



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

2006 Annual Report of the City of Toronto Archives

Date:	October 17, 2007
To:	Government Management Committee
From:	City Clerk
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The City Clerk is required as part of the Acquisition Policy approved by City Council in 1999 to report annually on the acquisitions and activities of the Archives program, a business unit of Records and Information Management in the City Clerk's Office. The report contains information detailing progress made with archival acquisitions, descriptive standards, research and reference services and education and outreach provided to City staff and the public. It also reflects our initiatives in expanding public access to our important archival holdings through the Archives' on-line database by enhancing the digitization program to address the steadily accelerating demand for the provision of electronic information.

Of particular note in the 2006 report is information about the development and expansion of the Archives' digitization program as a result of capital funding.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The Acquisition Policy for the City of Toronto Archives adopted by City Council at its meeting of July 27, 28, 29 and 30, 1999, as clause 4 of Report 2 of the Administration Committee, requires the City Clerk to submit "to Council an annual report for the City of

Toronto Archives which will describe the activities of the program, including a list of the acquisitions made under the terms of this policy.”

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The annual report for the Archives provides an overview of the year’s activities and allows us to document our progress in the preservation and dissemination of Toronto’s documentary heritage. It is also a valuable tool for identifying important benchmarks for future planning as we move forward in the digital era.

See Appendix 1 – 2006 Annual Report of the City of Toronto Archives

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: 2006 Annual Report for the City of Toronto Archives

Appendix 1

2006 Annual Report for the City of Toronto Archives

Introduction

The City of Toronto Archives is a program of Records and Information Management in the City Clerk's Office. The program manages information throughout its life cycle to satisfy statutory and operational requirements, and ensures the availability of the City's documentary heritage in the public's interests.

Building upon a foundation of archival records from the former municipalities as a result of amalgamation, the Archives preserves and provides access to records of enduring value regardless of media or format. The Archives also acquires, preserves and provides access to non-government records that make a contribution to an understanding of the development of our City, its natural and built environment, and the people who lived, worked or had an impact upon Toronto.

This report reflects our initiatives in expanding public access to our important archival holdings through digitization to address the steadily accelerating demand for the provision of electronic information. The volume of archival materials – paper-based and electronic, is growing exponentially and presents ongoing challenges for their long term preservation, storage and dissemination. As we move forward in a digital environment, there will be additional pressures to use existing resources effectively to meet users' needs and expectations.

This report provides an overview of the accomplishments and initiatives undertaken by the Archives in 2006.

Acquisitions:

The Archives is the collective memory of the City. In order to provide a balanced record of our heritage, the Archives acquires both government and private records as outlined in its mandate and approved by Council in 1999. Since amalgamation in 1998, the Archives has made available many of the records from the former municipalities and identified collections in the community which expand our knowledge and understanding of government actions and decision-making.

Government Records:

In 2006 some of the government records which were made accessible on the Archives' public online database include:

- Approximately 670 volumes of assessment rolls for 1996 and 1997 from the former municipalities of East York, York, Scarborough, Etobicoke, North York and Toronto.
- North York bylaws, 1922-1997
- City of Toronto building permit books from 1920 to 1970
- Approximately 2,000 copies of municipal reports on planning and public transit
- TTC records – minutes of the Commission (1999-2005); minutes of the Committee of the Whole (1999-2005)
- East York deeds, 1924-1997
- North York Planning Board
 - reports, 1957-1975
 - annual reports, 1954-1983
- Former City of Toronto Clerk's Dept.
 - Investigations and Inquiries, 1878-1976
 - Election records, 1858-1997
 - panegyrics, 1936-1969
 - Protocol records, 1889-1982
- Former City of Toronto
 - Board of Control communications, 1967-1968
 - City Services Committee minutes, 1981-1997
 - Neighbourhoods Committee minutes, 1981-1997
- East York Committee minutes, 1966-1996
- Economic Development Committee minutes, 1984-1993

Non-government records:

In 2006 the Archives acquired a significant number of donations of non-government records, ranging from single items such as a letter from former Mayor Sam McBride and an 1834 catalogue of the first exhibition of the Society of Artists and Amateurs of Toronto to several boxes of records from such organizations as the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. Large or small, these collections provide a broader context to the activities of the many individuals, organizations and associations who have contributed to the documentary heritage of Toronto.

Some of the major acquisitions are listed below:

- Records of Frank Horgan, 1950 – 1989 (records consist of 39 annual journals compiled by Frank Horgan, Commissioner of the former Metropolitan Toronto Works Dept. during his career dating from 1950 to his retirement in 1989);
- Records of Arts Etobicoke, 1973-2000 (records consist of minutes, annual reports, newsletters and various aspects of the Etobicoke arts community such as volunteer coordination, relationships between business and the arts, arts advocacy, fundraising activities);
- Records of the Swansea Area Ratepayers' Association, 1964-1988 (records consist of minutes of monthly and annual meetings, executive committee

- meetings, newsletters and subject correspondence relating to planning and other local issues in the area);
- Records of Nir Bareket, 1982-2004, (records consist of 35 photographs documenting aspects of homelessness in Toronto);
 - Records of Eli Ophek, 1970-1998, (records consist of papers, photographs and maps that were created, accumulated and used by Eli Ophek, an urban planner from 1970 to 1998 and which reflect his interest in developing strategies to improve Toronto's waterfront);
 - Records of Harbourfront Corporation, 1972-2003 (records consists of papers, photographs, posters and publications that document the growth of Harbourfront Centre from its inception as a 92-acre tract of waterlots and waterfront properties assembled by the Canadian government, to its current position as an internationally renowned non-profit cultural organization that attracts more than 12 million visitors a year to its 10-acre site);
 - Records of Louise Herzberg, 1986-2005 (records consist of over 1,000 negatives and corresponding prints documenting the Lower Don Valley and environs from the perspective of a long term resident. Includes images of the Don River, the Don Valley Parkway, Leaside Bridge, Todmorden Mills, and the Don Valley Brickworks among others).
 - Records of Ken Webster, 1987-2004 (records consists of research files, audiocassettes, and miscellaneous publications created or acquired by Webster in the course of his research about the history of movie theatres in Toronto).
 - Records of the Toronto Society of Architects, 1896-1992 (records consist of papers created and accumulated by the Toronto Society of Architects, and by its predecessor organizations, the Architectural Guild and the Toronto Chapter of the Ontario Association of Architects).
 - Over 300 books added to the Archives' library.

Special Projects:

As a result of a Young Canada Works grant in 2006, the Archives hired a university student to process approximately 37m (3,400 files) of correspondence records created by the Clerk-Treasurer for the Village of Swansea from 1926 to 1966, the year that Swansea was amalgamated to the former City of Toronto. Subjects include assessment, building and planning, welfare, personnel, elections, bylaws and various council matters.

As part of its long-standing relationship with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information Studies, the Archives supervised a student intern. The student acquired some practical archival experience by processing the records of:

- the Queen-Broadview Village Business Improvement Area (records reflect the projects relating to urban development undertaken by the BIA in the Queen Broadview neighbourhood)
- Morry Smith (records relate to a North York resident who organized a campaign to save the York Downs Golf Club lands from redevelopment to ensure it became parkland).

Reference Services:

In 2006 there were 4,890 in-person researcher visits to the Archives Research Hall, and nearly 50% of those researchers were first time visitors. Our team of three Reference Staff, supported by the archivists, answered over 9,000 research inquiries received by phone, fax, Canada Post mail, e-mail and in-person. Archives staff provide a high level of customer service to researchers, both in person and via the internet. Approximately 26,000 archival descriptions of records and 11,000 digital images were added to our on-line database in 2006 and made available on our website. The total number of descriptive and name authority records in our database is 200,500 and 38,000 scanned images. To further assist researchers, particularly on-line users, 6,770 of these scanned images were linked to their descriptive records, allowing the image and description to be seen on the same screen. This brings the total of linked scans in the Archives' database to 28,346 by the end of 2006.

Approximately 6,870 bylaws were entered into the bylaw status register in 2006, most of which were bylaws from the Township of Scarborough. This brings the total number of bylaws in the register to 16,338. The Archives also responded to 855 internal and external bylaw enquiries in 2006, an increase of 100% over 2005. A new service, added in October 2006, provided for the scanning of bylaws in response to reference inquiries. By the end of December, 513 bylaws comprised of 4,175 pages had been scanned and e-mailed to clients.

Our collections are extensively used in the production of scholarly and popular books, magazines, television programs, school projects and exhibitions, as evidenced by the 422 photograph orders that were processed in 2006, and by the 100 copyright permission letters prepared by reference staff. Some of the more notable projects that used our resources include:

- Three episodes of the popular History Channel television program, *Ancestors in Your Attic*. On March 29th, the City of Toronto Archives was featured in a film about the resources available at municipal archives; on May 2nd the show's story focused on the history of jeweler Henry Birks and archival records such as assessment rolls, and fire insurance plans were used to prove that Birks did his apprenticeship in Montreal, not Toronto; and on June 14th the show was about movie projectionists, and host Paul McGrath used City Directories to show that a particular individual worked at a Leow's theatre in downtown Toronto.
- A television documentary called *Fighting Words* about the crusading Toronto Star newspaper publisher Joseph Atkinson;
- A book celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association, which contained 38 images from our Department of Public Works photographs;
- And one of the episodes of the popular Roger's Television show *Structures* which is all about the interesting built environment of the city of Toronto.

Digitization:

In 2006 the Archives received City Council approval for a capital project to purchase digital equipment and related hardware and software to support the digitization of the City's vital records and other archival materials. This expansion of the digitization program has provided public access to an increased amount of our holdings. The new equipment consists of the following:

- A high-end copy stand for large documents that measure up to 1m x 1.5 m. This copy stand is equipped with studio lights and a vacuum system to keep documents flat while they are being photographed;
- A digital camera back system which is used to digitize wide format documents such as maps, plans and other over-sized documents associated with bylaws, contracts and agreements;
- Two Digital Single Lens Reflex cameras used to scan large bound books without removing their bindings. These cameras are used to digitize bound copies of Council proceedings from the former municipalities as well as publications from other archival collections.

This equipment was installed late in 2006 and staff digitized the following oversized documents:

- Approximately 18 original elevation and floor plans dated 1887 of Old City Hall: these were digitized to assist employees in Facilities and Real Estate with the restoration of Old City Hall. The creation of these electronic images reduced the exposure and handling of the original documents and facilitates future access by the public;
- An original plan, c. 1850 of "Design for a stone bridge over Government Creek" [Garrison Creek] by City Surveyor John G. Howard;
- A large panoramic photograph of the 1904 fire in Toronto;
- A bound volume entitled "Resolution of congratulation to Chief Justice Meredith from the council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto" containing six illuminated resolutions dated 1894 designed by A.H. Howard.

In addition to the oversize documents, nearly 10,000 images were scanned and added to the Archives' database. These included the following:

- City Architects' Department: Approximately 1,150 - 5X7 glass plate negatives were scanned. These images were taken between 1912 to 1952 and document different styles of buildings under construction, undergoing repair work, or buildings exhibiting structural damage;
- City Engineers' Department: These 650 images document the activities of the City Engineer's Department between 1891 and 1911, including the construction of and improvements to sidewalks, roads, bridges, and water works. There are also photographs of level railway crossings, municipal buildings, dredging operations, and panoramic bird's-eye views of the city, the

harbour, and Toronto Island. They were used to monitor public works projects and to illustrate the Annual Reports of the City Engineer;

- Toronto Transportation Commission, Brigden Limited Photography: These 2,000 images document the construction of the Yonge Street subway from 1949 to 1952. Many illustrate the pre-construction facades of retail and commercial establishments on both sides of Yonge Street, from Queen to Alexander Streets;
- Alan Howard fonds, John Boyd Sr. photographs: These 1,000 images were taken between 1887 and 1941 and illustrate Toronto scenes relating to nature, sports, historic buildings, railways, and the military;
- Alexandra Studio fonds: Approximately 4,000 images which were scanned in 2006 and this completes the digitization of this entire collection of some 10,000 images into the Archives' database. The original photographs in this collection are affected by "vinegar syndrome," a chemical reaction that affects the stability of the film. Once the original negatives had been scanned, they were placed into cold storage.

The digitization staff also process requests for digital images from the public and city staff. They provide support to the Archives' exhibit program by providing digital images for publicity and promotional purposes and by producing prints from digital images which are subsequently matted and framed for Archives' exhibits. Their expertise is also required to assist in website exhibit development. They create digital images to support cultural property applications submitted by the Archives on behalf of donors, and they identify technical requirements relating to additional storage, network enhancements and workstation upgrades to maintain the efficient operation of the program.

Preservation Management:

The Conservation program undertakes a variety of preservation and conservation initiatives. Much of the work involves remedial measures to ensure the appropriate storage systems for the various types and formats of archival materials.

In 2006, the conservator assessed approximately 77 original plans consisting of elevation drawings, section drawings and sewer plans created by John G. Howard during his tenure as Toronto's City Engineer from 1843-1855. A number of conservation treatments were performed on these early plans, including minor repairs, dry-cleaning, encapsulation and developing a proper storage system for these rare and fragile documents.

A graduate student enrolled in the Master of Art Conservation program at Queen's University completed a nine week internship at the Archives working with the Conservator. Her projects were varied and involved cleaning and repairing 19th century photographs from the Toronto General Nursing Alumnae fonds, re-housing aerial photographs and assisting archivists on a number of re-housing initiatives.

Exhibit and Outreach:

The comments below are a selection of quotes taken from the Archives' 2006 guest book by visitors to our facility.

"Toronto's past is alive in the Archives." (JR)

"I discovered the Archives by accident, and I am glad I did." (JJ)

"Thank you, this place is a valuable resource." (AM)

"Wonderful space, great collection." (AB)

"It's so great to be able to come here and peek into what life was like on the streets of our city in past years. Thank God we have this place!" (MB)

These remarks illustrate what the Archives is all about: connecting people with their past. The Archives is important to our community because so many people have passed through our doors to do research, explore our exhibits or participate in the many programs offered over the years. This year the Archives welcomed nearly 10,500 visitors to our site, including those who came to do research (4,890), those who were here to see our displays (3,433), and children and adults who took advantage of our tours or educational programs (1,892). Some of the details of our programs in 2006 are described below:

- Our school programs continue to be a strong draw for local teachers and their classes. The Grade 3 program is directly tied in with two units in the Ontario school curriculum: Early Settlements in Upper Canada and Urban and Rural Communities. The children use copies of old photographs, maps and drawings to study how common aspects of daily life have changed in the past 150 years. They also compare the features of 19th century rural Ontario with those of downtown Toronto during the same period.
- The Grade 5 program is also linked to the curriculum, specifically to civics studies. This program, Our Local Government, is presented in conjunction with the Toronto Urban Studies Centre. The students learn about municipal services, such as road building and water mains, and they are also given an introduction to how government records are managed at the Archives.
- Older students and adults also benefit from the tours of the facility offered by our staff. Interested groups receive tours that are tailored to their needs. For example, students enrolled in the Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto, learned about the ways the Reference Hall is used to provide excellent customer service to researchers. Archivists and the reference staff provided several information sessions for people interested in research techniques, and in 2006, there were many visits from groups of City of Toronto and Toronto Transit Commission staff to learn how they can take advantage of the many services available at the Archives and the Records Centre, located at the Archives facility.
- A very successful outreach event, co-sponsored by the Friends of the Archives of Ontario, took place on April 8, 2006 during Archives Awareness Week. This free Saturday event was entitled, *Researching Your House in Toronto*. The purpose of

the presentation was to show how every property and neighbourhood has a past which can be discovered through examination of the Archives' documents. These documents include property assessment rolls, City directories, fire insurance plans, photographs and plans. As part of the promotion of this event, one of the archivists was interviewed by Matt Galloway, popular host of CBC Radio's afternoon program *Here and Now*. Mr. Galloway spoke with our archivist on the air, and she was able to reveal many interesting facts about his house and neighbourhood. This publicity contributed to an unexpected turnout which required us to hold a second presentation.

- In April, the Archives launched a new exhibit called, *A Collected View: Ten Years of Photography Acquisitions, 1995-2005*. This exhibit gave the Archives the opportunity to showcase some of the images donated by such talented local photographers as Vincenzo Pietropaolo, Peter MacCallum and David Hlynsky. The images capture the different perspectives of the photographers and collectively capture the moment, showing us local personalities and familiar landmarks in our bustling and ever-changing urban world. Reviews of this exhibit appeared in both *Now Magazine*, and the *Globe and Mail*.
- Doors Open in May of 2006 saw close to 900 people attend the Archives' own special version of this popular open house, called *Step Into Your Archives*. Each year this event is a collaboration between the City of Toronto Archives and the Toronto Area Archivists Group (TAAG). The Archives hosts the displays and presentations of many local archives, giving them the chance to show off some of their holdings to the throngs of people who venture into the Archives, many for the first time. Visitors are introduced to the resources of the Archives and shown how they can take advantage of government and non-government records in our collection. Archives staff members also provide a tour of the conservation lab, and teach Doors Open enthusiasts some tips for preserving their own personal archives of family photographs and papers.
- Later in 2006 the Archives produced a desk calendar for 2007 based on the theme of 'Toronto After Dark'. The images on this calendar illustrate the mixture of tranquility, exhilaration and isolation that characterizes the city by night.

Many of the Archives' staff gave presentations and/or tours to outside groups which included the following:

- Several graduate classes from the Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto
- Ryerson University (Graduate program on Photographic Preservation and Collection Management program)
- Delegation from Sudbury District Library and Archives
- George Brown College – Conservation program
- Volunteers of the Jewish Congress Archives

- Various seniors groups
- Ontario College of Art and Design