

**LEARNING MODULE #4**  
**RIDEAU CANAL RESEARCH METHODS**

## **Learning Objectives**

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To Learn:

1. How to use secondary sources to locate and find primary sources
2. How to use your secondary sources more effectively
3. How to be a better researcher
4. More about archival repositories

## **Introduction**

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There are many methods of research, and each individual will ultimately settle into his or her own techniques and practices. Examine the volume of secondary sources to be found on the Rideau Canal, these resources can be used as tools with which to locate primary source material. Sometimes reading the bibliography/endnotes/footnotes from the book first will give you the most valuable information with which to begin your research. You may begin to see patterns in other individuals' research, such as the use of the same archival documents from the same repositories.

## **Learning Module**

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As many secondary sources have built upon primary sources in their works, you will be able to find the sources they consulted right there in the body of the text, footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies. Sometimes you will need to hunt deeper for these sources because the format for citations is not always consistent from one book to another. Older publications by private agencies often allowed the writer to use his or her own citation methods, to which you may not be accustomed. Here is an example where the citations were found, sorted by chapter, at the end of the publication.

Rideau Corridor: the Effect of a Canal System on a Frontier Region," 1832-1895," (unpublished M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1972) and Robert B. Sneyd, "The Role of the Rideau Waterway, 1826-56," (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1965).

Conclusion

- 1 PAC, MG13, WO44, Vol. 32, p. 215, Wellington Memorandum, 27 January 1827, quoted in Raudzens, "The British Ordnance Department in Canada, 1815-55," pp. 137-38.
- 2 Raudzens, *ibid.*, pp. 110-11, 125, and 162-64.
- 3 PAC, MG24, Dalhousie Muniments, Section No. 3, Reel A534, n.p., Lt. Col. By to Lord Dalhousie, 14 January 1833.
- 4 PAC, MG13, WO44, Vol. 16, Reel B-217, p. 19, Lt. Col. By to Major General Pilkington, Inspector General of Fortifications, 22 July 1833.
- 5 Raudzens, "The British Ordnance Department in Canada, 1815-55," pp. 115 and 162.
- 6 The economic impact of the Rideau Canal has not been treated in the present study. It is extraneous to the argument being pursued, and has been developed at length elsewhere: viz. in Robert B. Sneyd, "The Role of the Rideau Waterway, 1826-1856," M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1965; and Victor A. George, "The Rideau Corridor: The Effect of a Canal System on a Frontier Region, 1832-1895," M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1972.
- 7 PAC, MG13, WO55, Vol. 1551 (7B), Reel B-1280, p. 144, Memorandum by the Duke of Wellington, 31 March 1841, p. 144.
- 8 These charges are made in Raudzens, "The British Ordnance Department in Canada, 1815-55," pp. 110, 143, 162, and 199. The quote is taken from p. 110.

From: Passfield, R. W. (1980). Engineering the defence of the Canadas: Lt. Col. John By and the Rideau Canal. Parks Canada: Manuscript Report Series, No. 425, Ottawa: Parks Canada, 479 p., illus.

1. Look at this page from the endnotes in Passfield's Engineering the Defence of the Canadas. What do you notice about these endnotes? What makes it difficult to locate the records he is referencing?
  - Many Rideau Canal sources will cite PAC (Public Archives of Canada) as a source for documents. They may also cite NAC (National Archives of Canada) and more recent publications may use LAC (Library and Archives Canada). These are all the same institution, but over the years the name of the repository has changed with different Acts of Parliament. You cannot rely on the age of the document to determine the use of the acronym. Newer publications may use the old PAC acronym for one of two reasons: (a) they were copying the reference from another source, or (b) the citation from the institution used the older reference.
    - Acronyms from Library and Archives Canada will also include NMC or MC or CMC. These stand for National Map Collection (NMC), Map Collection (MC), or Canadian Map Collection (CMC).
  - Library and Archives Canada has two main ways of categorizing the textual records in its repository: MG (manuscript group) for government-related and created records; and RG (record group) for privately donated

or created records. When you see MG or RG (followed by a number), that is an indicator of who created the records and an identifier.

- WO44 stands for War Office. This too is an identifier at Library and Archives Canada. There are many War Offices, but only some of them had a role to play in the history of the Rideau Canal. Some of the War Office records used in Rideau Canal research are War Office 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 54, and 55.
- Doctoral and master's theses are also useful sources of information when you are researching. Not only can you use them as secondary sources themselves, but you can look at their bibliographies for clues to primary source material as well.

2. Passfield mentions two theses in his endnotes. How would you locate these?

- All theses in Canada are searchable through Library and Archives Canada, with many of them available right off the site:  
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/thesescanada/index-e.html>.
- Alternatively, you can use AMICUS to determine other locations where they might be available:  
<http://amicus.collectionscanada.gc.ca/aaweb/aalogine.htm>
- If you are at a university, check your own library catalogue or try the inter-library loan system. You may be able to borrow and/or view these theses from other universities free of charge.

3. What does the Passfield endnote citation PAC, MG13, WO44, Vol. 16, Reel B-217 mean? How can you locate this resource?

- PAC means Public Archives of Canada, which is known today as Library and Archives Canada. That is where this resource can be found.
- The MG13 is the identifying manuscript group of this resource.
- WO44 stands for War Office 44 and is the creator of this resource.
- When you see a Reel number that is an indication that you will be using a microfilm. The Vol. is the volume number in a series of reels.
- Library and Archives Canada finding aids are available for all the MGs. You can find these binders on the second floor in the Ottawa reference room. You can also search online finding aids by looking here:  
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/lac-bac/search/arch>.
- Use this link and search for WO44.
  - What did you find out? WO44 stands for the Ordnance Department. This department oversaw the construction of the

Rideau Canal. Lt. Col. John By was an Officer of the Royal Engineers. The Royal Engineers were commissioned by the Ordnance Department to undertake the engineering and to oversee the construction of the canal. This group of records has correspondence, drawings, estimates, and other evidence of this early period in the canal's history.