

## Compte rendu

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### Ouvrage recensé :

*A Catalogue of the Riche-Covington Collection*. Compiled by Barbara de St. Remy, revised, enlarged and edited by Leslie H. Morley, introduction by Arthur E. Covington, index by Barbara B. Aitken, Kingston, Queen's University, Douglas Library Occasional Paper Number 6, 1984. Pp xxvi, 63, illus., index. ISBN 0-88911-017-4, \$10.00

par Richard A. Jarrell

*HSTC Bulletin: Journal of the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine / HSTC Bulletin : revue d'histoire des sciences, des techniques et de la médecine au Canada*, vol. 8, n° 2, (27) 1984, p. 161-162.

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Historians of Canadian science are well aware of how few decent well-organized collections exist in Canadian archives and libraries. So much of the energy of the historian is expended on mastering the idiosyncracies of each archive; what a boon when a library or archive produces a professional guide to a scientific collection. This catalogue, one of the first of its kind in the country, is a model of usefulness and a reflection of the care of Queen's bibliographers. The collection itself owes its existence to Arthur Covington, wartime radar researcher at the National Research Council and pioneer in solar radio astronomy, who initiated the programme of collecting in 1973. Building upon Queen's older McNicol collection of early telegraphy, telephony and radio, the Riche-Covington Collection contains monographs, articles, reprints, pamphlets, original papers and correspondence and ephemera devoted to a wide selection of topics including history, biography, science policy, electronic music and even parascience, but the heart is astronomy, radio engineering, radio and radar astronomy. Any student of the early days of radio astronomy (1940s and 1950s) could find no easier way to begin than by spending a few weeks in the Douglas Library armed with this cata-

logue. There is no doubt, however, that this is a collection organized by a scientist rather than an historian: the bulk of scientific material is made up of published articles, books and reprints, not the raw material of day-to-day science. Arthur, what did you do with your files?

The organization of the catalogue is clear, the printing neat and the paper of good quality, which is a decided improvement over all those tattered mimeographed 'guides' that one normally has to wade through. A brief introduction by Covington provides background to the collection's origins and a short account of the rise of radio engineering and radio astronomy in Canada. One hopes that this catalogue will make a good impression on scientists and engineers as well as archivists and librarians. Canadian universities, institutions and companies must have the kernels of many excellent collections; private initiative (and money), allied with library professionalism, would make access to our heritage so much easier.

Richard A. Jarrell