

2014-2015 Faculty of Education HSS Seed Grant Competition

Penney Clark

Project Title: "It pays to satisfy your customers:" The Firm of Copp Clark and Textbook Publishing in Canada, 1841-1963

Project Abstract:

This historical study examines the prominent Canadian educational publisher, Copp Clark, which began as a book store in 1841 and was purchased by Pitman in 1963. This firm was one of the earliest Canadian publishers, and along with W.J. Gage and the Canada Publishing Company, was a member of the infamous and highly successful Toronto Textbook Ring. It asks: What did Copp Clark contribute to the production and provision of school (K-12) textbooks over this period? Further to this, it will investigate how this firm situated itself within a context of evolving political, cultural and economic trends; how it negotiated its place among other major Canadian firms and foreign subsidiaries; factors contributing to its demise; and the nature of its legacy. The study will involve examination of primary source documents located at the William Ready Division, McMaster University Archives (Copp Clark fonds) and the Archives of Ontario, as well as other materials, including textbook commission reports.