

2007 Annual Report of the City of Toronto Archives

Date:	April 2, 2008
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 which outlines the progress made with archival acquisitions, reference services and public programming provided to City staff and the public. It also reflects the many initiatives carried out to improve public access to our holdings through the Archives' on-line database by enhancing the digitization program to address the increasing demand for the provision of electronic information.

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 – 2007 Annual Report of the City of Toronto Archives

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Appendix 1: 2007 Annual Report for the City of Toronto Archives

Appendix 1

2007 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 interest.

Looking back on the year's activities, it is evident that 2007 was a significant year for the Archives. On January 1, 2007 the City of Toronto marked the proclamation of the new City of Toronto Act at the Archives where a copy of Bill 53 was deposited and entered into the official record. This notable event was officiated by Mayor David Miller and Member of Provincial Parliament and Parliamentary Assistant to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Brad Duguid. This represented a unique opportunity for the Archives and ushered in the New Year on a very positive note.

This report is intended to highlight many of the initiatives and accomplishments which were undertaken throughout the year. One of the substantive changes to the program was the implementation of a service delivery review that resulted in a re-structuring of Archival Services to better align staff resources. The Archives is now divided into three program areas – Collection Management and Standards, Reference and Outreach and Preservation and Conservation. The annual report reflects the activities and developments in each of these defined areas.

Enhancements to the Research Hall and impressive outreach initiatives that attracted new constituencies to the Archives, contributed to advancing the public face of the Archives. Finally, this report demonstrates how our primary concerns about the preservation of and access to, the City's documentary heritage are being addressed through the ongoing development of our digitization program.

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 2007 some of the government records which were made accessible on the Archives' public online database include:

- Approximately 300 volumes of 1996 for 1997 assessment rolls from the former municipalities of East York, York, Scarborough, Etobicoke, North York and Toronto.
- Scarborough Board of Health annual reports (1955-1970)
- Former City of Toronto Property Dept.
 - Approx. 600 photographs of residences relating to Don Mount Renewal Scheme (1965-1968)
 - Building construction and maintenance records (1911-1972)
 - Emergency housing records (1946-1958)
 - Subject and operational files (1915-1970)
 - Annexations records (1908-1937)
- Former City of Toronto Planning and Development Dept.
 - Approx. 1500 photographs of Alexandra Park public housing development
- Former City of Toronto Buildings Dept.
 - Correspondence from the Commissioner
 - Building Permit Application Plans (1904-1959)
 - Building drawings index (1916-1936)
 - Architectural drawings (1912-1969)
 - Horse building, Exhibition Park construction photographs (1931)
- Forest Hill Clerk-Treasurer's correspondence (1924-1966)
- TTC records
 - Official minutes of the Commission (2007)
 - Approx. 2,700 files of photographs from the Marketing and Consumer Relations Division (1968-1988)
- Etobicoke Protocol Office records, 1960-97
- East York Mayor's Office, True Davidson records (1958-1973)

Non-government records:

The Archives acquired a significant number of donations of non-government records in 2007 including approximately 28 unsolicited donations ranging in extent from one photograph to several small collections. Of particular note was a donation of letters and reports of Toronto's first Superintendent of Public Health Nurses, Eunice Dyke. Another collection consisted of a series of photographs and minutes of an early 1900s Lawn Bowling Club in Toronto. These collections, be they small or large, 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 Joanne Flint, 1998-2003 (former North York politician)
- Records of Michael Prue, 1968-2001 (former East York Mayor)
- Records of Bruce Sinclair, 1987-1994 (former Mayor of Etobicoke)
- Records of Eric Hounsom, 1904-1978 -- records consist of architectural drawings including the interior and exterior design of the University Theatre on Bloor Street West.
- Records of John Grubb, 1837-1947 -- records consist of letterbooks of personal and business letters, diaries and account books written and compiled by an early Etobicoke pioneer.
- Records of Jack Winston, 1986-2006 -- records consist of drawings and photographs created and compiled by prominent Toronto interior designer and consultant Jack Winston.
- Records of St. Andrew's Society, 1884-1998 -- records consist of materials relating to the social and charitable activities of the St. Andrew's Society of Toronto and the St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation.
- Records of Paul Till, 1977-2001 -- records consist of panoramic views of Toronto and portraits of people involved in Toronto's music and arts scene.
- Records of the Swansea Area Ratepayers' Association, 1963-2001 -- records consist of executive committee and general meeting minutes, newsletters, and subject files created and accumulated by the Swansea Area Ratepayers' Association of Toronto.
- Records of Peter Sramek, 1973-1979 -- records consist of photographs that document aspects of Yonge Street between Bloor and Dundas streets, people and fashions on Toronto's downtown streets, and views of storefront windows.
- Records of the Toronto Symphony Volunteer Committee, 1929-2006 -- records consist of the administrative and operational records of the Toronto Symphony Volunteer Committee, publications by the Committee and photographic documentation of events and activities.
- Records of Virginia Mak, 1993-1994 -- records consist of photographs that document interior views of laundromats in Toronto.
- 70 books were added to the Archives' library.

Reference and Outreach

Research Hall

In 2007 there were 4,600 in-person researcher visits to the Archives Research Hall, and over 50% of those researchers were first time visitors. Our team of three Reference Staff, supported by the archivists, answered close to 10,000 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 32,000 new archival descriptions of records were added to our on-line database in 2007. The total number of descriptive and name authority records in our database is 230,386 and the total number of scanned images is 41,000. To further assist researchers, particularly on-line users, 5,926 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 34,272 by the end of 2007.

The Archives' Bylaw Clerk entered 11,272 pre-amalgamation bylaws into the bylaw status register in 2007, bringing the total to 27,610. The bylaw status register is a very useful tool which provides a description and a complete history of individual bylaws. This history includes the date the bylaw came into force, and the name of the former municipality that passed it. It indicates if the bylaw amended other bylaws, or was itself amended, and if the bylaw was repealed and by what. The database also includes linkages from bylaws to Ontario Municipal Board orders. In 2007 the Archives Bylaw Clerk responded to 873 internal and external enquiries from lawyers, planners and residents seeking information about bylaws.

Our collections are extensively used in the production of scholarly and popular books, magazines, television programs, school projects and exhibitions, as evidenced by the 465 digital reproduction orders that were processed in 2007, and by the 297 copyright permission letters prepared by reference staff. Several books published over the past year have included photographs from our collection including: *Historical walking tour of Lawrence Park*, *The Canadian housewife: an affectionate history*, *Urban parks in Ontario: the modern period*, and *The great adventure: 100 years at the Arts and Letters Club*.

Some new services and equipment were added to the Research Hall in 2007 for the benefit of our researchers.

- An electronic cash register was purchased to facilitate the tracking of cash transactions. Payment by credit and debit cards was also introduced to much acclaim from our researchers.
- Analog photographic services were phased out, and a large range of digital reproduction services were initiated, including scanning, digital photography of large format items, and copying of CD's and DVD's. A new fee schedule was developed and approved by Council, to accompany these new reprographic services.
- Wireless access to the internet was introduced, allowing access to the Web on personal laptops that researchers bring with them to the Archives. This increases flexibility for our users and reduces the demand on our in-house computers.
- For researchers who may have impaired vision, or for those who want to magnify small or hard-to-read documents, a closed-circuit television video magnifier was purchased early in the year. This machine not only magnifies, but also changes the view seen on the screen from positive to negative, changes colours, and isolates a portion of the original from the rest of the document.
- A new specialized photocopier was acquired to replace an older one. This copier has a feature which prevents the spines of books from being broken, by allowing the side that is not being copied to hang over the side of the copier. It also does not allow for the "feeding" of documents, which can easily result in damage to thin or fragile records.
- Three new microfilm readers were purchased to replace three worn-out ones.

- The Archives' general brochure and our most popular handout, *Researching Your House*, were translated into French, Chinese and Italian. While the vast majority of our records are in English, we hope these new handouts will encourage an increased use of our resources by people whose first language is not English.

Special Projects:

As a result of a Young Canada Works grant in 2007, the Archives hired a student who was enrolled in the Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto. The student was hired to work on a 60-day special project involving a segment of our geographic names database. This database is used to provide authoritative names of people, places and things that the archivists use when describing records. Researchers also use the name authorities to refine and clarify their searches in our descriptive database. The 325 name authorities the student created and/or revised were for Toronto street names. Each name authority record provides a history of the street name's origin and information about any changes that may have occurred to the street name over time. The completion of this project has added greatly to our knowledge and understanding of the history associated with our roads, streets and highways.

Exhibits and Outreach

- The Archives launched two major exhibits in 2007. The first one, which opened in January, was entitled *A Visual Legacy: The City's Use of Photography 1856-1997*. This exhibit featured the work of some of Toronto's official photographers, such as Frank Micklethwaite, Arthur Goss and more recently, Peter Goodwin. Their photographs document such municipal initiatives as the Prince Edward Viaduct, social and health programs amongst Toronto's poor, and official ceremonies like Royal Visits. The photographs included in this show are among the best in the Archives' collection, and they proved to be very popular amongst the many visitors and school children who saw the exhibit.
- The second exhibit, *A Work in Progress: Preserving Toronto's Architectural Record*, opened in November. This exhibition featured architectural records, many of which were recent donations to the Archives from well known Toronto firms including Howard D. Chapman, Eric W. Hounsom, Mandel C. Sprachman, Irving D. Boigon and George A. Robb. The Archives was fortunate to have a great deal of support in mounting this exhibit, with sponsorship from the Toronto Society of Architects, the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Giannone Associates Architects Inc., TEDCO, Blackwell Bowick Partnership Ltd., Holcim Awards and St. Lawrence Cement.
- The Archives also hosted a number of special events for the public in the spring. Archives Awareness week was launched in collaboration with the Archives of Ontario with the event *Voices from the Past: Archives and Authors* on Wednesday April 4th. This event featured acclaimed local authors Michael Redhill, Lawrence Hill and Barbara Greenwood whose works have been inspired and informed by archival

records. The evening was hosted by CBC radio personality, Matt Galloway who introduced the authors and led the discussion afterwards with a spirited audience of 116 people.

- The Archives also invited local historian and star of the television series, *Ancestors in Your Attic*, Paul McGrath, to present *A City Revealed: A Virtual Tour of Victorian Toronto during the 1850s and 1870s*. This event, which was held in conjunction with the annual general meeting of the Friends of the Archives of Ontario on Saturday April 21, attracted an enthusiastic 200 attendees.
- To round out our spring outreach program, we once again participated in Doors Open Toronto, with our “Step Into Your Archives” open house on Saturday May 26. Along with twelve exhibitors from other local archives, we also treated our guests to tours of the Archives conservation lab and free films in our theatre. A special feature of 2007’s Step Into Your Archives was a public art installation on our grounds. *Leslie Spit Wall No. 2* by artist Michael Brown presented 2000 bricks which were remnants of Toronto’s lost architecture. A record-breaking 1,400 people visited the Archives in one day for this open house.

Educational Programs:

The City of Toronto Archives continues to be a strong draw for local teachers and classes. Over 850 Grade 3 students visited the Archives in 2007 to participate in our school programs, which relate directly to two units in the Ontario curriculum: Early Settlements in Upper Canada and Urban and Rural Communities. The children use copies of old photographs and maps to study how common aspects of life have changed over 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 school program is also linked to the curriculum, specifically to civics studies. Our Local Government is presented in conjunction with the Toronto Urban Studies Centre (TUSC), with over 600 students participating in 2007. 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 stored and managed at the Archives.

In 2007 the Archives began offering a new program for high school students. Designed to link with aspects of the Grade 9 geography and Grade 10 history curricula, students look at original and copied archival documents and photographs. Using the information contained within these records, they investigate and analyse the residents and living conditions of an early 20th century immigrant neighbourhood, studying the changes over a forty-year period. This new program attracted over 200 students from grades 9 through 12.

The Archives also welcomed groups of older students from the University of Toronto, York University, Ryerson University and the Ontario College of Art and Design. These students were studying history, political science, sociology, religion, art and journalism. Tailored tours, designed to suit the specific needs of each group, introduced students to

archival theory, research techniques, and the descriptive database available at the City of Toronto Archives.

The Archives was also pleased to host over 200 English as Second Language (ESL) students and special interest groups, including the Upper Canada Map Society, a number of Special Needs schools, seniors groups and groups of professional archivists and librarians. The educational program continues to attract a large number of diverse groups to the archives, expanding the demographic base of its users. Tours and presentations were provided to the following outside groups:

University of Toronto, Faculty of Information Science
University of Toronto, Dept of Political Science (undergraduate)
University of Toronto, Dept of Religion (undergraduate)
York University, Dept of Sociology (post-graduate)
York University, Dept of History (post-graduate)
Ryerson University, School of Journalism (post-graduate)
Ryerson University, MA photographic preservation & collection management (post-graduate)
Ontario College of Art and Design

ESL schools (adults):

Costi Immigrant Services
North York Community House
Language Instruction for New Canadians Programme
Preparatory Training Programs of Toronto
International Student Centre, University of Toronto
English Conversation Programme
Access International English Language Centre
Global Village English Centre
Bathurst Heights Adult Education Centre
Highbrook Learning Centre
Burnhamthorpe Collegiate
Wood Green Immigrant Services

Preservation and Conservation

As part of a two-year capital project to undertake a pilot project on the digitization of the City's vital records and other archival materials, the Archives surveyed the legislative records from the former municipalities, including council minutes and bylaws, to determine whether or not reference copies existed for these records. The survey revealed that there was only one copy of the bylaws for North York. In order to preserve these records and make them more accessible, a project was initiated to digitize these bylaws. In 2007 approximately 13,500 North York by-laws (representing over 67,600 images) from 1965 to 1997 were scanned. This project will continue into 2008.

This capital funding also enabled the Archives to purchase a network-attached storage system (NAS) which was required to provide local storage for preservation and ready access to the Archives' increasing collection of digital images. This additional storage can be expanded to accommodate the continued development of the Archives' digitization program. Other improvements included the installation of equipment to provide faster access to the network in addition to the development of a backup strategy to allow staff to transfer and retrieve working files, video files and other electronic files to and from the corporate data centre. Four workstations used to create large graphic files for the digitization program were upgraded to improve the efficiency of the workflow.

With the purchase of a new digital copy camera system in 2006, the Archives acquired the ability to photograph or digitize large format records. In 2007 this system was used to digitize approximately 72 oversized drawings. These documents included:

- 36 plans of the Canadian Pacific Railway Roundhouse, 1927-1930
- 12 plans of the harbour and City parklands requested for a publication entitled the *Historical Atlas of Toronto*
- a minute book of the St. Andrew's Society of Toronto and Home District of Upper Canada, 1836-1870
- and, a Plan of the City of Toronto, Canada West, 1857, showing the major landmarks in Toronto at that time.

Other digitization projects undertaken in 2007 involved the digitization of several series of glass plate negatives to facilitate public access to these images and to prevent the unnecessary handling of rare and fragile items. These projects included the following:

- Road and street condition photographs, 1910-1957 -- Over 2,000 images document road construction and maintenance projects including street paving, road widening, track laying and the creation of traffic islands.
- Assessment photographs, 1911-1947 -- These 1,300 images were taken for the Assessment Department to assist in their evaluation of property values within the former City of Toronto.
- Bloor Street Viaduct photographs, 1912-1923 -- These 860 images document progress views, structural details and equipment associated with the construction of the Bloor Street Viaduct.
- Crawford Street Bridge photographs, 1914-1919 -- These 100 images consist of details and progress views of the reconstruction of the Crawford Street bridge, which spanned a ravine in the north-west corner of Trinity Bellwoods Park just south of Dundas St. West.
- Forest Hill photographs, 1924-1966 - These 370 images document Forest Hill's municipal government and its activities, as well as the buildings, streetscapes and residents of the village.
- Globe and Mail negatives -- Approximately 240 nitrate negatives (subject to deterioration) were scanned as part of an ongoing project begun in 2007.

The digitization program also scanned approximately 215 images for display purposes in public exhibitions at the Archives and approximately 100 images to support applications submitted to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board (CCPERB) for those archival donations identified as having national significance.

As of March 1, 2007 photographic services were phased out and replaced with a wide range of new and improved digital reproduction services to accommodate increasing public expectations for electronic information. This shift to a digital environment has increased the number of digital orders received from the public and city staff and has significantly increased our yearly revenues.

Several preservation projects were also carried out last year which included the following:

- Removal of the bindings of some 102 volumes of the former City of Scarborough Council minutes from 1913 to 1997 to have them microfilmed to provide a back-up reference and preservation copy for the only extant hard copy set of minutes.
- Rehousing of 69 panoramic photographs into custom-designed boxes.
- Cleaning and rehousing of five oversized bound volumes of zoning maps and plans from Etobicoke.
- Examination and testing of photographic collections for evidence of vinegar syndrome and conservation collection assessments as required.
- De-framing of various records from mounts and placement into appropriate archival storage containers as required.