

# Electronic Dialogues: The ABC's of E-Mail for Historians

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For most historians, the computer is a closed system, an introspective writing tool. Increasingly, however historians are using their computers to provide very fast, low cost communication with scholars in Canada, the United States, Latin America, Asia, and throughout Europe. Articles, conference announcements, job postings, and bibliographies are regularly sent, not only to individuals, but also distributed by electronic mailing lists to the subscribers of special interest forums, including those for historians.

If you work at home on a wordprocessor you will be able to use these systems with the aid of a modem, communications software, and an account on your university mainframe.

In general, mainframe mailing systems usually consist of three parts: the software that sends messages, a NAMES file of addresses you use regularly, and a MAILBOX which holds messages that you can read, discard, save or answer. The mailing software at each university may differ, so do talk to the consultants at your university's computer center for specifics. (My examples are drawn from the common CM/VMS system.)

To send an electronic message I type "MAIL (ACCOUNT NAME of RECIPIENT) AT (NODE)". Most systems use "@" instead of "AT". After a prompt for my name and a subject I type in the message. The electronic address is automatically added to the letter. One keystroke sends it and an acknowledgement lets you know it arrived. At most universities, this service is free to faculty and students, or available at a minimal cost. My recent letter to Don Mabry, author of "Electronic Mail and Historians" in the February issue of the *AHA Perspectives*, reached him at Mississippi State in six minutes and his answer was in Ottawa at the end of the day. Such speed is why some users refer to traditional postal systems as "snail mail".

The NAMES file stores addresses and it allows you to save messages in NOTEBOOKS linked to some or all of your addresses. I use a notebook for a WordPerfect forum, another for CHA business, one for the HISTORY group and a general one for everything else. Another feature of

the NAMES file is the ability to use shorthand. Rather than typing a full name and node address each time you send a message you can assign a nickname. For example, when I type "MAIL CHA" the programme looks up the full address in NAMES and adds the university (node) address.

The MAILBOX aspect is just as straightforward. When you logon to the mainframe, you are told what messages are waiting. I type "MAIL" and a list appears, giving the date and time the messages arrived, the names and nodes of the sender, and most importantly a brief subject description. Some discussion groups generate a lot of mail, and subject headings let the recipient quickly spot the chaff and delete it. Mailbox lets you read the messages, sort them, delete them or reply immediately, or save them in a notebook.

Forwarding allows you to send an interesting item on to another person together with a message from you.

Once you have the hang of handling E-mail, you can sample some of the discussion lists of interest to historians. Each forum is based at a LISTSERVER, located at a node. Currently, the computer systems at 2700 "nodes", each a college, university, organization or research center, are linked together through electronic networks. The LISTSERVER stores the discussion group's activity logs or archives, files of common interest which can be retrieved by participants, such as bibliographies or articles, and the list of subscribers. It also automatically receives all messages for the list and then distributes them to the names on the subscription list. Anyone can send mail to a list but only the  
...*Electronic*, p. 11

## Archives Notes

compiled by George F. Henderson

*Archives notes is an annual feature of the CHA Bulletin which draws the recent acquisitions of Canadian archives to the attention of scholars. Material for inclusion should be sent to George F. Henderson, Assistant Archivist, Queen's University Archives, Kathleen Ryan Hall, Queen's University, Kingston, ON K7L 3N6.*

**McMASTER UNIVERSITY** (William Ready Division of Archival and Research Collections, 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4L6). A recent acquisition has been the Westinghouse Canada Inc. archives. Extending to over ten linear feet of records, the collection consists of photographs, catalogues, employee magazines, invoices, contracts and general correspondence, dating from 1897 to the mid 1970s. One of the most valuable and interesting aspects of the Westinghouse archives is the extensive collection of photographs which spans the period from 1897 to 1970. There are photographs of company executives, plant workers, buildings, and the products manufactured by the company. Another important part of the collection is the *Westinghouse Employees' Magazine*. This employee magazine with monthly

issues from March, 1943 to December, 1946 provides insight into the working conditions during the Second World War and shortly after.

Another important accession has been the papers of Robert M.B. Fulford, one of Canada's top literary and cultural critics. His papers represent all aspects of his career to 1988, and are particularly rich in resources concerning his memoirs, *Best Seat in the House* (1988), and in correspondence with many persons active in literature and the arts in Canada.

A third major accession is the files of Canadian authors from the archives of the American publisher, Dodd, Mead and Co. The files contain letters written by important Canadian authors, contracts sent to these authors for their signature and revision, correspondence with other publishers, internal memoranda, sales figures, printing information and publicity material. Among the authors represented are Bliss Carman, Bronwen Davies, Philip Freund, John Murray Gibbon, Grey Owl, W.G. Hardy, Stephen Leacock and Martha Ostenso.

...*Archives*, p. 8

# Archives Notes

from page 3

## QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

(Kathleen Ryan Hall, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario K7L 3N6). Recent accessions include the papers of Grant Macdonald, 1938-1983; William Felix Edward Morley, 1965-1984; Archibald William Currie; Richard Sankey Malone, 1957-1984; Francis Moses Wafer, a Canadian doctor who was a surgeon with the Union Army during the American Civil War, 1863-1864; H. Rex Wilson, 1940-1990; Allie Vibert Douglas, 1920-1984; Isobel Skelton, 1908-1950; Gorse Howarth, former Director, Foreign Investment Review Agency; Artur Z. Arthur, 1950-1990; a letterbook (with poetry) of Harriet Cartwright and Mary Cartwright Dobbs, 1827-1845; and Joy Parr, 1975-1990. Additions to the papers of William Roger Graham, c.1932-1988 and Leonard D. Hopkins, c.1970's to 1990 have also been received.

Additions to the microfilm collections include 524 reels for the William Lyon Mackenzie King Papers, J1 Series and J4 Series, 1887-1950 (from the National Archives of Canada), the Heir and Devisee Commission, 1797 to 1895 (from the Ontario Archives) and the Cemetery Records (from the Ontario Archives).

Additions to the Queen's University Records include files from the Department of Alumni Affairs, 1926-1988, the Theological College, 1983-1990, the Alma Mater Society, 1980-1988, the School of Nursing, 1966-1981, the Office of the Secretary, 1926-1980, the Faculty of Education, 1988-1989.

*Frontenac County Records: An Inventory* has just been published. This guide describes the records of Frontenac County which contains documents dating from the 1830's to the 1970's. Copies are available from the Queen's University Archives at \$10.00 per copy.

**YORK UNIVERSITY** (Archives and Special Collections, 4700 Keele Street, North York, Ontario M3J 1P3). Significant additions have been made to the Margaret Laurence papers, the Norman Levine papers and Bill Bissett papers. The editorial and office records of the literary and poetry journal, *Waves*, have been processed and a large addition to the papers of the Canadian composer, teacher and exponent of Canadian cultural policy, Louis Applebaum, has been accessioned and listed. The Archives has also received a major

donation of administrative and artistic records of the Danny Grossman Dance Company.

The Archives has received a major donation of material from the caricaturist and popular commentator, Ben Wicks. The material includes tapes of the "The World of Wicks" television broadcasts and a large number of cartoons including "The Outcasts". Additional scripts and administrative files from the C.B.C. television drama section have been accessioned and a microfiche finding-aid is available from the Archives. The Archives has received additional television and radio scripts from the popular playwright, Lionel Siegal. Additions have been received to the archive of the Association of Cultural Executives.

The Michael Posluns Collection (c.1966-c.1987) concentrates on native issues and includes a wealth of recorded material including interviews with tribal elders, personal recollections and oral history and some ceremonials. The Robert Owen Foundation records and library (c.1911-c.1984) is a collection of major importance. The records document the activities of the Foundation, particularly its support of workers' co-operatives in Canada. Included in the archive is a strong component of the personal archive of the Robert Owen Foundation's founder, Henri Lassere, who had a long and active correspondence with workers' co-operatives in Europe, Japan

and South America. His publications are also included in the strong pamphlet collection on socialist issues and co-operatives maintained by the Foundation.

Indexing of three hitherto unlisted series of photographs from the photo archives of the *Toronto Telegram* newspaper is nearing completion.

**UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH** (Archival and Special Collections, The Library, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1). The University of Guelph has recently received the Leverette Collection of over 75,000 stereographs. In addition the personal archives of journalist and historian Willson Woodside who was based in Europe and reported on world events from 1930 to the 1960's has been acquired. The theatre archives received the long awaited deposit of the records of the Toronto Workshop Productions as well as some smaller collections including materials relating to the careers of actor Barry McGregor, artistic director Malcolm Black and lighting designer Jeffrey Dallas.

A guide to the collections under the title *Past Forward: A Guide to the Archival Collections, University of Guelph Library* has just been published. It is divided into two parts, one for major university record series including the founding colleges of Macdonald Institute, the Ontario Agricultural College and the Ontario Veterinary

## Historical Papers Gets New Title, New Look

After long deliberation and consideration of a number of different possibilities, the CHA Council adopted the recommendation of the CHA Publications Committee to change the name of *Historical Papers/Communications historiques*. The new title will be the *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association/Revue de la Société historique du Canada*.

The newly named *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association/Revue de la Société historique du Canada* will continue to be an annual publication containing the best papers presented at the Annual General Meeting. It will however, be given a new look to accompany the change in title.

Council agreed to change the title of the journal to make it more clearly identifiable with the CHA. The new title will also emphasize the fact that the articles published are rigorously peer reviewed and selected from over 100 submissions each year.

According to editor Dana Johnson, the revamped journal will be numbered as "New Series" and start with volume one. He hopes this will clear up the longstanding difficulty presented to libraries, and scholars wishing to find or cite *Historical Papers*. The format of the publication meant that it was catalogued and cited variously as a journal or as conference proceedings.