

Clio Under Attack: The Teaching of History in Secondary Schools and What We Should Do About It.

by Gail Cuthbert Brandt, CHA Vice-President

As recent articles in our newsletter have indicated¹, the teaching of history in secondary schools is in a state of crisis. Educational bureaucrats appear committed to effecting major curricular overhauls which erode the amount of history taught at the secondary school level. Social studies, politics, economics and law are rapidly replacing history courses, and in some schools, history departments mount far more courses in these areas than they do in their own discipline. Many history teachers to whom I have spoken feel unhappy, frustrated and fairly helpless to reverse the current trend. They are actively searching for ways to keep history alive as a distinct discipline and an integral part of the educational system.

There are several reasons why I believe the Canadian Historical Association should seriously consider how it might more effectively serve this constituency of history educators. First of all, the promotion of history in Canada is central to the mandate of the CHA, and as an association, we have taken several important initiatives such as the creation of the regional history prizes to stimulate a public appreciation for history. Moreover, it is in the direct interest of our members who teach at the post-secondary level to ensure that students who proceed to higher education have already acquired a rudimentary knowledge of history. If history continues to be diluted in the secondary schools, there will be significant negative repercussions for the numbers and quality of students who choose history as their major area of study at university.

Another reason for assessing our role regarding non-university teachers of history concerns our present membership, and our potential for growth. We already have members who are high school

teachers, for whom we provide no specialized services. Many of these individuals possess graduate degrees and consider themselves to be professional historians, but their needs and interests are not identical to those of university professors.

Moreover, a significant proportion of university history professors started their careers as secondary school teachers, and continue to have an ongoing interest in history at the secondary school level. It is they who are often brought in as

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Computing and History: The CHA Adopts a Long Term Plan of Action

by Gérard Bouchard, Council member responsible for the Historical Profession

In the fall of 1988, the Council of the CHA assigned the task of examining and conceiving a plan of action for the use of computers in history to one of its members (G. Bouchard). The targeted objective was to identify and put into place terms and conditions that could facilitate the integration of computers into the profession as smoothly and efficiently as possible (see article in *CHA Newsletter*, Winter 1989, pp. 4-5).

In pursuit of this objective, an ad hoc committee was struck and chaired by José Igartua (History, UQAM). During the last two years, four topics were pursued:

- 1 the technical and legal rules and regulations,
- 2 a user policy,
- 3 the building and administration of data banks,
- 4 computing and the teaching of history.

The following nine persons formed the ad hoc committee:

- Bouchard, Gérard, UQAC
- Campbell, Gail, Mount Saint Vincent
- Coates, Ken, University of Victoria
- Darroch, Gordon, York University
- Gaffield, Chad, University of Ottawa
- Gavrel, Sue, National Archives of Canada

- Gervers, Michael, University of Toronto
- Igartua, José, UQAM (Chair of ad hoc committee)
- Vallières, Marc, Université Laval

A final report was submitted to the CHA Council and adopted at its November 1990 meeting. The CHA Committee on Computing was formally accepted as a

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Calls for Papers

The Canadian Study of Parliament Group will host **Canadian Constitutionalism: 1791-1991 - A Conference to Celebrate Two Hundred Years of Constitutional Government in Canada, Ottawa, November 1-2**. Papers are welcomed on constitutionalism, limited government, representation, Canada's constitutional history and parliamentary tradition and it is hoped that a selection of the papers will be published as a collection. Abstracts of 300 words or less should be sent by July 31, to the Secretary, Canadian Study of Parliament Group, P.O. Box 533, Centre Block, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A4.

The Annual Meeting of the Oral History Society, Cleveland, October 15-18, 1992 invites proposals for papers, sessions, panels or media presentations. Submissions to be made by December 1, 1991 to Donna M. DeBlasio, Program Chair, Youngstown Historical Centre of Industry and Labor, P.O. Box 533, Youngstown, Ohio, 44501, USA; 216-743-5934.

Perspectives on Witchcraft: Rethinking the 17th Century New England Experience, Salem, Massachusetts, June 19-21, 1992. Send abstracts by September 1, 1991 to Anne Farnham, Essex Institute, 132 Essex St., Salem, MA, 01970, USA.

The Atlantic Studies Conference and the British Columbia Studies Conference, St. John's, Newfoundland, May 1992 and Victoria, B.C., November 12-14, 1992. Six core sessions will be part of the programme for both conferences on the topics of: Native Peoples; Resources and Economic Development; Federal-Provincial Relations; Women's Studies; Working Class Studies; Literature and Art; Region, Community and Rural Life. For the core sessions send proposals and short c.v.s to both Eric Sager, History Department, University of Victoria, P.O. Box 3045, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3P4 and Rosemary Ommer, Research Director, ISER, Memorial University, St. John's, Nfld. A1C 5S7. For non-core sessions for the Atlantic Studies conference send proposals to Rosemary Ommer or J.K. Hiller at the same address. Deadline for both core and non-core sessions is April 30, 1991.

The Third Latin American Congress of History of Science and Technology will be on the theme **America in the Formation of a New World: 500 Years of Scientific Exchanges, Mexico City, January 12-16, 1992**. Send paper proposals for papers in English to Nathan Reingold, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 20560; 202-357-2183.

By Sea and By Air: Five Centuries of Interactions Between the Low Countries and the Americas, 1492-1992, Leiden, The Netherlands, June 4-6, 1992. Send paper proposals to Ms. S. Tabeling, Department of History, University of Leiden, P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands.

Conference on the History of Christianity, Notre Dame, Indiana, March 26-28, 1992. Send paper proposals by June 15, 1991 to History Conference, Cushwa Center, University of Notre Dame, 614 Hesburgh Library, Notre Dame, IN, 46556; 219-239-5441.

Annual Meeting of the Economic and Business Historical Society, Seattle, April 23-25, 1992. Send abstracts by January 20, 1992 to David O. Whitten, EBHS, Department of Economics, Auburn University, AL, 36849-5242, USA; 205-844-2928, FAX 205-844-4016.

Marriage and Family in Western History, Ottawa, May 13-16, 1992. Send proposals by October 1, 1991 to Roderick Phillips, Department of History, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON, K1S 5B6.

International Conference on the Columbus Quincentenary, Newport News, Virginia, October 9-12, 1992. Send abstracts by October 1, 1991 to Tim Morgan, Christopher Newport College, Newport News, VA, 23605-2998, USA; 804-594-7158, FAX 804-594-7713.

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Computing was formally accepted as a sub-committee of the CHA. It will operate as a network, will hold business meetings during the annual meetings of the CHA and will be able to submit session proposals or special activities to the programme committee. This is to take effect during the next annual meeting in Kingston. The Committee will be chaired by José Igartua until such time as committee members or Professor Igartua himself decides otherwise.

The final report prepared by the ad hoc committee contains detailed technical studies including twenty recommendations. The new Committee on Computing will work to implement and prioritize the recommendations. The final report is available upon request from the CHA Secretariat (*History and Computing in Canada: Terms of Reference and Plan of Action*. Ottawa, Canadian Historical Association, 1990, 135 pages, under the direction of José Igartua).

On behalf of the CHA, I would like to thank Professor José Igartua who graciously accepted the chair of the ad hoc committee and the direction of the new one, as well as the other members of the ad hoc committee who brought an exemplary collaboration to the project.

Editorial Policy

The CHA *Bulletin* is published quarterly by the Canadian Historical Association. Notices, letters, call for papers and articles of two pages or less, double-spaced, are welcome on topics of interest to historians, preferably accompanied by a translation into the other official language. Deadlines for submission of articles, etc., are the following:

Summer issue: **May 31, 1991**
Autumn issue: **August 31, 1991**
Winter issue: **November 30, 1991**
Spring issue: **February 28, 1992**

We reserve the right to edit submissions. Opinions expressed in articles etc. are those of the authors and not necessarily the CHA. Direct correspondence to: Newsletter, Canadian Historical Association, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N3; FAX 613-567-3110.

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