visit? (Forgetting to ask these obvious questions may lead to immense research frustration.)

2. How are the collections organized? What is the physical arrangement with which you will be dealing and in what format is catalogued material? Is there access to originals and is special permission required to obtain such access?

3. What percentage of holdings are uncatalogued? If accessible, how long will it take to retrieve uncatalogued material? Might it be worth retrieving, or is it in a disorganized state?

4. What level of subject indexing or finding aids has been attempted? Are captions and pictures separated or are the caption cards image-bearing?

5. Will captions be provided with reproductions you order? What are other policies and costs regarding reproductions? Can photocopies be provided? What is the minimum length of time required to process the order?

It may still be difficult to determine how much time is adequate for the task at hand for those engaged in picture research on broad themes and in material history. It may be as well to allow more than seems necessary or is advised by an archivist or librarian, given the quantity of uncatalogued material, and the state of subject indexes, cross-references, and captions in so many picture collections.

This situation might be improved if patrons of picture collections expressed clearly (and in advance) their research interests to the archivist or librarian, and later offered a few constructive suggestions on indexing, captions, and other matters which seem to be of general concern. Thereby, they would be helping one another in a scholarly community and contributing to the increasing importance of pictures in the historical record.

NOTES


2. The project was announced and described more fully in Research Bulletin no. 170, "Annotated Illustrations of Domestic Activities in Canada, ca. 1840-1920: A Description of the Project and a Classification Scheme," by Hilary Russell, Parks Canada, December 1981.

3. These will be called "pictures" in this note, notwithstanding that the term is imprecise. Collections of maps, architectural drawings, moving pictures, and so on are not included or considered here.

4. A reproduction print ordered by the researcher will result in the item being catalogued.


6. Public Archives of Canada, "Descriptive and Subject Cataloguing at the National Photography Collection," 1983. It is intended to "facilitate communication between professionals."


Manuscript series
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Janet Holmes

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