

An introduction to archival research and writing forest history

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Looking Back, Looking Forward: The Ongoing History of Canada's Forests
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In this session we will learn

- to distinguish between primary and secondary sources
- the difference between an archive and a library
- how to navigate archival culture
- how to locate specific info in an archive
- how to craft compelling narrative



- **Primary sources** (often found in archives)

Originate from time under question, unique documents, independent, reliable.

- **Secondary sources** (often found in libraries)

Published books or articles by people who are interpreting primary sources or past events.

David Douglas (1799-1834)



- modest Scottish upbringing
- 1820 botanic garden Glasgow University
- recommended to Royal Horticultural Society, London
- three trips: 1823-4, 1825-7, 1829-34 (journal destroyed 1833).
- mysterious death

General secondary sources:

Wikipedia, Cdn Dictionary of biography

Journal articles, books

Primary sources:

Douglas' published journal

The original journals and correspondence

- Librarians

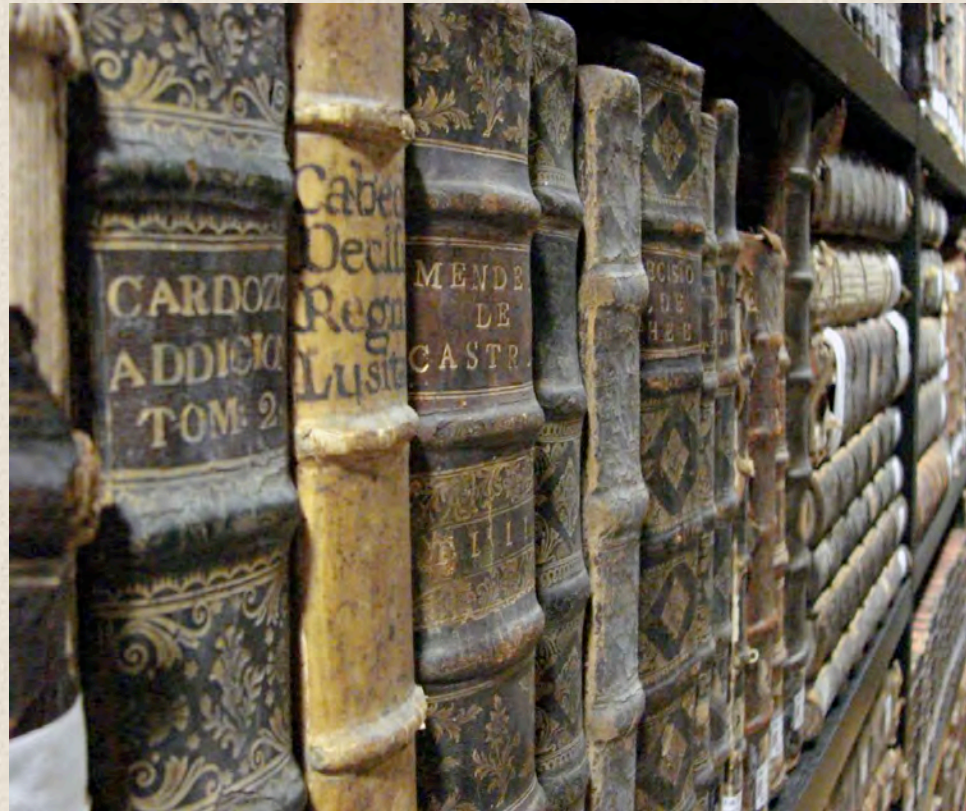
- decide what to include in their holdings
- impose a universal(?) classification system
- descriptions made at the item level

- Archivists

- decide whether to keep or discard records
- describe and attempt to bring order
- descriptions made at the collection level

In the archives

- getting access
 - record groups,
 - record types,
 - finding aids



Turning Primary Sources into Narrative

- identify author, time/place, events and ideas
- context, under what circumstances was record created?
- what does this tell us about period in question?
- critical readings include
 - understanding of author's motives, intended audience
 - relationship between author and event
 - what is missing or distorted
 - identify unspoken assumptions

Please get in touch!

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http://www.foresthistory.org/research/Canadian_archives_Fr.pdf


http://www.foresthistory.org/research/Canadian_archives_brochure.pdf

Preserving Canada's Forest History

By understanding the past, we shape a brighter future.




- Identify valuable forest history records
- Locate appropriate archival repositories
- Bring together donors and archives
- Collaborate with forest history community
- Encourage forest history research and writing



Préservons l'histoire forestière du Canada

Comprendre le passé pour façonner un meilleur avenir.



- Identifier des collections de documents importants pour l'histoire forestière
- Repérer des centres d'archives qualifiés
- Établir des liens entre donateurs d'archives et centres d'archives
- Collaborer avec la communauté intéressée par l'histoire de la forêt
- Encourager la recherche et les publications sur l'histoire de la forêt

