
EX LIBRIS NEWS

Newsletter of the Ex Libris Association

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CONTENTS

| | Page | | Page |
|---|------|--------------------------------------|------|
| Editor's Notes | 2 | In Memoriam | 36 |
| Membership Eligibility | 2 | Edward Gerald Brown | |
| From the President | 3 | Evelyn Matilda Campbell | |
| Elizabeth Homer Morton Fund | 3 | Samuel Stevens Campbell | |
| From the Ontario Archives to UWO, by Dr. James J. Talman | 4 | Charles Deane Kent | |
| | | Ilene Male | |
| | | Margaret Moore | |
| | | Samuel D. Neill | |
| | | ENCLOSURES | |
| Mind and Manuscript: the Work of Historian-Teacher Fred Landon, 1881-1969, by Dr. Patricia Skidmore | 10 | Program for 7th AGM, 1992 | |
| | | 1993 Membership or subscription Form | |
| | | Conference Registration Form | |
| Our Fourth Librarian — Fred Landon, by Elizabeth Spicer | 22 | | |
| Fred Landon, 1889-1969, by Frederick H. Armstrong | 24 | | |
| The Day the Sun Shone Again on the Kremlin, by Sheila Laidlaw | 28 | | |
| A Major Exhibition at the University of Toronto, by Gerald Prodrick | 33 | | |
| Miscellany | 34 | | |
| Retirements | 35 | | |
| Awards | 36 | | |

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EDITOR'S NOTES

In this issue we present the paper given by Dr. James J. Talman at last year's (1991) Annual Meeting. The full flavour of his talk can best be savored by a "live reading" with throwaway pauses as only JJT can deliver them. We continue the London theme with three contributions relating to Dr. Fred Landon, a man of considerable status in each of his chosen professions.

It must be acknowledged that this issue's contents present a rather narrow view of our goals and geographic coverage but an editor can only process what is received. Again you are implored to help us all out by letting us know of happenings past and present in your neighbourhood and for this reason I especially thank Sheila Laidlaw and Gerry Prodrick.

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Although the majority of our present members have retired from service in librarianship, membership is open to others interested in the program of the Association as it refers to library history.

Enquiries about membership should be directed to the Association's office.

Please note that the mailing address of the Association is:

Ex Libris Association
PO Box 536, Station Q
Toronto, ON
M4T 2M5

FOR YOUR DIARY

19 November 92 AGM Ex Libris Association, Toronto

20 November 92:

- Write a biographical sketch of a librarian from the past and send to the Editor of *Ex Libris News*.
- Research and write an article on some historical aspect of a Canadian library or library association and send to the Editor of *Ex Libris News*.
- Write an article that would be of interest to your colleagues in the Ex Libris Association.

by February 28, 1993.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The seventh annual meeting of the Association is approaching and once again we thank the Executive and members of the Ontario Library Association for accommodating us during their annual conference.

The program for the meeting is included with this issue and it promises a lively exchange of views by our library consultant experts, Dr. Margaret Beckman and Albert Bowron on the changes, good and bad, in the field over the last thirty years. In addition, we look forward to Maurice McLuhan's perspective on his famous brother.

Copies of the newsletter are being mailed to prospective members along with the invitation to attend the meeting and to join the Association. Please pass on the invitation to anyone who has not heard from us.

Looking forward to seeing you in Toronto on November 19th.

Janette White, President

Announcement of a Grant of \$15,000. from the
Elizabeth Homer Morton Fund

The Ex Libris Association in conjunction with the Canadian Library Association announces a grant of \$15,000. from a fund set up to honour Elizabeth Homer Morton, a founding member of member of the Canadian Library Association and its first Executive Director, for the compilation and publication of a history of the Canadian Library Association from its historical beginnings to 1990. Proposals are invited from interested persons. For further information contact:

Janette White, President
at the Association Office

Members of the Board in 1986 to 1989 when it met at SLIS in London will be pleased to learn that Clara Chu who was a great assistance in the early development of Ex Libris particularly our membership lists, successfully defended her thesis in August and will receive her PhD at the fall convocation at UWO. She is now a member of the faculty of UCLA in Los Angeles.

FROM THE ONTARIO ARCHIVES TO THE UWO, by James J. Talman
(Transcript of his talk at the 6th AGM on November 14, 1991)

I welcome this chance to talk to my friends because it gives me an opportunity to record the names of people who have been protecting me and carrying me my whole career. Of all the librarians I know there are only five whom I could do without. And to save time I will name them. One, I don't miss George Locke; two, I didn't get on all that well with Winifred Barnstead; three, four and five don't really matter. One was Andrew Osborne who was the Dean of the School of Library Science (at UWO). They were the lesser people. Where's Bob Blackburn? He will agree with me. Another was Robert Downs who inspected the university libraries and the last, a name I have forgotten but he was the Chief Librarian of Springfield College in Massachusetts. I never met him but he was an enemy of mine. Anything I say about anybody else today is meant to be kind. And if, by a slip of the tongue, I say something derogatory, stand up and say "change that". This is a small group and it will be more conversational than a formal lecture and so if there is something you don't understand, ask.

I plan to start with the Ontario Archives. Colonel Fraser, Alexander Fraser for whom I have kind words in case they don't come out, was appointed Archivist in 1903 and he was a good archivist. He acquired a lot of good material, land records and the like and brought out twenty-three good annual reports. In 1930, he was then seventy, he wanted an assistant but he didn't want anybody from Toronto. I don't know why. I think it had to do, and this is conjecture, that maybe Toronto was slow in giving him an honorary degree. So he wrote to Western to ask for the name of a recent graduate with a PhD and they gave him the name of a man, Gilbert Tucker. Gilbert was smart. He was not on the tenure stream at Yale

but at Western they thought he was unemployed. But he wasn't and instead had gone to The University of Minnesota. Fraser wrote back and asked, "Who else have you got?" They said, "Well we have a recent graduate named Talman. Unfortunately his degree is from Toronto but he would be all right."

So there was I, on the staff, never intending to go into archives work, assistant to Colonel Fraser. And what a staff. I have to take time to describe it. Miss. McClung was really smart. She did the calendaring of documents. She was tops. There were also a secretary, a filing clerk, a man named Irving who was seventy-five and a good scholar in military history, and another man whose name I don't remember. In those days you would have called him half-witted: today you would say he was less able but he was more than less able. All he could do was unfold and refold paper. What made me mad was that archives are for important but retired documents. Here the Archives was used as a place to bury alive, relatives of politicians. And I never knew whom this half-witted guy was related to. There was also a young man named Reid who had a grade three education but he had a mind like a trap and he taught me about Loyalists. He spent all his time looking up Loyalists, gathering information. He also ran the photostat machine. I persuaded him to go and improve his English. His father was the best boot and shoemaker in Toronto. He made orthopedic shoes and I must say my shoes were always kept in good repair. But I got Reid to go and take remedial English for three years. In his third year he was chosen to thank the teacher for the course. Before he was done he wrote a fine article for *Ontario History* or what preceded *Ontario History* on Herkimer, Johan Jost Herkimer so good that the scholar who was the

authority on Herkimer of the Royal Canadian Northwest Mounted Police asked me who was this man Reid? He also did a couple of reviews for *Canadian Historical Review*. Coming from a grade three education to that level of scholarship I think was good. Who else? We had a man named Carstairs who had organized the Conservative campaign in 1908 and we had a piper named McLeod - I don't know what he did. Well, that's it. There was Talman, twenty-six years old, a farm boy only twelve years from the farm, stuck with that group. I had to edit the annual reports. I see Margaret Banks in the audience. If you want to know anything more about the Archives in later years, ask Margaret.

So that's how I got into the Archives. They were located in the southwest corner of the old building. The light came through prisms in the roof which were waterproofed with tar and in the hot summer days the tar used to drop down your neck and onto the documents. So today if you go to the Ontario Archives and you find a document covered with tar, that means it was in the old building.

Well soon after 1930 they moved the Archives to the Whitney building. I don't know how many stories, was it 14? with windows all around. I felt for the documents. The sun would come in and burn the lot. It was a terrible place for them. The view was superb and when scholars came to town and needed a temporary office to work they came to us. We had Bert McKay who later was an ambassador in Norway; a Frenchman named Giraud who wrote the definitive work on the Métis. These visiting scholars were friendly people and I got to know them well. It was a fine space but not for archives.

The Deputy Minister of Education was A.H.U. Colquhoun who also figures in this story. Colquhoun and Fraser didn't speak. Fraser came from Inverness and Colquhoun

came from the south, a Lowlander. I figured, in my simple way, that this was a Scottish difference. But when I looked into it further I found it was tied to the history of Canadian journalism. In Toronto there were two newspapers, the *Mail* and the *Empire* and these two men had been connected to different papers. Then the *Mail* and the *Empire* combined and I think Fraser got a job senior to A.H.U. Colquhoun. At any rate part of my time was taking messages between them as they would not communicate directly. I have to bring Colquhoun in because that contact led me to education.

But all things changed on June 10th, 1934. Hepburn became the Premier of Ontario and the first place he gunned for was the Archives. Very quickly we lost Colonel Fraser; we lost Carstairs; then we lost the piper and the halfwit and when they found what a researcher Reid was they stole him from the Archives for Treasury where they paid him about \$1300 a year. The first year he was in that job he brought in a million dollars in company taxes that hadn't been found before. He and I would go for a walk at noon, I had kept up my friendship with him, we would go into a store and he would look at something and say, "Canadian eh? - you know what that is - its a company that doesn't pay taxes." After the war I got a letter from him. He wanted to go to Income Tax so I went to the Income Tax in London, and wrote a letter to Clark, the man whose name used to be on some Canadian dollar bills. I told him about Reid and he said, "Well as you know I am not the Minister of Revenue but I have given them the name of Reid". And so Reid got a job in Income Tax. Kaye Lamb wrote to me once and had a question he wanted me to answer and I said, "Well it's tricky. I think Reid knows it a little better than I do." Kaye replied, "I can't bother him: he's too high in Income Tax for me". So the Archives lost

Reid. The Secretary got married and left town. The filing clerk stayed on. So they gave us a new secretary. I don't remember her name. She was the woman who went with Mitch on his Bermuda trip along with Bickle and the Federal MP whose name I forget.

You know it is quite tricky to have the Premier's mistress as your secretary. You have two choices, you can get a bad press or you can maybe get built up, a problem for a farm boy from Acton. Well maybe you learn something in the country too. After all there are hay mows. Jack Saywell is writing a history of Mitch Hepburn. (Interruption from the audience) Who said that? You remember her name then? Don't tell me. This is terrible. I'm wasting time. In Ontario you don't dare mention a name. Once I was talking in Peterborough about the royal family that took over in Brazil in 1824. I talked about the Emperor Pedro and his Empress. I said that the British South Atlantic Fleet didn't have anything to do in Brazilian waters so the Admiral and the Empress talked politics. The crowd roared with laughter. I didn't know what I had said wrong. Any rate after the meeting I said to the President of the Society, "What did I say wrong about the Empress and Admiral Sidney Smith?" She laughed again and said, "Admiral Smith's granddaughter is a member of our club and if she hadn't had flu she would have heard you." At any rate you shouldn't mention names in Ontario, so from now on I'll dodge them.

While Alexander Fraser was still the Archivist we got a bright young person because I was told that I needed a secretary. She was a beautiful woman and could she type! She had worked for a bank. She was a good typist. I don't care very much about the people - let me put it this way - I would employ the devil herself or himself as a typist if she or he could type. Well she was not only an excellent typist but she was also the girl friend of a Federal

MP. She had an identical twin sister who worked at Treasury. One day I was walking through the Treasury halls and saw my secretary. I said, "What are you doing here?" It was the sister. She gave me a dirty look.

One day when I came in, I'd gone to the Ontario Historical Society meeting, and Bill Reid met me and said "There was trouble while you were away. Susie Doakes, (I'll call her) came in drunk as an owl. She rolled in and Colonel Fraser sent her home." Later Colonel Fraser had her on the mat. She came in to me weeping because he had treated her so well. He had said that he had three daughters and how would he feel if one of them went that way. She was really touched. I don't know what became of her.

Now, in 1934, we have the new deal. Colquhoun retired and his place was taken by Duncan McArthur who, I thought, would be alright to get along with because I knew him. I had met him at historical meetings. But he gave me trouble. He called me on the first of September 1935 and said, "When are you taking your holidays?" And I said, "Well I've got three weeks coming to me." And he said, "Can you take them before the fifteenth of September?" I remember the day because it was my birthday and I said, "It is hard to squeeze three weeks into two". He answered, "On the fifteenth we want you to take over the Legislative Library. We have appointed a man who has been transferred within the Department of Education and we think he could manage the Library". What makes me mad is that when you get a problem person the layman thinks he or she would make a good librarian. I've run into that so many times. I was on the train one time and it came up that I was a librarian. I was sitting next to a stranger and he said, "Oh you know, I think my son would be a good librarian. He's a graduate of Toronto and he has diabetes. He's terribly introspective and doesn't get on well

with people, but he loves books." To be a librarian you have to hate books. To see the punishment books get from students and borrowers, chewing gum used as a marker, that kind of thing, you cannot love books. If you loved them you would be heart broken all the time.

I was appointed on the fifteenth of September 1935 as Acting Legislative Librarian while the new appointee was on leave. However on the second of January he went for a walk, slipped on a piece of ice, fell, cracked his skull and died. And so I asked the accountant, "How do I sign now?" since I had been signing 'Acting Librarian'. He said, "Sign 'Legislative Librarian'." I never really was appointed Legislative Librarian even though you may find me signed that way. So that's how I became a librarian. I never went to library school and all my life I have appreciated the way professional librarians have accepted me. Never have I heard, I can't say it was never said, but never have I heard an unkind word about my not being "professional".

I should say that Colonel Fraser treated me very well. When he was sick I would go out to his house on Woodlawn in North Toronto and take him his mail. He would tell me what answers he would write. And while he was reading his mail his three daughters, three or four daughters, treated me royally. I've met them since and they still treat me royally. Fraser said to me, "We have a new Deputy Minister of Public Works, Chester Walters. Do something for him." I said, "Such as?" "Oh, I don't know but do something for him."

It gets to me now sixty years later, how I could just walk into a deputy minister's office. A couple of days later I had to take a memo to Chester Walters who was a very bright man and I said to him, "That's an awfully bleak wall you have there in your office. Do you want to do a kindness for the Archives?" "What can I do?" I

replied, "We have in the basement, and I'm afraid someone is going to push a metal filing cabinet through it, Benjamin West's original sketch of *The Death of Wolfe*. It is not as big as the original but all of the detail is there. If you could put it on your wall it would save it and it would improve the look of your office." So he arranged it and I told Fraser what I had done. He was delighted. And from then on I would see Walters maybe three or four times a week on the elevator and he would always say, "Hi Talman, how are you and what have you found today?" He got to be very friendly.

Colonel Fraser retired in 1935 and while I continued in his job I also was keeping an eye on the Legislative Library. The tower was across the road from the big red building and, to save putting on an overcoat, I use to walk through the underground passage under the road. While I was walking underground I kept an eye on the garbage trucks to see what provincial documents they might be burning.

One day McArthur said to me, "Mitch Hepburn is going to close the Archives." I said, "You can't do it. The Archives has been given material worth keeping and you will have to find all of the donors and give the material back." "Well", he said, "we need the space. We can't have the Archives in that valuable office space." I thought I had been getting no where. I said to him, "If I can find a place for the Archives, can we save them?" "Well there's no place in these buildings" he replied. I said, "You have right under your office here a bunch of empty vaults with wide corridors all around them. If you built a factory fence from floor to ceiling with a locked gate, I am sure you could house the Archives here." (By now you see I had an office in the Legislative Library as well as in the Archives.) "And", I continued, "we could make a little office in the reading room for the secretaries; I could use the Librarian's office as the Archivist's office and we have an

elevator down to the stacks. There is one thing that should be done though, and that is that the ceiling should be plastered. Too dusty." "Why couldn't it be white washed?" he countered. And I said, "Yes you could and then you would have white dust instead of gray."

Next thing I knew, the elevator man, a friend of mine, said, "What have you got around here." And I said, "Me? I've got nothing. I just work here the way you do." He said, "Well you must have something. When I hear the Deputy Minister of Public Works say to McArthur, 'If Talman says we have to have plaster, then we'll have plaster,' you must have something." That was the first I had heard that they were even studying the problem carefully. They had a young architect named Major, his given name, Lang or Long or something like that. He got interested in the case and he plotted and drew. He cut pieces of paper to scale for every piece of equipment and laid them out. So we moved the Archives to the north wing where it stayed for quite some time before they moved it out after my time. Afterwards I asked if anybody had taken a picture of that north wing archives set up, but nobody had.

So now we get out of the Legislative Library. F.C. Jennings was the Inspector of Public Libraries. McArthur said to me, "Jennings is gone. Sam Herbert will need a little help. So if he does I told him to ask you." Jennings went because the Chairman of the Ottawa Public Library Board came to Toronto looking for a librarian. He ran into W.J. Dunlop of the U of T publicity department, and Dunlop said that he knew two librarians, Talman in the Legislative Library and Jennings, Inspector of Public Libraries and either would do. So we were checked out and we said, "Leave it to us." So Jennings and I had a meeting, and I said, "The problem is, which one of us hates his job more than the other." We both had to agree we were most unhappy but F.C. Jennings said that

he was more unhappy than I was. So although he left he was still a good friend of mine. That's partly why I didn't care for George Locke. Locke didn't like the way Jennings reviewed his book in the *Ontario Library Review* and I was a Jennings man.

Then, in 1939, Western invited me to join the University Library. I said, "No I can't go unless you offer the job first to Kate Gillespie." I knew her brothers and she was one of the finest people and an excellent professional librarian. She certainly could have run the library. The UWO Chief Librarian had to run the medical library as well as the general library. Before I tell you about Western I just remembered that Sam Herbert came to me one day and said, "I'm having trouble. Middlesex County wants to establish a county library and I've sent the request over to the Deputy-minister (that was McArthur). I sent it three weeks ago and he hasn't bothered to sign it and we have only about two more weeks to go because the year's running out." So I went to see Mrs. Brown, the secretary. She and I had got to know each other very well in the years I had been walking back and forth to see Colquhoun. So I said to her, "Sam Herbert has a letter on Middlesex County. Would you please put it on the top of the file every morning." So each morning she always pulled that letter out and put it on top of his basket and he signed it just in time. I always thought I may have saved the Middlesex County Library System. At that point I got kind of hooked on county libraries. The librarians of county libraries were the best librarians I ever knew. However, so much for county libraries.

When I got invited to Western, I had said no I would not go unless Kate Gillespie didn't want the job. They did ask her. Kate Gillespie wrote me the grandest letter asking me to accept the job. Imagine, imagine being the librarian of a university library where the second-in-command

was so loyal and so competent! I was the luckiest fellow ever. Kate Gillespie could have done the work but she was too decent to be a chief librarian. You have to be able to take the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune to be a librarian. One day some years after, Kate came to me in tears. There was a shortage of staff and she had gone up to the main desk, since she ran circulation as well cataloguing. A woman had come up to ask for a book. Kate said, "Its out." This woman stood back, you know the way a sergeant-major used to stand back so that everybody could hear him, and said, "You bitch, you know the book is in the library and you just wont give it to me." Well I was mad. They say don't let the sun go down on your wrath, so I went over to the chairman of psychology and told him the story. I said "I know she is schizo but that doesn't relieve her of responsibility". And he drew himself up and said, "She is not schizophrenic she's paranoid with schizophrenic tendencies." Trust those birds to change the ground on which you stand

if they can. And I said, "I don't care if she's schizophrenic or paranoid but she is not going to speak to my staff that way. She should be kicked out." They finally did kick her out. Kate Gillespie couldn't have taken such punishment. She was too sensitive. But boy, she stayed with me her whole career, almost until the end. So how lucky can you be!

We had a very good cataloguer, Miss. Welling. She came to me one day and said, "Here's a book. You recommended it. Library of Congress puts it under religion and I can't imagine your recommending a religious book." I remember the book *Saints in Politics*. She said, "I would put it under English history," and I said "that's where I would". Last Friday, after all these years just to check that I had once helped a cataloguer, (I, personally, couldn't catalogue *Mary Had a Little Lamb*.) I shouldn't have! Miss. Welling had catalogued it under BR which is "religion" in LC Classification. That's one of the highlights of my career as a non qualified librarian. But have I been lucky with the people who worked for me, who saved me. They carried me through my entire career!!

MIND AND MANUSCRIPT: THE WORK OF HISTORIAN-TEACHER FRED LANDON, 1881-1969, by Dr. Patricia Skidmore

"An absolutely inspired teacher, and one who knew his subject and loved it. He made you want to know, too." That is the memory of one of the pupils of historian Fred Landon. Those who did not study under him but, rather, related to him as a colleague; or used his manuscript collections in the Regional Collection at Western's Library (he was its librarian); or read his published researches, have equally high praise for Landon's abilities. His many suggestions for research are still fostering important projects.¹ Landon did not begin as a teacher of history. In 1906 he became a writer for the *London Free Press* after graduating from Western. Ten years later he was London Public Library's Chief Librarian, giving some history lectures at Western at the same time.² Then, in 1923, he came to Western as its first full-time librarian, and he continued and expanded his teaching role. Always he wrote history, even to 1960 when the seventy-nine year old Landon published his last book *An Exile from Canada to Van Diemen's Land*. In fact, his last effort was published after his death in 1969, an entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.³ Altogether, Landon wrote over seventy major articles, authored three books and co-authored two others on history. He also published much on librarianship, Great Lakes shipping, and contemporary comment.⁴

The present study will omit both Landon-as-journalist and Landon-as-librarian in order to focus on Landon's historical research and publication. His ideas about the study of history should be set forth first. Then his place in the evolving discipline can be outlined; in some ways, he fit into the trends of his day, while in other ways, Landon was a pioneer, a breaker of new ground. The very magnitude of his collected writings testifies to an unusual ability

to work efficiently and effectively, so it is natural to inquire into his working habits. Finally, Landon's career is remarkable because of his constancy and his complete commitment to Clio's craft, and these are important factors in explaining his achievements.

Although he collected many notes on the art or craft called History, Fred Landon seldom addressed the subject as such.⁵ Occasionally, however, he would wax lyrical and reveal his approach to the discipline. "The business of history is to get at the thoughts, passions, endeavours, and failures of mankind and of individual men and women in the past," he wrote, paraphrasing G.M. Trevelyan.⁶ In fact, most of Landon's own investigations focused on a particular kind of individual in the past — the common man. Highly influenced by the work of C.R. Fish, Landon was convinced that portraying the average man was a worthwhile task.⁷ He had high praise for a historian who "thought history had been written too much upon the basis of what great men said on the public platform or wrote in an official capacity."⁸ Landon thought the same. "History has a way of disinterring the record of very humble folk, who never dreamed that some day their names might appear in print," he wrote. "History does not relate to the great alone but to all men, and the humble folk are always the more numerous."⁹ What is perhaps Landon's best paper on social history, "The Common Man in the Era of the Rebellion in Upper Canada," was derived from this interest.

The reason for recollecting the past, of humble men or great, lay in the matter of understanding the present, for Landon. "To travel in time enables us to place our present in some relation to the past and to give the existing institutions and practices a meaning that they

may otherwise lack."¹⁰ Landon chose to make his Presidential Address to the Canadian Historical Association in 1942 on the subject of the social history of the 1880's in Canada because he could point to both the justifications mentioned here. The cultural and institutional history, the life of the common man of the 1880's, still needed investigation, he suggested; and to explore that area of history was important because "it is vitally related to much of our contemporary scene." Its efforts and its problems persisted still.¹¹ Landon was equally convince of the value of studying particular kinds of history, especially local or regional history and the history of the interrelationships of Canada and the United States.¹² His defence of these two foci will be presented later.¹³ For now, Landon's absorption with history in all its forms stemmed from his belief that it illuminated the present, especially if one used history to cultivate an understanding of daily life and the practical patterns which influenced people at large.

In a number of ways, Landon's approach to the study of history was formed by his era. He was trained during the opening decade of this century, just when history was beginning to be a subject separate from English in the universities,¹⁴ and when the history of Canada was emerging as a separate course of study.¹⁵ The publication of historical documents had begun in earnest during Landon's undergraduate years.¹⁶ He undoubtedly read the new *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada* which was founded in 1897 and reconstituted as the *Canadian Historical Review* in 1920. During Landon's ten year career as a journalist, from 1906 to 1916, Canadian history underwent what one critic calls "a kind of creative and scholarly explosion" which included the publication of *The Chronicles of Canada* in thirty-two volumes (1914-16) and *Canada and its Provinces* in twenty-three volumes (1914-17).¹⁷ When

Landon was ready to begin writing historical papers, there existed an interested, informed audience of scholars who belonged to societies with regular publications such as the Ontario Historical Society's *Papers and Records* and the London and Middlesex Historical Society's *Transactions*. In other words, Canadian history was "successfully organized."¹⁸

Similarly, archives were fairly systematized, thanks to a dedicated group of scholar-librarians who collected, purchased, and preserved manuscripts and documents pertaining to history.¹⁹ The original group of scholar-librarians included Adam Shortt and George Wrong; Fred Landon would follow their lead after joining the London Public Library in 1916. There, he brought together as much material as he could collect relevant to local or regional history and made it available in the "London Room".²⁰ He would do the same at Western from 1923 onward, creating the Regional Collection²¹

Not only in becoming an archival librarian was Landon representative of his era. The 1920's and 1930's have been called the "golden age of local history in Canada."²² Landon was at the heart of this movement, alongside W. Sherwood Fox and James Talman.²³ Perhaps because he was confined to London by his job as librarian, first at London Public Library and then at Western, Landon delved into Western Ontario and London History.²⁴ Under his direction, *Western Ontario Notes* and *Western Ontario Nuggets* were begun as vehicles for the dissemination of local history. His earliest historical articles included descriptions of two Western Ontario Negro settlements,²⁵ a portrayal of fugitive slaves in London, Ontario,²⁶ an examination of the London area during the 1837-38 uprisings,²⁷ and similar subjects. Landon's interest in local history continued throughout his life; articles with a regional focus form the bulk of his writings.

Landon's three main books had their genesis in local history. In addition to *Western Ontario and the American Frontier* to be discussed later, he produced the definitive historical description of *Lake Huron*²⁸ and chronicled the life of a Southwestern Ontario rebel in *An Exile from Canada*.²⁹ He wrote some hundred pages of the *Province of Ontario*³⁰ for J.E. Middleton, and described the London area with Orlo Miller in *Up the Proof Line*.³¹ Finally, Landon edited several groupings of papers, diaries, or letters of local figures, including abolitionists Benjamin Lundy³² and Charles Stuart³³ and ministers James Evans³⁴ and William Proudfoot.³⁵

Although practical constraints on his time and a need to reside always in London may account for Landon's initial interest in local history, he undoubtedly came to believe in its significance. In the final pages of his classic *Western Ontario and the American Frontier*, Landon addressed this matter:

This study, having been restricted in its scope to a particular section of one province, may seem to be local history. But only as we are able to see the working out of our social institutions in separate localities and can compare the results one with another will we be able to obtain a clear perspective of the whole.³⁶

Local history, then, was to be fused with more local history until a realistic collage of the whole emerged. For example, Landon argued that the full impact of the political crisis of 1849 was visible only when one noticed the many individual communities in which "old-time Toryism was making its last stand."³⁷ To focus on the burning of the Parliament Buildings at Montreal would be to overlook "the diseased political condition widespread throughout the Upper Province," argued Landon.³⁸ In a similar vein, Landon felt that a right understanding of the rebellion of 1837 awaited studies of the conditions and events in many communities. "It was not one rebellion but many

rebellions, and to generalize may be an acknowledgement of insufficient evidence," he warned.³⁹

In one additional way, Landon was a part of the scholarly trends of his age. There was underway a rebellion against the preceding era's focus on constitutional history: Frank Underhill, nine years Landon's junior, was one leader in this movement whose iconoclasm pleased Landon.⁴⁰ Instead of focusing on the political clichés about constitutional growth under Mother Britain, a new group of historians were appearing who paid attention to historical influences coming from the United States, and who were interested in grass roots discontent and the emergence of democracy.⁴¹ They focused also on the influences of the frontier on Canadian life, following the inspiration of Frederick Jackson Turner.⁴² Many members of this group were trained at the graduate level in an American university, including Arthur Lower, A.S. Morton, and Landon.⁴³ These younger men were marshalled by slightly older historians, especially Bartlet Brebner and James T. Shotwell, and they formulated what was called a "continental interpretation."⁴⁴ This interpretation, captured in a twenty-five volume study of Canadian-American relations, is the starting point and main theme of Landon's contribution, *Western Ontario and the American Frontier*.

Landon came to his continental interpretation of Canada's history naturally enough. His M.A. thesis, done for the University of Western Ontario in 1919, explored Canada's role in the anti-slavery movement.⁴⁵ His subsequent specialized training at the University of Michigan in 1923 was guided by Ulrich Phillips, the great historian of the American South.⁴⁶ Landon's research papers in the 1920's included such titles as "Canadian Opinion of Southern Secession, 1860-61,"⁴⁷ "The American Civil War and Canadian Confederation,"⁴⁸ and

"Canadian Opinion of Abraham Lincoln."⁴⁹ In all of this, Landon was reinforcing his conviction that Canadian and American histories were intertwined. It was an easy step to see the origins of the 1837-38 unrest in Jacksonian democratic pulsations, American religious institutions, and frontier freedoms experienced by pioneers on both sides of the border. When he came to write the regional history requested of him by Shotwell, Landon argued his case for North Americanism well.

Landon's study convincingly demonstrated that Canadian-American relations had repeatedly been relations between people in all walks of life, not merely formal interactions between states, concludes the historian of Canadian history writing.⁵⁰ Landon's interest in the common man as the subject of historical inquiry combined with his North American consciousness to produce his best volume, *Western Ontario and the American Frontier*. Yet his vignette on the same subject, "Our Neighbors and Ourselves," captured his concept equally well:

It is not only natural but perfectly logical that a North American pattern should be found in Canadian activities and nothing could be more foolish than to attempt a graft of an unsuited pattern drawn from elsewhere.⁵¹

While Landon's approach to history and his choice of subject matter were in some ways typical of his era, in certain matters he was a pioneer. His research and publication on Negroes in Canada was perhaps fifty years ahead of its time. He described the workings of the underground railroad,⁵² the treatment received by fugitive slaves upon arrival in Canada,⁵³ and the social conditions and agriculture of the Negroes settled in Upper Canada.⁵⁴ His attention moved away from Negro history as his career wore on, and at the time of his retirement, he was pioneering in

quite a different field, Great Lakes history. As an assistant editor of *Inland Seas* and a lifelong aficionado of shipping activities on the Lakes, Landon enjoyed writing the "biography" of particular ships, or tales of Lake disasters, or accounts of life on the Lakes in the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ The pinnacle of his effort in this area was *Lake Huron*, published in 1944 as part of the American Lake Series. Landon was the perfect choice to write this volume, as the editor pointed out, for he had been a Lake sailor in his youth (1902), was an accomplished scholar, and yet could write well — "he is incapable of producing a dry-as-dust recital," his editor asserted.⁵⁶

In two additional areas, Landon mined productive veins nearly by himself. His first career as a *Free Press* reporter interested him in the history of newspapers. Thus, he investigated London's early newspapers and journalists in 1927,⁵⁷ and later did a pathfinder study of the agricultural journals of Upper Canada.⁵⁸ In fact, Landon set James Talman to work on the latter subject, which became a lifetime interest for Talman.⁵⁹ Related to newspaper history was Landon's unique inquiry into agriculture history. He made a careful study of this field in the 1930's, producing four articles and calling on historians to pay more attention to farm journals as source material.⁶⁰

Obviously, Landon's research and writing methods were superb. No one could produce such a volume of writing without regular and intelligent working habits. Testimony to his research methods rests in the Regional Collection at D.B. Weldon Library in the form of twenty-four boxes of Landon's scrapbooks containing labelled, indexed articles, clippings, and notes on every area of interest to Landon. Lincoln, Riel, Laurier, the Civil War, the Great Lakes, the Fathers of Confederation, railways, agriculture, and Methodism are but a few of the subjects on which he collected notes.⁶¹ In

addition, Landon corresponded widely with archivists, librarians, and other historians, exchanging information and research findings. Among his correspondents were R.P. Baker, M.N. Quaife, J.T. Shotwell, and Goldwin Smith.⁶²

An illustration of Landon's search techniques appears in his "The Knights of Labor," published in 1937.⁶³ Seeking the last reported data and place of a meeting of this organization, Landon wrote to the Department of Labor. He followed up their lead by writing to the Boston Public Library, where he obtained an office address for the Knights. After establishing contact with an employee there, Landon visited the office and interviewed him. Subsequently, Landon obtained several annual reports of past conventions from this man, and these enabled him to write his article.

This same article on the Knights of Labor will serve to illustrate another of Landon's hallmarks, his writing style. As a young journalist, he had learned to "get it down on paper," and ever afterward he wrote quickly and in an eminently readable style. Sketching the Knights of Labor office, Landon wrote, "The office was small, dingy and dusty. Here and there were bundles, probably of records or correspondence, showing no indication of having been disturbed in a long time."⁶⁴ Landon also had a flair for discerning the quotable, probably a product of his newspaper days, which is evident in the following letter written by Mrs. Amelia Harris and reproduced in his article on London in 1837:

We have been several times notified that Mr. Harris was to be shot and our house burned. Mrs. Cronyn [wife of London's Anglican rector] was notified that her house would be burned as it was church property, but she need not be alarmed as her and the children would be allowed to walk out — very civil.⁶⁵

Not the least attractive of Landon's writing

mannerisms was his willingness to inject a lighter note. Describing this same Rebellion of 1837 and its effect in galvanizing the men of the Huron Tract into forming detachments, Landon wrote:

The Huron men were organized by companies and bore such names as the Huron True Blues, the Huron Braves, the Invincibles, and one company which modestly designated itself the Bloody Useless.⁶⁶

One final characteristic of Landon as craftsman deserves attention. His interest in a subject persisted. Perhaps the outstanding example of this quality is found in Landon's work on Benjamin Lundy, an early abolitionist who travelled in Canada. In 1922, Landon edited and published Lundy's diary.⁶⁷ Then in 1927, Landon did a short biographical piece on Lundy for the *Dalhousie Review*,⁶⁸ the first such study to appear. Thirteen years later, he wrote an account of Lundy's final years in Illinois.⁶⁹ Twenty years elapsed and Landon presented yet another sketch of Lundy, this time in *Ontario History* in 1960.⁷⁰ By now, others were beginning to take an interest in the subject, and an article appeared on Lundy's Texas years in 1959.⁷¹ At last, in 1966, A full biography of Lundy appeared and Landon reviewed it for the *Canadian Historical Review*.⁷² As with all his reviews, this one was descriptive, uncritical and impersonal. Yet Landon surely felt some pleasure in the fact that his "discovery" of forty-four years before had finally been thoroughly studied.

There are many examples of Landon retaining an interest in a subject over long periods. In 1919 and 1956, he wrote on the Anti-slavery Society of Canada;⁷³ in 1918 and 1937, he published studies on the Wilberforce Negro colony in Middlesex County.⁷⁴ On April 2, 1925, Landon addressed the Waterloo Historical Society, as he had addressed and would address hundreds of other societies. His

subject this night was "The Exiles of 1838."⁷⁵ Two years later, he wrote a paper for the London and Middlesex Historical Society on the same subject.⁷⁶ And in 1960, his book on one of those exiles, Elijah Woodman, was published.⁷⁷ Always, Landon's later studies of a subject were different from and fuller than his first ones. He never attempted to monopolize a subject; but, with his students and colleagues alike, he would open up an area and be pleased to see it well developed, whether by his own subsequent work or by the work of others. Similar to the Lundy review, Landon often ended up writing a review on a book which treated of a subject he had uncovered years before but had not been able to develop himself. In 1925, he wrote "Social Conditions among the Negroes in Upper Canada before 1865."⁷⁸ and in 1940 he reviewed two books in this subject.⁷⁹ Similarly, he wrote briefly on the tragedies on the Great Lakes as early as 1945,⁸⁰ and then reviewed William Ratigan's comprehensive *Great Lakes Shipwrecks and Survivals* in 1960.⁸¹

This mild mannered, gentlemanly scholar received numerous honors for his work, ranging from the Presidency of the Ontario Historical Society, 1926-28, and of the Canadian Historical Society, 1941-42, to Fellowship in and the Tyrell Medal of the Royal Society of Canada. His own university made him a Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies, and his colleagues held him in universal esteem.⁸²

Landon's students remember him for his approachability, his sincere interest in their work, and his obvious love of history. He would come bouncing into the lecture room, carrying a slim black volume of notes. These he often ignored as he talked from memory, building a vivid picture of the day's subject. Students forgot to take notes in their fascination, and left his lectures eager to turn to their books for more.⁸³

Landon seldom concerned himself with the grand theories of history or the various interpretations of Canada's evolution, although he appreciated the work of Frank Underhill, Donald Creighton, J.B. Brebner, A.L. Burt, and others who dealt more in generalizations than he did.⁸⁴ Also Landon virtually ignored historical fields such as politics, the constitution, the Imperial connection, and Maritime, Quebec, or Western Canada. Yet the work he chose to do, he did well. His research on the Great Lakes, agriculture, newspapers, Negroes in Canada, the common man of Western Ontario, and the relationships between Canadian and America history with their frontierism and democracy was accurate and well written. His enthusiasm for history in general and local history in particular was infectious. Landon's contribution to Canada history was an important one for, as he wrote on a scrap of paper in his files, "Without social history, economic history is barren, and political history is unintelligible."⁸⁵

Endnotes

1. A collection of Landon's writings, albeit incomplete, is available in three bound volumes entitled "Historical Articles" by Fred Landon in the D.B. Weldon Library's Regional Room. Typical modern studies which elaborate themes introduced by Landon include: J.R. Miller's "As A Politician He is A Great Enigma: the Social and Political Ideas of D'Alton McCarthy," *Canadian Historical Review* (Dec., 1977), 399-422 (see note 2 thereof) and D.G. Simpson's "Negroes in Ontario from Early Times to 1870," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1971. Cf. Landon's "Dalton McCarthy -- Crusader," *Willison's Monthly*, IV (1929), 360-61, and his "Dalton McCarthy and the Politics of the Later Eighties," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report* (1932), 43-50. See also Landon's work on Ontario Negroes cited in notes 24, 25, 51-53 below.
2. Western University became The University of Western Ontario in 1923.
3. "Linus Wilson Miller", (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 514.
4. Hilary Bates, "A Bibliography of Fred Landon," *Ontario History*, Vol LXII (March, 1970), 5-16.
5. D.B. Weldon Library, The University of Western Ontario, Landon Papers, Box 4205, file 78, "The Writing of History." Hereafter this collection is referred to as Landon Papers.
6. "The Common Man in the Era of the Rebellion in Upper Canada," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report* (1937), p.90. This article was reprinted in F.H. Armstrong, H.A. Stevenson and J.D. Wilson (eds.), *Aspects of Nineteenth Century Ontario: Essays Presented to James J. Talman* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 154-170.
7. This information comes from an interview with J.J. Talman, The University of Western Ontario, Jan. 31, 1979. Fish's book was *The Rise of the Common Man, 1830-1850* (New York, 1927.)
8. Fred Landon, "Ulrich Bonnell Phillips: Historian of the South," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. V, No. 3 (August, 1939), p. 370.
9. *Lake Huron* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1944), foreword.
10. Fred Landon, *Western Ontario and the American Frontier*, Carleton Library No. 34 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1967), p.270. This volume was originally published in 1941 by Ryerson Press, Toronto.
11. "The Canadian Scene, 1880-90," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report* (1942), p. 18.
12. In 1927, Landon wrote, "The influence upon Upper Canada of the great changes taking place in the United States in the thirties deserves more attention that it has yet received." "London and its Vicinity, 1837-38," *Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records*, XXIV (1927), p. 4.
13. see pp. 7-8.
14. Carl F. Klinck, "Bookmen and Scholars," in Armstrong *et al.*, eds., pp. 329-30.
15. Kenneth N. Windsor, "Historical Writing in Canada (to 1920)," *Literary History of Canada*, Vol. I (2nd ed.), (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 256.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 250-52.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
18. Klinck, p. 330.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 331.

20. Although Landon began the local history collection at the London Public Library, the "London Room" was not established until 1966 under the direction of Charles Deane Kent. (The Editor)
21. Cf. Fred Landon, "The Library and Local Material," *Ontario Library Review*, Vol. I (1917), 61-62.
22. Windsor, p. 252.
23. William Kilbourn, "The Writing of Canadian History," *Literary History of Canada*, Vol. II (2nd ed.) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 33.
24. Talman interview cited in note 7.
25. "The Buxton Settlement in Canada," *Journal of Negro History*, III (1918), 360-67; and "The History of the Wilberforce Refugee Colony in Middlesex County," *London and Middlesex Historical Society, Transactions*, IX (1918), 30-44.
26. "Fugitive Slaves in London Ontario before 1860," *London and Middlesex Historical Society, Transactions*, X, (1919), 25-38.
27. "London and its Vicinity," cited in note 12 above.
28. Cited in note 9 above.
29. *An Exile from Canada to Van Diemen's Land: Being the Story of Elijah Woodman transported overseas for participation in the Upper Canada troubles of 1837-38* (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1960.)
30. Landon and J.E. Middleton, *The Province of Ontario: A History, 1615-1927* (Toronto: Dominion Publishing Co., 1927-28) Landon wrote Part II, Ch. 6-8 on the Thames Valley and London.
31. (London: D.B. Weldon, 1955.)
32. "The Diary of Benjamin Lundy, Written during his Journey through Upper Canada, January, 1832," *Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records*, XIX (1922), 110-33.
33. "Captain Charles Stuart, Abolitionist," *Western Ontario Historical Nuggets*, No 24 (1956), 19 pp. Reprinted in *Profiles of a Province* (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1967), 205-10.
34. "Selections from the Papers of James Evans, Missionary to the Indians," *Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records*, XXVI (1930), 474-91; and "Letters of Rev. James Evans, Methodist Missionary," *Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records*, XXVIII (1932), 47-70.
35. Introduction to "The Proudfoot Papers," *London and Middlesex Historical Society, Transactions*, XI (1922), 3-4.
36. p. 269.
37. "An Upper Canada Community in the Political Crisis of 1849," *Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records*, XXVI (1930), p. 3.
38. *Ibid.*
39. "The Common Man...", p. 90.
40. Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 64.
41. *Ibid.*, Ch. 6, "A North American Nation."
42. Kilbourn, p. 27.

43. Berger, pp. 144-45.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 144, citing Bartlet Brebner, "Canadian and North American History." *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report* (1931), 37, 48.
45. The exact title was "The Relation of Canada to the Anti-slavery and Abolition Movements in the United States."
46. Landon took four credit courses in American History during the summer of 1923 in order to be better prepared for his lecturing at the University. Interview with Mrs. Margaret Landon at London, Ont., Feb. 2, 1979. For Landon's examination papers from these courses, see Landon Papers, Box 4211, File 52.
47. *Canadian Historical Review*, I (1920), 255-66.
48. *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd ser., XXI (1927), Section II, 55-62.
49. *Dalhousie Review*, II (1922), 329-34.
50. Berger, p. 154.
51. *Quarterly Review of Commerce* (UWO), XI (1944), 53-57. By "elsewhere," Landon meant England, and he was undoubtedly quietly rejecting the ideas of historians like Chester Martin and W.P.M. Kennedy. For a discussion of their view of Canada's evolution within an Imperial pattern, see Berger, pp. 34-43.
52. "Canada and the Underground Railroad," *Kingston Historical Society, Reports and Proceedings* (1923), 17-31; "Amherstburg, Terminus of the Underground Railway," *Journal of Negro History*, X (1925), 1-9; "The Underground Railway Along the Detroit River," *Michigan History*, XXXIV (1955), 63-68 (originally a radio broadcast at Windsor.)
53. "The Fugitive Slave in Canada," *University Magazine*, XVIII (1919), 270-79; "The Anderson Fugitive Case," *Journal of Negro History*, VII (1922), 233-42; "Fugitive Slaves in Ontario," *Northwest Ohio Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin*, VIII (1936), #2, 1-12.
54. "Social Conditions Among the Negroes in Upper Canada before 1865," *Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records*, XXII (1925), 144-61; "Agriculture Among the Negro Refugees in Upper Canada," *Journal of Negro History*, XXI (1936), 304-12.
55. For example: "Return of the Turret Cape," *Inland Seas*, V (1949), #2, 122; and "The Manitoba," *Inland Seas*, VI (1950), #4, 273; "Great Lakes Storm of 1913," *Michigan History*, XXXVIII (1954), 265-72; "Port Stanley to Cleveland Excursion of 1849," *Inland Seas*, X (1954), #2, 137-38.
56. *Lake Huron*, p. 9.
57. "Some Early Newspapers and Newspaper Men of London," *London and Middlesex Historical Society, Transactions*, XII (1927), 26-34.
58. "The Agriculture Journals of Upper Canada," *Agricultural History*, IX (1935), 167-75.
59. Interview with Talman.
60. "Some Effects of the American Civil War on Canadian Agriculture," *Agriculture History*, VII (1933), 163-69; "The 1860's — a Period of Transition in Upper Canadian Agriculture," *OAC Review*, XLIX (1937), 416-18, 451-58; and see notes 53 and 56 above.
61. Landon Papers, Boxes 4195-4207 and X1470-1482.
62. *Ibid.*, Boxes 4208 and 4209, *passim*.

63. "The Knights of Labor: Predecessors of the C.I.O." *Quarterly Review of Commerce* (UWO), IV and V (1937), 133-39.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
65. Cited in note 12 above, pp. 9-10.
66. *Lake Huron*, p. 124.
67. See note 31 above.
68. "Benjamin Lundy, Abolitionist," *Dalhousie Review*. (1927), 189-97.
69. "Benjamin Lundy in Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, XXXIII (1940), 56-67.
70. "A Pioneer Abolitionist in Upper Canada," *Ontario History*, LII (1960), 77-83.
71. Merton L. Dillon, "Benjamin Lundy in Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXIII, No. 1 (July, 1959), 56-62.
72. Review of Merton L. Dillon's *Benjamin Lundy and the Struggle for Negro Freedom* in *Canadian Historical Review*, XLVIII (1967), 170-71.
73. "The Anti-slavery Society of Canada," *Journal of Negro History*, IV (1919), 33-40; "The Anti-Slavery Society of Canada," *Ontario History*, XLVIII (1956), 125-31.
74. See note 24 above; "Wilberforce, an Experiment in the Colonization of Freed Negroes in Upper Canada," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd ser., XXXI (1937) Section II, 69-78.
75. Landon Papers, Box 4212, file 72, pocket diary for 1906-32 listing writings and public addresses. This address was published as "The Exiles of 1838," *Annual Report of the Waterloo Historical Society*, XIII (1925), 154-58.
76. "The Exiles of 1838 from Canada to Van Diemen's Land," *London and Middlesex Historical Society, Transactions*, XII (1927), 5-20.
77. See note 28 above.
78. See note 53 above.
79. Review of H.A. Turner, *The Settlement of Negroes in Kent County, Ont...* and of Ira De A. Reid, *The Negro Immigrant...*, in *Canadian Historical Review*, XXI, (1940), 82-83.
80. "A Military Tragedy on Lake Erie," *Inland Seas*, I (1945), #4, 37-40.
81. In *Inland Seas*, XVI (1960), #4, 333.
82. Fred Armstrong, "Fred Landon, 1880-1969," *Ontario History*, LXII (March, 1970), 1-4.
83. Interview with former Landon student, Mr. William Hitchins of London, Ont., Feb. 20, 1979.
84. *Western Ontario and the American Frontier*, pp. 21, 25, 232 and interview with Mrs. Margaret Landon.
85. Landon Papers, Box 4205, File 78.