended. Such offices as the following may be included here:

Warden, St. John's Anglican Church
Secretary, Mechanics Institute and Literary Library
Treasurer, Algoma Curling League
Curator, Algoma Historical Society
President, County Reform Party Association
Chairman, District Temperance Alliance

Accounts and Receipts

This category should include all vouchers, receipts, accounts, and other commercial papers, regardless of whether they pertain to an individual's personal, public, or business papers. As in the case of the correspondence this will allow the grouping together of all material of this type. Accounts, receipts, and vouchers invariably are bulky, and they rarely contain information that could not be obtained in summary from financial statements in the business papers of the individual in question. For this reason no detailed catalog here is necessary. A simple chronological arrangement will serve the purpose adequately.

Printed Matter

Here belong such printed items as, for example, newspaper clippings, circulars, pamphlets, booklets, and books. If the society that maintains the archives has a library, it is recommended to transfer to the library all *bound* printed books. If, however, these

bound printed items have marginal notes that throw light on the individual, they should remain with his papers.

For printed items a strict chronological order is usually most practicable. Many such items originally came as enclosures, and adequate cross-references should be prepared. An inventory should give the dates of the papers, the title and subject of each item, and the consecutive numbers of pages.

Miscellaneous Papers

These include the type of material that cannot be grouped together under any other heading. This is a good place for many items that do not strictly fall into the category of manuscripts—such as photographs, maps, stamps, medals, and other souvenirs.

PAPERS OF CORPORATE BODIES

The other major type of material in the local archives is the papers of corporate bodies. The problems arising in connection with their organization cannot be thoroughly discussed here. I shall only touch upon a few practical considerations.

Let us assume that the archives of, say, the Algoma Historical Society made arrangements with some agencies of the local government, private organizations and institutions, several business corporations, and a number of schools and churches to serve as their official depository of documents. In due time various corporate bodies transfer their papers to the archives. For the purpose of organization, main groups of corporate papers were created in the following order. (1) County, township, and municipal offices. (2) Organizations, institutions, and societies. (3) Business corporations.

The papers of the various county, township, and municipal offices will arrive at the archives already arranged. They will be complete with registers, name and subject indexes, and other elaborate guides. Under no circumstances must the original order be disturbed. Only in cases where no organization exists may the following pattern be used for arranging the material. (*Note*—Archivists are urged to acquaint themselves intimately with the corporate structure of the agencies, institutions, organizations, or business companies before attempting to arrange their papers.)

Table 8

ALGOMA COUNTY COUNCIL PAPERS

No.	Group	Outside Dates	Pages
1.	Minutes of Council Meetings	1877-1911	1-135
2.	Correspondence:		
	a. Letters Received	1877-1911	156-2,456
	b. Letter Books	1877-1899	2,457-3,323
3.	By-Laws, Resolutions	1877-1911	3,324-3,897
4.	Oaths of Office	1881-1911	3,898-3,999
5.	Petitions:		
	a. Individual	1879-1911	4,000-7,576
	b. Joint	1882-1911	7,577-10,235
6.	Reports and Returns of Committees:		
	a. Board of Health	1895-1911	10,236-11,094
	b. Chief Constable	1877-1911	11,095-11,176
	c. Finance and Assessment	1879-1911	11,177-11,231
	d. Fire and Water etc.	1877-1911	11,232-11,298
7.	Financial Statements	1877-1911	13,787-13,988
8.	Accounts and Receipts	1877-1911	13,989-17,004
9.	Miscellaneous		

The same practice should apply to the papers of *Organizations, Institutions, and Societies*. The following pattern should be consulted only in cases where the papers arrive without order.

Table 9

TARENTORUS MECHANICS' INSTITUTE AND LITERARY SOCIETY

No.	Title of Unit	Dates	Pages
1.	Constitution	1857	1-13
2.	Minutes of Meetings	1857-1878	14-189
3.	Correspondence:		
	a. Letters Received	1858-1878	190-230
	b. Letter Books	1867-1870	231-451
4.	Membership Books	1857-1878	452-497
5.	Learned Papers read at meetings	1859-1877	498-555
6.	Publications, Reviews, Annual Reports:		
	a. Tarentorus Quarterly	1867-1870	558-767
	b. Annual Report	1861-1871	767-868
7.	Financial Statements	1858-1876	869-901
8.	Accounts and Receipts	1857-1877	902-999
9.	Miscellaneous		

Business Corporations

The papers of business firms are much more likely to arrive at the archives disorganized. Sometimes the arrangement will deviate substantially from the accepted practice, and the papers will have to be reorganized. In a great number of cases, also, the papers of a business firm will come to archives along with the papers of the firm's owner. In the latter case they should be placed with the papers of that person. Papers of most joint-stock corporations should be filed under the name of the firm, with the papers of other corporate bodies. Following is a sample arrangement of a fictional mining corporation which may serve as a guide for arranging the material of this type.

Table 10**LAKE SUPERIOR MINING CORPORATION LTD.**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Title of Unit</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Pages</i>
1.	Charter	1899	1-2
2.	Minutes of Meetings of Directors	1900-1945	3-242
3.	Minutes of Annual Meetings	1901-1945	243-351
4.	Correspondence:		
	a. Letters Received	1900-1946	352-444
	b. Letter Books	1900-1907	444-467
5.	Assets: Deeds and lists	1900-1945	
	a. Mining properties		
	b. Installations, buildings, machinery, etc.		
	c. Other assets		
6.	Contracts, agreements, bonds, mortgages, leases, other contractual obligations	1900-1945	675-713
7.	Lists of Shareholders, stock books, records of dividends	1904-1946	714-788
8.	Legal suits	1909-1937	789-844
9.	Ledgers, Journals, Account books	1899-1946	845-1,376
10.	Financial Statements	1900-1945	1,377-1,397
11.	Accounts and Receipts	1899-1945	1,398-1,500
12.	Miscellaneous		