

# 2015

City of Toronto ARCHIVES  
ANNUAL REPORT



This new artwork called *Celestial Dive* was based on an archival photograph from our collection. It was created by the Grade 11 students at Don Mills Collegiate to celebrate the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. Read our annual report to learn about the Toronto District School Board's partnership with local archives that produced this and other amazing pieces.

## A message from the City Clerk



Ulli Watkiss,  
City Clerk

Throughout 2015 the Archives engaged more and more people in the government of the City and in contributing to Toronto's story. The City Clerk's Office leads the fulfilment of the City's Open Government priorities. One of those priorities is making City information available to the public, which is a core responsibility of the City Archives.

You might expect that the Archives staff fulfil that responsibility by holding exhibits or hosting lectures. You'd be right. The Made in Toronto exhibit formed the backdrop of an after-hours event attended by about 100 people and jointly hosted by Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests (LEAF) and the Urban Forestry people from Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division. And the guest curator of the No Little Plans exhibit, which opened in September, was interviewed by the *Toronto Star* and the *Canadian Consulting Engineer*.

But they also fulfil that responsibility in ways you might not expect. Students, from K through 12, created artwork for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, inspired by archival photographs and in

collaboration with the Toronto District School Board and the Archives of Ontario. And, in partnership with OMNI TV, the Archives provided archival materials in support of a Russian language show about Ernest Hemmingway in Toronto.

In these ways, the Archives has made itself much more than simply a location to access City information – whether in the Research Hall at 255 Spadina Road or on-line. By extending Toronto's rich heritage to citizens and visitors alike, the Archives strengthens Toronto's many communities and fosters a sense of value in what we can all contribute to building a better city. Please take some time to read through the report. I am confident you will see the Archives in a new and rich light.

Ulli S. Watkiss  
City Clerk



## Introduction

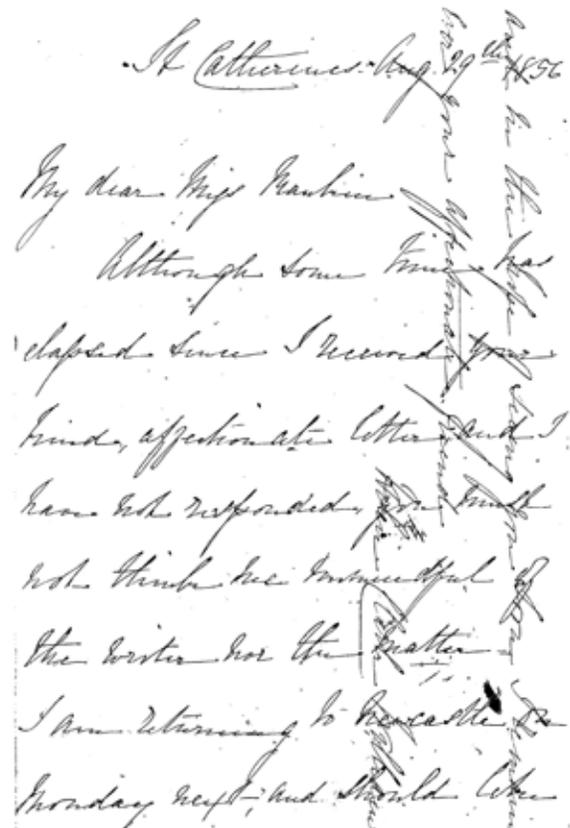


Carol Radford-Grant,  
City Archivist

Technology is fundamentally changing the way people interact with information in archives. In the past, researchers would need to visit in person and read through paper finding aids to find a record to meet their needs. Now, people can search our online database from anywhere in the world, and identify documents, sometimes also available online.

At the same time, with technology opening up archives for many people, the Archives has taken note of new realities for some of our researchers who are eager to engage with their past. For example, we find that more and more young people are unable to read the cursive writing on older documents, and that it is the “new normal” now to rely on the internet as one’s sole source of information. Therefore, we are beginning conversations about how we can make City records more accessible. Technology will be part of this solution.

In 2015, staff spent time planning how we can improve our first-floor public spaces. Built in the early 1990s, 255 Spadina Road was a state-of-the-art, purpose-built archives facility that accommodated all of the needs of researchers and



It is hard enough sometimes to read handwriting, but especially difficult when the person cross-writes, as in the above example from 1856.  
Series 347, File 1

staff. Since then, the internet, social media and mobile technology have grown to be ubiquitous tools in education and the work environment. The needs and expectations of students and the public have changed over the past twenty-five years.

In 2016-17 we are embarking on a capital project that will transform the existing theatre into a multi-purpose classroom. This will equip our staff with the space and technology tools to be able to deliver more effective and relevant educational sessions. Simply having a dedicated space for students, with the flexibility to set up lecture-style seating or smaller groups around tables, outlets for plugging in laptops, screens that can display images of documents and notes that can be sent back to the classroom, and wifi for interactive tweeting and discussion, will equip our program for 21st-century learners.

## The HeART of the Games



The cover image for our report was based on this photograph of members of the Toronto Swimming Club, taken by William James in 1912. Fonds 1244, Item 2176

When Toronto was selected to be the host city for the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, the City of Toronto Archives knew it wanted to become involved. Out of that desire sprang a collaboration between our staff, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), the Archives of Ontario and the TDSB Fine Art, Archival and Artifact Collection.

Working with a talented set of teachers from 29 elementary and secondary schools across the city, the job of our partner archives and ourselves was to provide archival sports-related images to students in selected classes from grades K-12. Using these archival images for inspiration and frequently as the basis for their work, the students came up their own take on what their city's hosting of the Games meant to them.

Some students selected and isolated individual elements from the photos, while others reinterpreted them by adding colour, flags, athletes and contemporary environments. To realize their projects, each class was provided with three equal-sized wooden panels on which the artworks were to be mounted.

The culmination of all this inspired activity was an exhibition of the finished works created by over 500 students. Mounted in the Archives' Atrium, The HeART of the Games remained on view from May 20 to June 5. Many proud students, parents, teachers and school officials attended a jam-packed official opening on May 20. For those who couldn't make it that evening, many other opportunities, including Doors Open Toronto or one of the numerous class visits made to the Archives, allowed schools and the public a chance to view the work of these talented students.



A young George Chuvalo proved irresistible to the students and the image of the sculler was very popular as well.

Top: Fonds 1257, Series 1057, Item 2470, [ca. 1955]  
Bottom: Fonds 1257, Series 1057, Item 4187, [ca. 1925]



The heART of the Games: Toronto District School Board 2015, Splash of Colour, Grade 1/2, William Treadway Jr. PS



Copies of these and other artworks by the students were displayed at the Athlete's Village during the Games.

The heART of the Games: Toronto District School Board 2015, Sports Invasion, Grade 7/8, Jesse Ketchum



The heART of the Games: Toronto District School Board 2015, United in Sport, Grade 7, Macklin PS

## Greening the Archives



Hardly a day goes by in which Archives staff don't feel grateful for our wonderful facility. Designed by Zeidler Partnership Architects and opened in January 1992, the building is graced with a light-filled expansiveness and is the envy of many. However, anything can be made better and one must avoid complacency. Thus, when the City's Facilities Management Division approached us about improving the Archives' internal environment, while at the same time lowering our energy use, we were on board!

Facilities' project manager, Prashant Bhalja, oversaw the installation of a new HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) system, and energy efficient boilers to regulate temperature, relative humidity, and air flow in the building. The new boilers require less energy to function, and the HVAC system automatically lowers consumption in practical ways, such as shutting off when the Records Centre's loading doors are open. Staff are more comfortable, and the atmosphere is much better for our records – avoiding the wide fluctuations that put stress on paper, magnetic media and photographs.

Once the new equipment was in place, we witnessed an astonishing reduction in electricity use. Our monthly consumption dropped from 200-250 to 130 kilowatts, a 59.91% decrease. The change was

so dramatic that our gas and electricity meters were replaced to ensure they were working properly

The success of these changes in our facility resulted in the City of Toronto winning a "Race to Reduce" prize from CivicAction, a group that seeks to make a measurable difference in the Greater Toronto Area through multi-sectoral partnerships. The goal of the Race to Reduce is to encourage smart energy use in office buildings for economic and environmental benefits. Needless to say, we were very proud to win this award, and it has only spurred us on to make additional upgrades. Future plans include the replacement of our windows and our chiller system; no efforts will be spared to improve both our ecological footprint, and the security of our records for many years to come.

### Fast Facts

The waste diversion rate for our facility at 255 Spadina Road, taking into the consideration the shedding of obsolete government records that are not in the Archives' collection, is 99%. Go team!



We have a new emergency generator on our roof. This equipment replaces our old generator which had reached the end of its lifespan. The emergency generator will start operating if there is any interruption to our electrical service, and is crucially important for maintaining the heating, air conditioning and ventilation in our building. Powered by natural gas, the generator is guaranteed to support the ideal conditions for our archival records regardless of power outages.

## Recent Digitization Projects



Series 724, Item 184, December 15, 1903

The Archives has a wealth of oversized media in its collection, including maps, technical and architectural drawings, plans, and advertising broadsides. Most of these items came into the collection years ago, and some originated from pre-amalgamation departments of the City of Toronto, such as Public Works, and the Building and Property departments. As was the archival custom at the time, similar types of records were arranged together because of their physical characteristics, rather than on the basis of their provenance. As these materials were large, flat, and needed to be stored in map cabinets, they ended up together and were known as the “MT” and “PT” collections, or simply, the maps and plans.



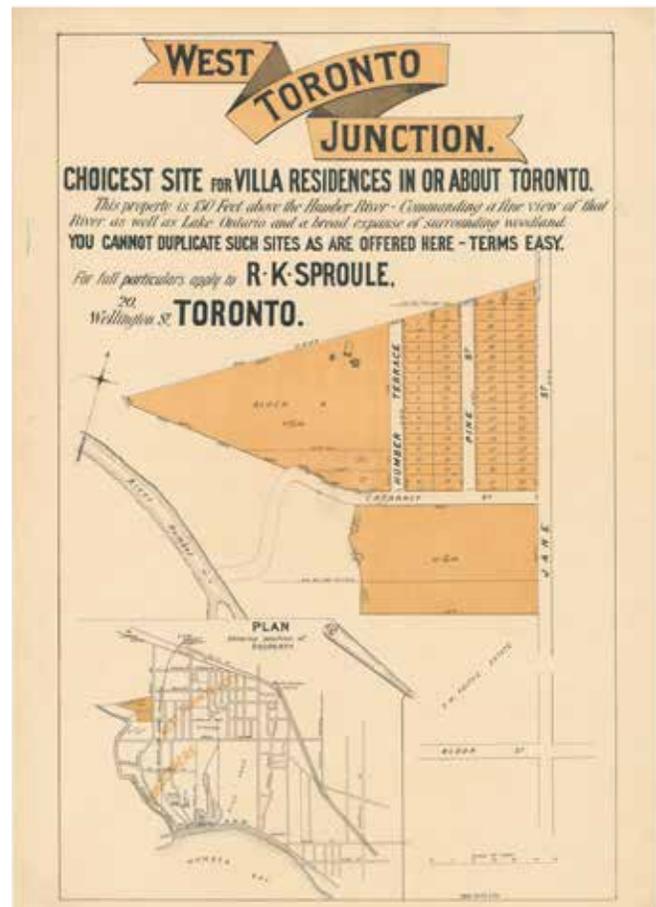
Series 724, Item 7, June 15, 1937

This situation was less than desirable because the contextual information about the creation of each item was unclear. Furthermore, there was a large backlog of undescribed material. It was difficult for researchers to find things, and even staff didn't exactly know what we had. Something had to be done!

Consequently, we began a major project to identify the sources of the maps and plans, and organize them into series to reflect their origins. As well, nearly

4,000 items were described individually into the Archives' database, a painstaking activity that will pay off immeasurably in increased accessibility. However, a further issue arose. We knew that as soon as our researchers became aware of this incredible treasure trove of oversized items in our collection – they would want to see them.

Of course, this is exactly the point of our work, but these large and unwieldy maps and plans are very fragile, and any amount of handling is bound to increase the risk of serious damage. The solution was clear: digitization. Thus began another major project to conduct conservation work as required, and then scan the items on our large-format scanner. Work began in 2015, and we expect it to continue for several years before completion. In the meantime, however, we would like to share some of these wonderful items with you here.



Series 726, Item 229, [1890]

## Students are engaged by innovative educational programming



The devastating effects of Hurricane Hazel are shown in this photograph from October 1, 1954, Fonds 1257, Series 1057, Item 1997

How do you get students interested in the archival record? One way is to show them how some of the problems we face today are not so different from the problems of the past. Almost all students are interested in learning about climate change, and the possible tie-ins with massive natural disasters such as droughts, earthquakes, and flooding. Toronto is fortunate in having been spared the calamities suffered by many other places in the world, but we do have a famous disaster of our own to claim: Hurricane Hazel. This storm walloped Haiti and the eastern United States, killing almost 500 people, before gathering strength and landing in Canada. Toronto was hit severely, with rivers, streams, and creeks all overflowing their banks. When it was all over 81 Canadians had died, mostly in Toronto, and it significantly changed our ideas about living on floodplains.

The Archives had always wanted to do something with Hurricane Hazel, and in November 2015, we got our opportunity. The students at the Toronto French School had been learning about natural disasters in class, and their teacher wanted to bring them to the Archives to learn more. Our educators pulled together a new program in short

order, showing the students what the city was like before the hurricane, the immediate effects, and the preventive measures put in place after the disaster, such as converting formerly residential areas on floodplains into parklands.

The study of natural disasters is part of the Grade 5 curriculum, so we plan to expand this improvised program into a permanent offering. Many of our educational programs have been inspired and developed this way: responding to teachers wanting to expose their students to archival resources relating to subjects they are studying. Our collection can provide rich and engaging archival materials on many topics, relevant to the requesting group, and across the curriculum.

## Reaching out at Pearson Airport

Far be it from us to be content with showing off our fabulous collection of photographs only in at the Archives, or on our Flickr pages, or through our tweets. Instead, we are always looking for new opportunities to reach fresh audiences. So when staff at Pearson International Airport invited the Archives



Chinatown, [ca. 1985], Series 1465, File 622, Item 2

to partner in the development of a temporary exhibit at Terminal One, we were very excited to participate.

The impetus for this exhibit, appropriately titled “Welcome to Toronto” was to welcome the many foreign visitors coming to our city for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, held from July 10-26 and Aug. 7-15, 2015. The 19 images in the exhibit were selected to illustrate how waves of immigration have shaped and strengthened our city. While our collection unfortunately does not include images of people from all of the 170 countries of origin for Toronto immigrants, the exhibit does include people representing various countries in Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean.

Little did we know how meaningful the exhibit would be for one individual who, passing through the terminal, was confronted by a huge image of himself from 30 years ago! David Mark tweeted a picture with him standing in front of his younger self in the photograph of Chinatown shown above. He is the handsome guy in the white jacket. Mr. Mark caught us by surprise, but that is the beauty and importance of archives: they reflect ourselves and our communities, allowing us to remember and touch our past.

## No Little Plans

Imagining what our city might have been has long served as a focus of interest for Mark Osbaldeston, curator of the Archives’ latest exhibit: *No Little Plans: Alternative Building & Transportation Visions for Toronto*. Already the author of two books on the subject, Osbaldeston jumped at the chance to further his exploration of some of the city’s unrealized or greatly modified schemes that relate to housing, roads, transportation and the provision of a new City Hall for Toronto.

Visitors to the exhibition, which opened on September 17, may recall schemes such as Ataratiri, for example. Conceived in the late 1980s this project was slated to provide six to seven thousand units of mixed-use residential units on almost 80 acres



View of the exhibit including models of City Hall.

of industrial land just east of the downtown core. Eventually abandoned due to escalating costs, much of the site was given over in 2015 to the athletes’ village for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

A particularly compelling aspect of the exhibit is the opportunity to see the vividly illustrated plans put forward in the 1970s for a system of super highways and expressways. Envisioned as free-flowing and interconnected roadways that would enable cross-city transportation, these highways were to cut through great swaths of the city’s residential neighbourhoods, including the Annex. That this idea was abandoned may well be comforting to many visitors to the exhibition.

While we celebrated the 50th anniversary of New City Hall in 2015, few people realize the genesis for its eventual construction can be traced back to the early decades of the 20th century. This too was explored in *No Little Plans*.



Proposed Spadina Expressway at Davenport Road, February 1970  
Series 1653, File 179, Plate M

## Happy Birthday City Hall!



Toronto City Hall, east tower, July 1, 1971, Fonds 1526, File 11, Item 29

One of Toronto's most distinctive buildings had its 50th anniversary in 2015, and the Archives joined in the celebrations by contributing an exhibit that was displayed in the City Hall rotunda over the weekend of September 12-13.

The story of the international competition to find a winning design for the new seat of Toronto's government is a fascinating one. In 1955, City Council presented the electorate with a scheme for a new building to replace the third municipal building – the structure we now call “Old City Hall.” This proposal had been submitted by a consortium of three architectural firms, Marani & Morris, Mathers & Haldenby, and Shore and Moffat. Unfortunately for these architects, their design was roundly criticized by architectural students at the University of Toronto. They described it as “dull and uninteresting,” an “inhuman pile of stones,”



The consortium's rejected proposal for a new City Hall and Civic Square, 1955 Series 1188, File 5, Item 5

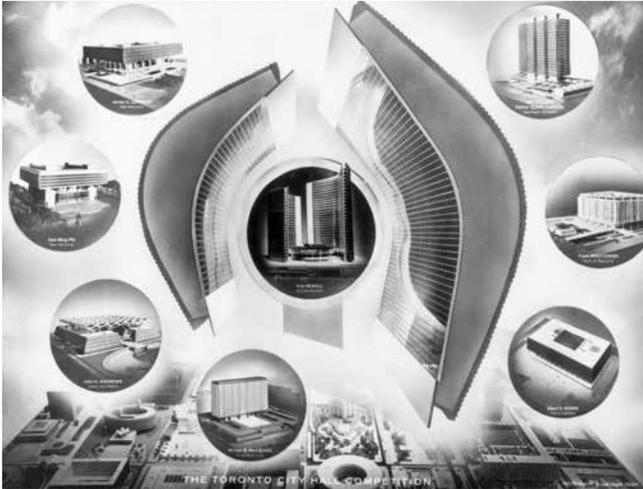
and “a funeral home of vast dimensions.” These damning opinions influenced the people of Toronto, and the City's request for the money to build the consortium's proposal was voted down.

Council listened to the people and decided to open up the field to other submissions by holding a competition. The deadline for the submissions was April 18, 1958, and there was no lack of interest.

An amazing 510 entries from 42 countries were received. The judges examined the plans and the three-dimensional models that were required as part of each entry. These models completely filled the Horticultural Building at the CNE and it took six days to winnow the selection down to eight finalists. Finally by September the winner was chosen, and it was a remarkable choice. The Finnish architect Viljo Revell had submitted a design that was so different and unique, it is amazing that it made it to the finalist stage. But Eero Saarinen, a fellow Finn and member of the judging team, made it his business to promote



Series 1465, File 119, Item 20, [1958]



Finalists and winning design, [1958], Fonds 1268, Series 1317, Item 250

Revell's entry to the rest of the judges, and his most unusual, modern design won out over all the others.

To further celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of City Hall in 1965, film-maker Michael Kainer produced a documentary film entitled *Finn with an Oyster: The Story Behind Toronto's New City Hall*. Kainer worked in close collaboration with former City Archivist Karen Teeple on this film, and her expertise in researching the history of the planning and construction, finding archival images, and her friendships with members of the Revell family contributed a great deal to the success of the documentary.

The film includes many fascinating interviews with people who have insight into the "behind" story, including architects Peter Richardson, Ken Greenberg, Phillip Carter, Michael McClelland and George Baird. Journalist Robert Fulford, and former mayors John Sewell, David Crombie, Barbara Hall and David Miller, each provided interesting commentary on various aspects of the controversial history of Viljo Revell's masterpiece.

Revell's two daughters Tuula and Sonja, as well as Sonja's husband Mike Stewart, were also interviewed for *Finn with an Oyster*. They bring a



Workers laying the terrazzo floor in City Hall, April, 16, 1964  
Fonds 1268, Series 1318, File 4, Item 445

fresh perspective to our understanding of the Finnish architect, who was not completely happy with his experience of working in Toronto. According to Tuula and Sonja, Revell often felt that his vision was compromised by obstacles, whether they were political, financial, or cultural, and one of his major disappointments was that he was not selected to design the interiors of City Hall, in addition to the structure itself. However, his influence can be seen inside the building – particularly in the extensive use of wood anywhere human hands would touch, such as door handles, railings and benches, and in the beautiful terrazzo floors in the rotunda that are so distinctive. It was a great tragedy that Revell died at the age of 54 in November of 1964, and therefore missed both the opening ceremonies, and the tremendous world-wide acclaim for his inspired design.

Most appropriately, *Finn with an Oyster* received its première in the Council Chamber of City Hall on September 12, 2015. If you missed seeing it then, you can always visit the Archives and catch it here. We know you will enjoy watching this film and learning more about Toronto's most iconic building.

# ARCHIVES 2015

## ANNUAL REPORT



City of Toronto Archives historic plaque installed in 2011

## City of Toronto Archives

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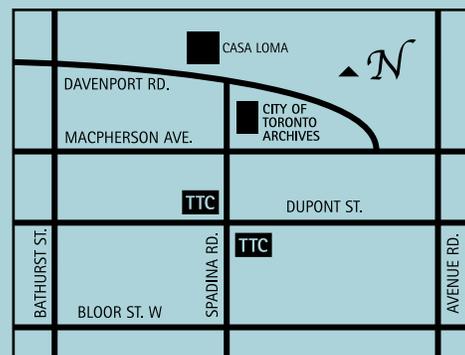


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[toronto.ca/archives](http://toronto.ca/archives)



Monday – Friday: 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Saturday (mid October to mid April): 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

The City of Toronto Archives is easy to get to by public transit.  
Exit the University/Spadina line at Dupont station and walk north.

The City of Toronto Archives is a program of the City Clerk's Office.