

Évaluation

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL BOARD
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Table of contents

Board and Committee News:

- [Update from the Board of Directors](#)
- [Report of the NAAB Professional Development Committee](#)
- [Report of the NAAB ad hoc Committee on the Monetary Appraisal of Electronic Records](#)
- [Term of Reference: NAAB Research Committee](#)

Announcements:

- [Discount on Membership Fees](#)
- [Archival Monetary Appraisal Forum](#)

Columns:

- [Dr. Hübner's Hammer Prices](#)

Resources for Appraisers:

- [In case you missed it...](#)

Articles:

- [On Sources of Archival Value and Measuring the Fundamental Characteristics of Archives: A Short Essay](#)

Book Review:

- [The Hunt for History](#)

[Call for Submissions](#)

UPDATE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Teeple, PNA
Chair, NAAB Board of Directors

COVID continues to overshadow much of NAAB's activities and although appraisals are put on hold in most regions, lots has happened over the past few months. NAAB has been engaged with a number of meetings and various efforts to tackle the collateral damage of CCPERB's changes to its guidelines. As we know, these changes threaten to seriously limit the capability of Canadian designated archival institutions to encourage gifts of significant archival fonds with tax incentives.

Following CCPERB's online publication of its revised *Guide* and accompanying *Communication to Archival Stakeholders* in late December, many archival institutions received letters from CCPERB regarding their 'deferred applications.' In almost all cases, these letters indicated that the fonds was certified to be of outstanding significance, but that the application did not provide enough sales comparisons information to enable it to make a determination of Fair Market Value. This has made it virtually impossible for NAAB to undertake any further monetary appraisals for applications being submitted to CCPERB as no Canadian market exists for archival fonds.

As a result, NAAB and CCA have been collaborating on several initiatives to consult with various constituencies in the archival community about the short and long term implications of CCPERB's recent changes. On Feb. 11th, the CCA invited those institutions who had received rejection letters from CCPERB and other interested parties, to a meeting about these issues and to look at next steps. Following this meeting, the CCA sent a letter to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Steven Guilbeault, outlining its concerns about CCPERB and requesting a review of the situation by the department. On March 4th NAAB arranged a meeting with its stakeholders (ACA, CCA, AAQ, CPTA, CARL, CHA and FMD) to also discuss the impact of these changes and solicit feedback from them about options to have our objections heard. As a result of these meetings, several archival institutions and organizations have also

sent letters to the Minister indicating their dissatisfaction and frustration with the recent changes. On April 6th the CCA sent another document, a brief entitled *Monetary Appraisal of Archival Fonds: A Call to Action* to the Minister that outlined several options for Action. All of this documentation has been posted on NAAB.ca although you should have received emails regarding these notifications. We continue to monitor the situation and will keep everyone informed of any new developments.

On February 22nd, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Monetary Appraisal of Electronic Records met with several members of CCPERB. This was a starting point to establish more open communications with CCPERB regarding the challenges, possibilities and expectations of determining the fair market value for digital records. For a more detailed description of the meeting please see the committee's report in this newsletter.

NAAB has also created a Research Committee that is intended to support and develop NAAB positions and

initiatives to further advance its knowledge base on monetary appraisal. The terms of reference for this committee, have been included in the newsletter by Marcel Caya, who will be the interim Chair.

On another note, the NAAB Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of two new regional directors. Mario Robert, formerly Head Archivist of the City of Montréal, replaces Marcel Caya as the Regional Coordinator for Quebec and David Sharron, Head of Archives & Special Collections at Brock University, replaces me as the Regional coordinator for Ontario. We appreciate their interest in taking on these roles and look forward to working with them as NAAB continues to further develop our resources and activities.

Finally – NAAB is eager to find ways of getting you, as PNAs, more involved in NAAB activities. Your support and interest are what keeps us moving in new directions. We invite your ideas, views and suggestions so that we can continue to improve our operations and make it a more robust organization.

REPORT OF THE NAAB PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Gordon Burr, PNA
School of Information studies, McGill University

Members of NAAB's Professional Development committee, all PNAs, include Dominique Foisy-Geoffroy, Regina Landwehr, and Melanie Hardbattle. Karen Teeple is the Board representative, and I serve as Chair. Administration of the committee is supported by Christina Nichols and Louise Charlebois, (Recorder).

David Sharron, Head of Archives & Special Collections at Brock University Library, announced his resignation from the committee on 22 March to take on another role in NAAB as a Regional Coordinator. We will miss David's work on the Committee, and thank him for his valuable contributions and his ongoing support for NAAB. We will be recruiting a new member to fill this vacancy.

The committee approved a list of core courses required to become a PNA. This was presented to the Board and

has been approved in principle. We will follow up on this when we have received additional comments from the Board, who will be reviewing it in detail at their May meeting.

We have begun to create a "Book of Knowledge" (BOK) Training Manual with reference to both current and future webinars and workshops. As part of this process, we will also be creating a list of experts with their respective areas of expertise, and are applying for a grant to help facilitate development of this valuable product.

We are also developing a series of educational seminars for current PNAs to keep our core community engaged in NAAB activities in these difficult Covidian times.

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NAAB AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE MONETARY APPRAISAL OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS (MAER)

Jeremy Heil
Queen's University Archives and co-chair, MAER

Since our report for the last newsletter, NAAB-MAER has been busy. In addition to our monthly meetings, we have been looking at data collected from past appraisal reports to examine methodology and values assigned to digital records and media. As a reminder, the questions we asked when examining these reports included:

- Was there consideration for curation?
- Was digital preservation considered?
- Were duplicate files considered or addressed?
- Was donor retention of copies considered?
- Did justification include an analog equivalency?
- Was access a consideration?
- Is metadata present for digital content, and was it considered in the valuation?
- Was the digital content's relevance to the fonds or total archive (where hybrid) addressed?

We have started working on our final report, which will include our analysis of this data as well as identifying both traditional and emerging approaches to the monetary appraisal of electronic records. The report will also provide recommendations for future standards and practice. We hope to have it ready later this fall.

Last month, we were finally able to meet with members of CCPERB to discuss their perspective on the value of digital records. This conversation provided us with some valuable information:

Despite their earlier stance placing value only on media carriers, CCPERB now takes the view that digital files are objects. This immediately answered many of our questions that had related to the definition of object and the necessity of migrating digital files for preservation. However, CCPERB could not answer questions related to how an institution's capacity to acquire, manage and preserve digital records might affect institutional designations, indicating these were established by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

We noted that digital records may not see a broker between donor and archives, leading to the absence of sales figures. CCPERB had no recommendations to correct this, and passed the problem back to institutions and appraisers to solve. The Board appears to consider that the rulings in *The Queen v. Malette* (2004) and *Nash v. Canada* (2004), in particular, require they accept only sales figures as a measure of fair market value. They referred to these two cases as reasons why the absence of a market due to technological hurdles would be no excuse not to provide sales figures, and why the cost replacement methodology would no longer be accepted in monetary appraisals.

Outside of legislative change or additional clarification in the courts, we are unsure whether this view will change, which makes the jobs of appraisers and the situation for archival institutions exceedingly difficult.

In spite of the unwillingness of the current CCPERB Board to adjust their current guidelines favouring a strict sales market above all other value indicators, this Committee still sees value in exploring all methods available to assigning value to digital records. The vast majority of monetary appraisals still take place outside of the CCPERB realm, and this Committee

still aims to provide guidelines to assist with all circumstances relating to the process of accepting electronic records in Canadian archival institutions.

TERMS OF REFERENCE: NAAB RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MONETARY APPRAISAL OF ARCHIVAL RECORDS

Marcel Caya, PNA
NAAB Vice-Chair

Mandate

NAAB provides monetary appraisal services for donations of archival records to Canadian cultural institutions. The professional literature and training materials on the monetary appraisal of archival records is still very limited. Few practitioners are involved in research on the foundations, the methodologies, and the practice of monetary appraisal.

The recent changes to the organization of NAAB have led to the recruitment and training of more archival appraisers and demonstrated the need to develop a comprehensive manual. The challenges posed by CCPERB's recent changes to its policies relating to the appraisal of archival records, have generated a greater need for research to support NAAB's objectives and practices.

The Research Committee will include members of NAAB who are interested in advancing the knowledge about all aspects of monetary appraisal of archives in all media. More specifically, it will be tasked by the Board of Directors to investigate various appraisal issues such as the definition of "fair market value" and its proper interpretation from various perspectives. On the longer-term basis, with the view of creating a manual of best practices on monetary appraisal of archives, it will work on researching and developing a framework of guidelines and best practices for monetary appraisal of all types of archival records.

Membership

The Committee shall have a minimum of five and a maximum of seven voting members. It can also delegate research assignment to other individuals or groups, as needed.

Committee membership shall be appointed by the NAAB Board of Directors upon consideration of the expertise and knowledge needed to fulfill the Committee mandate.

The Executive Director is a non-voting member of the Committee. Other non-member observers or advisors may also be appointed, at the discretion of the Chair.

Term

The members of the Committee will serve for four years and may be reappointed.

Governance

The Committee shall be chaired by a PNA who is also an archivist and who is appointed by NAAB's Board of Directors. The Chair shall preside for two years, unless otherwise determined by the NAAB Board of Directors.

A current NAAB Board member will be nominated as a Board Liaison to the Committee. The Board Representative shall serve as a full voting member of the Committee. In addition to participating in the work of the Committee, the Board Representative will liaise and communicate between the NAAB Board of Directors and Committee.

Deliverables

The Committee will respond to mandates generated by the Board of Directors. It may develop a framework, consisting of guidelines and best practices, related to monetary appraisal of various types of documents.

Administration

Working Language

The Working Group may function primarily in either English or French; however, as resources permit, all official communication and deliverables will be translated and made available in both French and English.

Decision-making

The Committee will strive towards consensus. In instances when consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made using a simple majority of at least fifty percent plus one vote.

Resources, Budget and Administration

The Committee shall meet by any electronic means that meets their needs. NAAB shall provide access to a videoconference or teleconference line, as needed, for Committee work. Video conferencing and email communication are encouraged.

The Committee is required to keep Minutes of meetings and forward a copy to the Secretariat for record keeping. The Minutes should record the date, attendees, decisions and next steps from each meeting. Upon request by the Committee Chair, a Secretariat staff person may be assigned to assist with preparation of Minutes.

When communicating via email, the Committee is encouraged to copy the Executive Director or other secretariat resources, as determined from time to time by the Board of Directors.

Note: *The Research Committee currently includes Marcel Caya, (chair); Richard Dancy, and Simon Rogers. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact Marcel Caya.*

2021 PNA MEMBERSHIP FEES

IMPORTANT REMINDER

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to upend the world in ways we could not have imagined. While this time has been filled with uncertainty and challenges, NAAB has responded and adapted operations where necessary to ensure strength and continued progress towards our mission.

Like most businesses and industries across Canada, archives were not immune to the economic effects of the pandemic and we realize that it will take time for monetary appraisal work to safely resume.

To respond to the financial impact and to help ease the financial burden of PNAs, at its meeting on September 28, 2020, NAAB's Board of Directors unanimously passed a motion to provide a one-time 50% fee discount on each PNA membership renewal, effective for one (1) membership year.

A one-time 50% code has been sent to all PNAs. If you haven't received it, please contact Isabelle at naab@archivescanada.ca. For those who have recently renewed their membership, *please note that the discount code may be applied when you renew during 2021.*

ARCHIVAL MONETARY APPRAISAL FORUM

National Archival Appraisal Board (NAAB)
in partnership with the
Canadian Council of Archives (CCA)

is pleased to announce that planning is
underway for a two-day national

ARCHIVAL MONETARY APPRAISAL FORUM

to be held
March 7-8, 2022 in Ottawa, ON

Since the safety of the speakers and
participants is our top priority, due to the
potential ongoing COVID-19 public health
or travel restrictions, this event will be held
as an online or hybrid event.

At this event, you will join your peers from across Canada as we explore the changing landscape of archival monetary appraisal. Held over two days, the Archival Monetary Appraisal Forum will feature intensive professional development opportunities, networking, and fruitful discussions and recommendations to address critical challenges, such as the monetary appraisal of electronic records.

The Monetary Appraisal Forum will be a must-attend event for Practising NAAB Appraisers and other appraisers of archival records who are looking for education and networking in a relaxed atmosphere. It will also be an ideal learning opportunity for mid-career and senior archivists and other emerging leaders in the heritage community to strengthen and develop their monetary appraisal skills. The content will be relevant to those who are looking for new ways of thinking and new ideas to sustain and grow their professional expertise.

We are sincerely grateful to **Library and Archives Canada** for helping us to make this event possible through the **Documentary Heritage Communities Program (DHCP)**.

Would you be interested in helping us prepare for this exciting event? Please contact Christina Nichols, cnichols@archivescanada.ca, to find out how you can get involved with this opportunity!

DR. HÜBNER'S HAMMER PRICES

"A Business Ledger, and Photographs of Indigenous People"

Dr. Brian Hubner, PNA
University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections

"Hammer Prices" will be an ongoing column, devoted to interesting and recent auctions and/or sales of Canadian or Canadian-related archival material.

In this, the inaugural installment of "Hammer Prices," we will look at three purchases, made by the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections, of material relating to 19th century Manitoba. Two of these purchases were made this year; the third, ten years ago.

First: an *"Original Handwritten Ledger of the Comprehensive and Fascinating Finances and Accounting of a Successful General Store in Rural Manitoba, that Grows Larger and More Successful Through the Years,"* by Oscar McCullough.

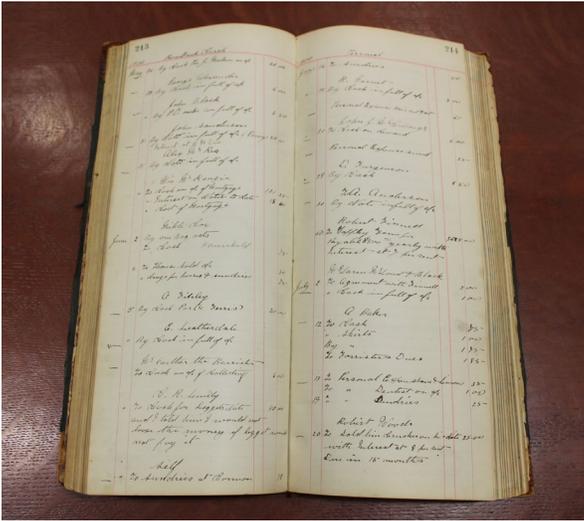
Dates: 24 August 1891- 5 December 1900.

Description: manuscript; folio - over 12" - 15" tall; 500 pages long, with over ½ of it (300 pages), blank.

Sold by: M. Benjamin Katz Fine Books/Rare Manuscripts (Toronto, ON)

Website: <https://www.mbenjaminatzfinebooksraremanuscripts.com/>

Price: \$1,695.99 Canadian (2021)



The following description of the ledger is an edited version taken from the seller's website:

"This ledger consists of the finances of a general store located in Miami, Manitoba, over the course of almost a decade. This ledger contains financial information on the operating costs of a threshing machine outfit, and a merchant store in rural town Manitoba which grows more complex each year, hiring more workers and expanding the business. It begins with: "An agreement ... entered into on the twenty fourth day of August 1891 between Oscar McCullough [and another man]...To own and operate a threshing machine outfit."

The ledger entries were written by Oscar McCullough, as a record of the threshing business, and later that of the general store. Beginning in September or October of almost every year from 1891-1900, the two men do a steady business. Each entry into the ledger has the date of the transaction, the person buying, what they bought, and how much they paid. For example: "October 9, 1892: John Kennedy. Wheat 604 bags @ 10' - \$60.40, Oats 299

bags @ 8' - 23.92, Barley 60 bags @ 8' - 4.80" – the total \$89.12 is owed."

By 1895, the book becomes more detailed as the two men have expanded the company and there are financial accounts throughout the year. Summer expenses also include wages for workers: "William Murray starts to work for me today at \$18 per month till I have finished harvest till labor till after harvest is the essence of the bargain." They also give credit and charge interest. The year 1899 marks the end of the first part of the [ledger].

After a 30 pages blank space, the entries begin again, this time as the financial transactions of lumber in the years 1899 and 1900. Like the section before, this part includes the date of the transaction, the name of the buyer of lumber, what and how much was sold and at what price, and the total of the transaction: "June 10 - Andrew Biddell - 4 Boards @ 10.00 - \$5.69, 4 pes. 2/6-14 @ 18.00 - \$1.15." There are transactions for almost every single day of ... 1899 and 1900.

This section lasts over 100 pages and ends with transactions on December 5th, 1900, this ends the entries in the book, over 200 blank pages, until the very last few pages of the book. The last pages are reserved for the accounting of who worked in the store, beginning in 1891 and 1892. For example: "October 6, 1891 - Mathew McQueen @ \$25 per month - Time three months - \$75.00." There are also pages devoted to those who bought on credit, and the personal assets and liabilities of Oscar McCullough. The last two pages contain recipes for making various substances including: "volatile soap for removing paint," "grease extractor" and almost a dozen other types of liquids and compounds."

The ledger was put to immediate use in researching the prices of farming implements and the cost of setting up a farm for a First Nation "Specific Claim."

Next: a *carte de visite* photograph of "Little Fox,' Cree Chief"

Dates: [ca. 1874-1875].

Description: 2 ½" by 4"; on the reverse: "neg. (1) 522, Copies like this can be had at any time"

Sold by: Jeffery Kraus Antique Photographic Images (New Paltz, NY).

Website: <https://antiquephotographics.com/>

Price: \$750 (+ \$15 postage) US (2021).

The image was photographed by Simon Duffin, who had a studio on Garry Street, Winnipeg from 1874-1875, which photographed Indigenous people. [See "Manitoba Photographers: Simon Duffin (1843-1900)," Manitoba Historical Society website:

http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/photographers/duffin_s.shtml (accessed 23 April 2021)].



And finally: almost a decade after the image of 'Little Fox' was made, a series of photographs of Indigenous people were taken in Winnipeg by James D. Hall and Skene Lowe, who had formed a partnership in 1882 and operated a studio at 499 Main Street, across from the old Winnipeg City Hall. They advertised themselves as "Hall & Lowe, Artists and Photographers" selling "Indian photos (taken from life), Xmas cards, views of Winnipeg." It is believed that the people who posed were paid a fee for their images and the resulting unidentified photographs were then displayed in the windows of

the studio for sale. Following a fire in 1886 which may have resulted the studio's closure, Hall & Lowe left for British Columbia.

The five cabinet card photographs (The Connie Macmillan Collection)

Dates: [ca. 1882-1886]

Description:

- 1) An Indigenous young man wearing a European sweater with long braided hair – formally posed.
- 2) An Indigenous woman with child in a cradleboard, wearing a shawl.
- 3) Elderly Indigenous man with pipe in capote.
- 4) Indigenous man in shirt with rosary, wearing decorated toque.
- 5) A young Indigenous male in a jacket with long hair.



Sold by: These photographs were owned by the family of Connie Macmillan until sold to Greenfield Books of Winnipeg, and subsequently sold to the University of Manitoba.
Price: \$1, 500 Canadian (plus \$75 GST) in 2011.

The album the photographs had been displayed in was subsequently donated to the Archives by the Macmillan family. These photographs were prominent in an exhibition at the Archives in 2016: “The Spirit of Red River – *L’esprit de la riviere Rouge.*”

Other sources of information on the purchase include:

“From the Archives: James D. Hall and Skene Lowe Aboriginal Photographs,” by Brian Hubner, in *The Bulletin* (5 April 2012, Vol. 46, No. 1): 9.

“Cool Things in the Collection: Hall & Lowe Cabinet Cards,” by Katherine Pettipas, in *Manitoba History* (No. 74, Winter 2014): 52-53.

“Manitoba Photographers: Hall and Lowe”, Manitoba Historical Society website:
<http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/photographers/halllowe.shtml> (accessed April 14th, 2021).

In the next issue, I will look into the prices paid for some really exciting and special Canadian documents which were actually auctioned off. Take care and stay safe, until the “Hammer Comes Down” again.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

In case you missed it, the Documentation Centre on the NAAB website includes several reports, letters, and communications with CCPERB - all worth reviewing.

Among these documents of note is Marcel Caya's letter to CCPERB regarding fair market value (https://naab59175.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/FairMarketValueDef_MCayaLetterToCCEEBC_EN.pdf), posted on 27 October 2020. Submitted as part of the consultative process on CCPERB's (then) proposed *Guide*, Marcel outlines the difference between 'fair market value' and 'market value', their "different functions and how they are applied...for various types of monetary appraisal." Marcel clearly establishes that "'market value' is not a synonym for 'fair market value', but rather only a possible component thereof." As he notes, his "purpose is to clarify monetary appraisal requirements in realistic and appropriate terms."

Another document worth revisiting is one of the most recent additions: the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) brief, *Monetary Appraisal of Archival Fonds* (https://naab59175.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/CCA_MonetaryAppraisalbrief_06.04.21_EN.pdf), posted on 6 April 2021. In it, CCA reviews both the issues raised by, and the impact of, CCPERB's revised *Guide for Monetary Appraisal*; providing background to the situation leading to NAAB's position that "...it can no longer, with any measure of professional integrity, conduct appraisals for submissions to CCPERB according to long established methodologies." CCA provides three recommendations, including the nomination to CCPERB of two senior archivists with "experience in both monetary appraisal and in negotiating the acquisition of significant multi-media archival fonds."

Happy (re)-reading!

ON SOURCES OF ARCHIVAL VALUE AND MEASURING THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ARCHIVES: A SHORT ESSAY

Simon Patrick Rogers, PNA, University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto
Curtis Sassur, PNA, University of Guelph Archives & Special Collections

There has been a lot of talk in the news about Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT) lately. Do these NFTs represent some sort of new late stage capitalist bubble? The tip of a complicated off-shore tax-sheltering scheme? An art hoax right out of Banksy's playbook? On the face of it, NFTs seem to exist in a real market, but how do we measure their value?

While NFTs may or may not become a permanent fixture on the global marketplace, the moment they are having is useful for us as a reminder that like NFTs, traditional archival properties are also non-fungible assets - unique, irreplaceable, not to be consumed and discarded - and this is a compelling argument for moving away from rigid adherence to fungible market sales information to justify the monetary appraisal of archives. One archival property is not exchangeable for

another, no matter how similar the linear measurement, the profession of the creator and the relative contents of the media on which it happens to be preserved. In order to arrive at the value of an archive each case requires a unique apprehension of the thing that is being appraised.

Last year we published an article on the monetary appraisal of archives in Canada, in *Archivaria* (Issue 90, Fall 2020), in which we overviewed the history of monetary appraisal practices and methodologies, and the implications for archives, followed by a brief outline of some broad issues and strategies for improvement. Meanwhile the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board [CCPERB] took a blunt hammer to their guidelines around interpreting monetary value for archives and presented the community with an

unsolvable paradox, centered around the Board's interpretation of fair market value. Under the new guidelines no value can be given to archival properties, and most kinds of electronic records, without comparable sales data, even though the Board recognizes the acute absence of such sales data and proffers no suggestions as to where such data might be found. It is somewhat eyebrow raising that this new hardline has not stopped the Board from assigning their own monetary values to certain archival properties without identifying their sources. As if that were not egregious enough, the Board has sent several recent messages to its constituents insisting that the state of affairs is merely business as usual, while some appraisers have been sent on a wild goose chase looking for non-existent data to satisfy certain questions on individual applications.

Many of us in the monetary appraisal community are still reeling from the implementation of these guidelines, but we should also consider the long view on this issue. It has *always* been impractical to interpret the fair market value of archives, whatever range of conceptual tools one has applied to the problem. We believe CCPERB is mistaken in its legal interpretations and has done a poor job of engaging with the community to suggest effective or practical guidelines for future certification. However, since CCPERB is only a board that authorizes tax credits for one class of cultural materials, and does not actually collect or preserve anything, we see value in treating this as the precipitating moment to move away from the sector's dependence on CCPERB certification for motivating donation to Canadian repositories. So, while the Board's inflexibility and somewhat bizarre sudden attention on archives is unfortunate, it does not have to impact our core practices, or lead us to open tax revolt, *because that is not the Canadian way*, in archives or other cultural sectors.

Instead, we politely shrug our shoulders, grumble a little, write a few choice words to ministers and our members of parliament, and move on with our lives. In the meantime, we have been thinking about loftier principles, like what constitutes 'value', and how do we better account for real value in the preservation of our shared cultural heritage? These are the kinds of questions addressed by thinkers like Wendell Berry in his essay "Does Community Have a Value?" (1986), when he effectively argues, it seems to us, that "strong communities and strong local economies are identical"

(p.190), and that it is only when we externalize economic costs and benefits, so that "a business may show a profit to everybody else's loss" (p.191), that we are able to consider how the profits of an open pit coal mine or resource company outweigh the national interests of everyone who lives on the land where that resource is extracted.

It takes a similar squinting of the eyes to argue that a letter signed by a famous person should be valued because of the collector's market for signature hunters, rather than the historical significance of the letter. **Such absurdities should have no bearing on the fair value of archives, which must and can be valued only by the accurate appraisal of their contents.** The archival community has a long and successful history of determining fair market values by reasoned justification that predates CCPERB, and it is folly (as well as a legally dubious path to trod down) to completely discard the precedents of these determinations. We need to think of markets more holistically, and, like Wendell Berry does, ecologically, so that we can calculate appropriate costs and benefits in the determination of actual archival values.

The main problem here is conceptual. How does one move away from what an archive might be worth if it was sold by private sale or auction, towards how much an archive is worth as a societally important commodity, which is not usually bought and sold, so much as kept and preserved? In this normal case, the transfer of the commodity entails certain obligations and responsibilities as it is transferred from one entity, usually its creator, to another, typically an institutional repository.

Archivists and appraisers do not need to reinvent the wheel on this issue. Appraisers, records managers and accountants in the fields of insurance and bankruptcy can and do account for non-fungible business assets all the time, such as electronic and private client records. Another range of existing comparables can be drawn from the robust industry which has been built up around the warehousing and records management sector. Establishing value in this sector would entail calculating storage and preservation costs for records. These costs are pragmatic comparables for archives, because when an archive accepts a donation it is entering a contractual obligation to store and care for a property in very real, calculable and beneficial ways, for a determined length of time, though, in reality, often in

perpetuity. The value of the archive is precisely the investment in the material preservation leading up to the transfer and extending to the completion of the contractual obligation to preserve that property. The public trust in the institution has motivated this transfer of ownership: in effect, a sale, without a bill of sale. What better value could be placed on a donation than the investment afforded by that transfer?

In this market paradigm an archivist is more like an asset manager than an auctioneer. It seems clear to us that the focus on itemized lists and sales receipts in the latest guidelines, highlights a confession on the part of CCPERB that they do not understand the archival world and would prefer to see everything in terms of auction listings, because that is the market context with which they are most familiar. However, the comparables used in auctions are still highly debatable when determining monetary value, because an auction value's authority lies not in the assessment of what it may be worth, but rather in the selling price. Indeed, the market predictability is uncertain and that is precisely the reason the work is sold at auction: to determine its market value. The estimates are almost always wrong. While the auctioneer may like to brag later how they knew some undervalued item would fetch a higher value because of their good taste, or vice versa, it is more honest to admit that the market is unpredictable and to reserve judgement for the clarity of hindsight. The use of a sales figure as a predictor of future sales value is as great a leap of faith as any other market comparable. The sales price does not even reflect the value fluctuations of actual sales, which are highly variable even for published identical rarities like books or baseball cards, let alone across a spectrum of similar but unique items like Group of Seven paintings.

We need to admit that any fair market value given to a non-fungible asset is an estimate, or an agreement of faith, not a fixed price. The value assigned at any given time in the estimation of the asset is speculative, nothing more than the handshake that represents the trade or agreement. Once we admit this limitation we can move forward on using a broader range of assessment tools to estimate that value and to justify our estimations in the court of public opinion, or the judicial courts of appeal, whichever comes first.

In determining the value of an archive, a sale value is really only one possible contributing factor in the calculation of fair market value. If an intermediary, say a

collector, purchases the archive from its creator, then the specific cost of that transaction is but a portion of the costs associated with the transfer of an archive to an institution. Other costs associated with the lifecycle of an archival record may be far more significant, such as transcription or migration costs, arrangement and description, preservation and administrative costs, intellectual property rights, stewardship, rehousing and processing costs. That these costs are ignored seems arbitrary when we holistically account for what it is that constitutes an archival property.

To paraphrase Dave Hickey's discussion of the art market in the essay "Dealing": archives and money never touch (p.109). The worlds of archival value and the global marketplace exist in parallel universes of value, and while we may be able to "translate our investment and our faith" from one universe to the other, this does not mean that we need to rely on sales receipts for assigning monetary value to archival properties.

In summary, the point here is not to outline all the features that comprise an archive's total value. We know that the real value cannot equal a monetary accounting of all the distinct aspects, costs, benefits, inputs and contexts of an archive, but that is not the function of monetary appraisal in our field. The purpose of the tax credit system is to provide an incentive to donate and recognize the contributions of donors to the collective memory. How we arrive at this determination should take into account all the tangible ways we might measure this contribution. Only then may we compensate in a fair, transparent and beneficial way as many of those known tangible qualities of the archival record as possible. While the factors that could help determine the value of a property are numerous, there are established ways of generalizing values across a spectrum by estimation and these other cost replacement-type considerations may be more stable than the antiquities market. We might quibble over whether a vintage postcard is likely to fetch \$2 or \$11.50 on eBay, but we can be relatively certain how much it cost to store 50 linear meters of textual records for 30 years. We just need the right balance of market and other factors to arrive at a reasonable approximate accounting of fair market value. This is the whole reason the National Archival Appraisal Board was developed in the first place: to arrive at these values by a consensus of experts.

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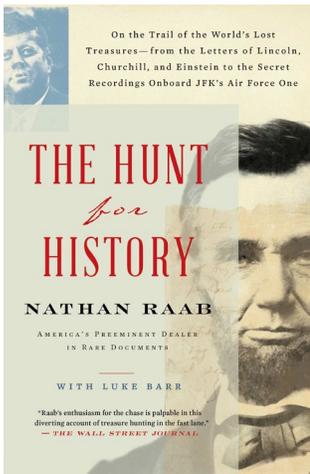
Editor's note: Simon and Curtis, both members of the NAAB ad hoc Committee for the Monetary Appraisal of Electronic Records, also maintain an occasional blog on monetary appraisal called "Valuable to Whom?"

<https://archivalmonetaryappraisal.blogspot.com/>

BOOK REVIEW: THE HUNT FOR HISTORY

Elwood Jones, PNA
Archivist, Trent Valley Archives

Nathan Raab, *The Hunt for History* (Scribner, 2020), 251 p.



The search for historical documents is often a key element in the lives of archivists and manuscript dealers. While it is rare at Trent Valley Archives, archival institutions occasionally acquire items related to their mandate by purchase from dealers or from auctions. Nathan Raab and his father, whose shop near Philadelphia is called the Raab Collection have dealt in archival manuscripts seriously since the 1990s; Raab since 2004. This fascinating book tells of Nathan Raab's greatest finds as well as lessons learned along the way. His experience helps others understand the fascination with original historical documents. For me, it was a trip down memory lane to some of my favourite stories about documents that I have rescued or found in catalogues and antique stores.

Raab begins with a reminder that white gloves, which can look impressive to the uninitiated, are not useful. Documents can be understood if one can feel the tactile quality and other special features such as the bleeding of ink. White gloves interfere with that. Far better to wash your hands and dry them.

His father's first manuscript treasure was a letter in which Theodore Roosevelt first used the expression "big stick" which he purchased for \$4,500, and after years of crowing, sold for \$200,000. He moved from his law practice to manuscript dealer, and it became the family business.

Another Roosevelt item was a letter written from Yellowstone National Park to his son Quentin in 1903; Raab paid \$7,000 and sold it almost immediately after appearing on national TV to the National Parks Service.

An early lesson: follow your instincts and do research on the item and its contexts. Understand value. Turn the document over. Look for connections to defining moments in the career of the letter writer. Understand the provenance, where the document had been.

Raab makes important observations suggesting that auction prices are only what "one person is willing to pay for one object on that day in that room. That is a function of the marketing of the piece and, sometimes, buyers' schedules and moods, the economy, and perhaps what sold yesterday at a different auction." His advice is to look with fresh eyes, as value could be higher or lower than the auction result [p. 57].

His description of the auction setting is quite helpful and he warns, “These events are not for the uninformed.” He had an example of a McKinley letter that his father had chosen for bidding. Slowly the bidding went up in increments and Raab got it for \$20,000. This was higher than he had wanted, but eventually he resold it for \$60,000. What his father had recognized was the historical context with “Remember the Maine”. His father read catalogues carefully, and often found “something hidden in plain sight.” [p. 61] His interest in American history was a plus.

One of the best examples of this was a letter relating to the Rosetta stone in 1801; this was the letter asking for it to be seized from the French, who had just lost the Battle of the Nile. But one had to establish the context.

He gives a detailed description of his first auction without his father nearby and he captures the atmosphere of a small auction house sale very well. He was there to get the first proclamation of thanksgiving, 1782, by the president of Congress assembled, John Hanson. For trivia lovers, the first person with the title President of the United States was not Washington but the man who presided over the Continental Congress, from the earlier US Constitution.

Raab discusses the history of manuscript collecting and fake documents. His father had built up an impressive library on both, and the younger Raab particularly liked Charles Hamilton, Great Forgers and Famous Fakes. On his first day in the library he was able to identify a new Abraham Lincoln fake.

The book is filled with interesting examples of his successful hunt for significant documents and collections and his ability to find buyers for these collections.

While very fascinating, the big lesson in the book is the importance of knowing provenance, knowing how books or manuscripts found their way to where you viewed them. At Trent Valley Archives we live on a more modest scale. I have been appraising historical manuscripts and ephemera for some fifty years, mainly to determine fair market value for donations so that donors may get income tax receipts. On occasion we have used outside appraisers, and I have done appraisals at other institutions. The same rules apply. One has to look closely at the documents, assess the route they followed since their creation, the quality and condition of the documents and the likely markets for such documents. Raab’s book is so well written and full of detailed examples it should appeal to all archival appraisers. It might be fun to write my memoirs of the life of an historian and archivist, even though none of my finds would get the national attention that some of Raab’s discoveries received.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The deadline for submitting ideas, articles, and links to online resources for the next edition is **16 October 2021 (for a November publication date)**. We are looking for authors to provide:

- Regular columns or features, particularly on appraising special media;
- Single articles, up to 1000 words in length;
- Profiles on specific auctions or sales precedents;
- Brief news or regional updates; etc.

Content should be practical or theoretical, and can focus on a specific format, appraisal issues, standards, and other subjects of interest. For those who participated in one of the Masterclasses: let us know if there are topics you would like addressed again, in more depth. Send us your ideas – we want to know what will be of most interest and value to you.

The newsletter is intended to help keep all NAAB associates, affiliates and PNA members up-to-date and well-informed on anything relating to monetary appraisal in Canada. If you are an expert in appraisal – or if you just received your PNA designation – we want to hear from you.

Please contact us at: naabnewsletter@archivescanada.ca

The committee members (in alphabetical order) are:

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With special thanks to Isabelle Alain, CCA

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