

# **TORONTO** STAFF REPORT

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January 20, 2006

To: Administration Committee  
From: Commissioner of Corporate Services  
Subject: Annual Report of the Toronto Archives for 2004

Purpose:

This report provides a summary of the acquisitions and activities undertaken by the City of Toronto Archives for 2004.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

Background:

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 No. 2 of The Administration Committee requires the City Clerk to submit an annual report of the Archives' activities, including a list of major acquisitions made under the terms of the policy.

Comments:

The report provides an overview of the accomplishments made by the Archives over this past year through several processing, conservation and digitization projects. It also provides information on the volume of reference service inquiries that comprise the major activities of the Archives' Research Hall. As more and more collections are processed by the archivists and made available through the Archives' on-line database, there is increasing interest from the public and more service demands in reference services.

Since amalgamation and the resulting consolidation of archival records from the former seven municipalities, the public profile of the Archives has steadily increased as demonstrated by the

annual increase in the number of researchers to the Research Hall and inquiries from the public and city staff. As more and more images are added to the Archives' on-line database, there is a corresponding increase in the number of photographic images requested for use in exhibits, publications, film, broadcast or website use.

Important initiatives in public programming that include school tours, virtual exhibits, walking tours, annual Open House events and partnership projects have provided a much greater public awareness of the Archives' role in Toronto's local heritage.

Conclusions:

The Archives' annual report for 2004 is a useful tool to communicate the City's significant accomplishments in the area of documentary heritage to the public and interested organizations.

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M. Joan Anderton, Commissioner of Corporate Services

List of Attachments

Attachment No. 1: Annual Report of the City of Toronto Archives for 2004.

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Attachment No. 1: Annual report of the City of Toronto Archives for 2004

Introduction:

The City of Toronto Archives is an integral part of the Corporate Records Management Program, which was established by City Council in July 1999 to ensure the co-ordinated management of recorded information throughout its life cycle to satisfy statutory and operational requirements, and to ensure the availability of the City's documentary heritage in the public's interests.

Building upon a foundation of archival services that began at the former City of Toronto in 1960, and the former Metropolitan Toronto in 1985, the Archives preserves and provides access to records of enduring value regardless of media or format, that provide evidence of the decisions, policies, and activities of the City of Toronto, its predecessor municipalities, and its agencies,

boards, and commissions which do not have their own archival programs. The Archives also acquires, preserves and provides access to non-government records that make a significant contribution to an understanding of the development of the City, its natural and built environment, and the people who lived, worked, or had an impact upon Toronto.

#### Acquisitions:

##### Government Records:

Since amalgamation the Archives has continued to make substantial inroads in the processing of archival records from the former seven municipalities. At the beginning of 2004 approximately 200 volumes of assessment rolls from six of the former municipalities were described in the Archives' database. Other government records added to the Archives database include: City of York Board of Health minutes (1943-1992), City of York Board of Health correspondence files (1970-1972) and City of York Housing Company minutes (1951-1991); East York Clerk's records (1924-1997); Leaside Council and Committee Proceedings (1913-1966); Forest Hill by-laws (1923-1966); City of Toronto Land Use Committee records (1980-1997); City of Toronto Buildings and Development Committee proceedings (1959-1980); and the photographic records for the City of Toronto Planning Board.

##### Non-government records:

In 2004 the Archives acquired 54 donations of non-government records, that represent the records of many individuals, organizations and associations who have contributed to the documentary heritage of Toronto. Some of the major acquisitions are listed below, along with the date range of the documents included in their donations and, where appropriate, a brief note regarding their sphere of activity:

Records of Irving Boigon, ca. 1951-1990 (architectural records relating to the design and construction of schools, community centres, mixed housing, apartment as well as special needs and long-term care buildings in Toronto)

Records of Michele Landsberg, ca. 1990-2003 (records document the professional activities of one of Canada's leading journalists)

Records of the Societe d'histoire de Toronto, ca. 1983-2004 (records documenting the foundation and early activities of Toronto's first historical society devoted to studying the City's Francophone history)

Photographs of the Don Valley incinerator prior to demolition, 2004 (40 photographs commissioned by Works and Emergency Services to document building before demolition)

Records of the Children's Aid Society, 1960-2000 (a further accrual to records already held by the Archives consisting of projects, policies and procedures, publications, newsletters and reports reflecting the agencies' activities)

Records of Anne Johnson, 1950-2003 (former City of Toronto and Metropolitan Toronto politician)

Records of Kenneth Lund, 1964-1974 (former North York politician)

Records of the “Save York Downs” campaign in North York, 1968-1989 (records document the campaign to save the York Downs Golf Club lands from redevelopment to ensure that it became public parkland)

Records of Geoffrey James, 2000-2004 (panoramic photographs by Geoffrey James, a prominent Toronto photographer, documenting aspects of Toronto’s commercial, industrial, residential, and natural landscapes)

Records of Vincenzo Pietropaolo, 1970-1985 (photographs documenting aspects of Italian immigrant life in Toronto between 1970 and 1985)

Records of the EarlsCourt Child and Family Centre, 1913-2004 (records documenting the social agency’s creation, organization and activities during its 90 year life span).

#### Preservation Management:

A Disaster Recovery Plan for Corporate Records and Archives has been reviewed and updated to provide essential information and direction to management and staff in the event of an emergency. It is a comprehensive resource tool containing contact information, roles and responsibilities as well as instructions for responding to an emergency call.

As a result of the consolidation of the assessment rolls and bylaws from the former municipalities to the Archives, preservation initiatives continue to be applied to these records. In 2004 approximately 350 volumes of assessment rolls were transferred to the Conservation lab and treated for ‘red rot’ a deteriorating condition which affects leather bindings. The assessment rolls were cleaned, chemically stabilized and stored in specialized boxes. Approximately 17,000 bylaws from the former municipalities of Yorkville, Brockton, Parkdale, East Toronto, North Toronto, Forest Hill, Swansea, Leaside and East York were assessed for their physical condition and storage needs as part of the overall bylaw assessment project begun in 2003.

Other preservation activities included the preparation of approximately 600 negatives which are affected by vinegar syndrome for freezer storage, and the re-housing of over 400,000 negatives from metal cabinets to appropriate archival storage boxes.

Conservation treatment and remounting of approximately 60 nineteenth century albumen photographs was undertaken and completed.

Restoration and cleaning of an oversize 1862 manuscript map of Toronto was begun in the fall of 2004.

The Archives’ conservator also mentored a student from the Ontario College of Art and Design who was interested in pursuing post graduate opportunities in conservation.

### Processing Projects:

Before acquisitions are made available to the public, they must be arranged, described and transferred to appropriate containers for storage. Each processing project includes a review of the acquisition to identify material that may require conservation treatment, as well as a description of the records according to national archival standards in a relational database that links all of the records of a particular individual or group – items, files, series, and fonds or collection.

In 2004 approximately 19,562 descriptive records were added to the Archives' database. Of particular note was the completion of the arrangement and description of the Mandel Sprachman records. Sprachman was a highly respected Toronto architect whose extensive body of work, was donated by his family to the Archives. This large collection of approximately 70 metres of textual, photographic and architectural records and 400 rolls of drawings (most notably the restoration of the Elgin Wintergarden theatre ) can now be searched through the Archives' database.

Processing efforts in the Archives were also significantly enhanced as a result of obtaining approximately \$10,000 in grants from the federal government in 2004. These two grants enabled the Archives to hire students to:

- Convert over 300 non-government collections from a word processed format into the Archives' online database in accordance with Rules for Archival Description
- Describe approximately 1,100 files of photographs from the Gilbert A. Milne & Co. fonds, the records of a large Toronto photography studio, into the Archives' online database

The Archives also received \$5000 from the Alumnae Association of the School of Nursing of the Toronto General Hospital in 2004 to assist in the processing of their records which they donated to the Archives in 2003.

The Archives has also enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto whereby graduate students specializing in archival studies are given an opportunity to do a practicum at the Toronto Archives. The students are able to gain necessary practical experience in an archival environment. In 2004, one graduate student intern described the records of the former mayor of Toronto, Allan Lamport, into the Archives' database providing public access to this material. Another graduate student from the same program worked on the records of the Wimodausis Club fonds (1906-2003) an organization which was formed to raise money for children, in particular the Earls court Children's Home and the Bond Street Nursery School.

## Reference Services:

In 2004 staff in the research hall responded to approximately 9,000 reference inquiries including walk-in researchers, telephone, written, email and fax inquiries. Approximately 52% of the researchers were first time visitors to the research hall.

The provision of reference services has become considerably more complex as a direct result of consolidating the council proceedings, assessment rolls and by-laws from the former municipalities to the Archives over the past few years. Because of the increased service demands from both external and internal inquiries to provide access to by-laws, the Archives was able to create a position for a by-law clerk in 2004 to support this function. Since the creation of this position, the by-law clerk has responded to approximately 50 by-law requests a month from city staff and members of the public. To further improve access to these by-laws, Archives and Secretariat staff formed a working group to address issues relating to tracking the status of all bylaws, developing a strategy for digitization of by-laws, and standardizing service delivery in response to requests for by-laws.

A team of Reference Clerks supported by professional Archivists responded to a increasing number of visits, telephone calls, letters, faxes and electronic mail under the supervision of the Reference and Standards Officer, as indicated by the statistics for the Research Hall activities:

	2002	2003	2004
Visits by Researchers	4329	4734	4353
New researchers	2200	2134	2273
Inquiries	3952	3400	4564
Requests for Retrieval of Records	537	1258	2117
Photocopies made for researchers	15559	9188	6664
Photograph Orders	377	307	287
Photographs Reproduced for Researchers	1590	1546	1334
Images Used for publication or broadcast	458	1035	768
* Bylaws Inquiries	_____	175	226

**Digital orders	_____	_____	76
**Digital images ordered	_____	_____	477
* not tracked			
** services not offered until 2004			

Throughout 2004 Archives staff spent considerable time working on and reviewing the functionality and application of the new descriptive system, WebGencat. This involved testing and evaluating data entry screens, displays, and reports generated by the system and making the necessary changes to the database. The implementation of this web-based software will significantly improve and facilitate access to the archival holdings and therefore potentially increase the demand on reference services.

Digitization:

Work continued on the installation and set-up of new hardware and software for the digitization program in 2004. This equipment will allow us to improve access to a wide range of archival material in the research hall and on the Archives' website. Later in the year a microfilm scanner printer was acquired to convert microfilm images to electronic files. The digitization program is evolving steadily as new techniques and procedures are developed and refined.

Scanning projects completed in 2004 included:

- J.V. Salmon Collection: Approximately 2,200 photographs were scanned. These images document public works projects such as the construction of roads, bridges and waterworks, and include views of public buildings and transportation in the Toronto area from 1910 to the 1950s.
- Aerial Photographs of the Metropolitan Area: Approximately 200 oversize prints were copied and scanned. These aerial photographs from 1947 cover the geographic area of the former Metropolitan Toronto and are frequently requested by researchers interested in studying changes to the urban landscape.
- Aerial Photographs of Valley Lands: Approximately 100 images of the Don and Humber River valleys and other open spaces in the Metropolitan Toronto region between 1937 and 1942, were scanned to provide better access to these records which show extensive coverage

Staff also provides advice and promotes media conversion initiatives to staff in other departments, special purpose bodies and external agencies. Assistance is often requested when a department is considering the conversion of its paper documents to a microfilm or digital format. The advice provided most frequently consisted of reviewing quotes from local service providers, equipment specifications, and recommending the relative merits of microfilm versus a digital solution.

In addition to providing digital images from the Archives' holdings to researchers and city departments, staff also provide support to the Archives' program by scanning images for operational needs including exhibits, the Archives' website, cultural property applications, presentations and reports as required.

In 2004 staff from the Archives continued their participation in the enterprise document management initiative, jointly sponsored by Corporate Records and Archives and by the Information and Technology Division. Digitization staff provided input to the Request for Proposal for several document management pilot projects, scheduled for release early in 2005. The Archives encouraged the authors to include requirements that will ensure the long term preservation of both paper and electronic records. As part of the development of the strategic plan, Archives staff reviewed and analyzed the Readiness Assessment and Sustainment model proposed by CGI, the consultants responsible for the enterprise document management strategic plan. This tool is designed to assess city departments' readiness to undertake a document management project.

#### Outreach:

The Archives had a very successful year with its public programming activities which continue to enhance the profile and role of the Archives in the community. Several of the significant outreach initiatives undertaken by Archives staff can be summarized as follows:

(1) Promoted and conducted school programs to both elementary and secondary schools (approximately 3000 students) throughout 2004. Archives' staff designed educational programming in accordance with provincial curriculum guidelines for various grades. These programs expose students to a wide range of archival records through exercises that encourage critical thinking skills and an understanding of the City's historical development. The school programs also generate a great deal of interest from teachers and students and also promote a greater awareness of archives and its role in the community.

(2) Installed a new exhibit on the main floor of the Archives entitled, *Signs of Urban Life: A History of Visual Communication in Toronto*. A poster was designed and widely distributed throughout the City. A larger version of the poster was made for inclusion in approximately 50 transit shelters as well as 50 locations in various subway stations across the City. The curator for the exhibit gave several media interviews which generated considerable interest in the show and contributed to an increase in the number of visitors to the Archives.

(3) Organized walking tour in October 2004 led by Jack Batten, CBC Radio personality, author and regular user of the Archives. The walking tour "Music, Murder and Religion in the West Annex" highlighted the landmarks in the Annex neighbourhood. This is the fourth walking tour sponsored by the Archives since amalgamation and in all cases the substantial turnouts indicate continuing public interest in the City's history.

(4) Designed and produced a brochure which describes the Archives' program, its holdings, activities and contact information.

(5) Installed an exhibit entitled, "Toronto and the Homefront 1939-45 on the main floor of City Hall to recognize the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of V-E Day. This exhibit was accompanied by a bookmark designed and produced in conjunction with Toronto Protocol to commemorate this historic anniversary.

(6) Developed a number of virtual exhibits that were mounted on the Archives' website to recognize events and highlight materials from the Archives' holdings that include the following:

- Great Fire of 1904
- Toronto Remembers the Homefront 1939 -1945
- Toronto Remembers D-Day, June 6, 1944
- Resources on Black History for Black History month

(7) Participated in an ongoing joint outreach program with the Ontario Geneological Society which involves the transcription and digitization of the 1853 microfilmed assessment rolls for the former City of Toronto. The Archives holds the original assessment rolls which were digitized by the OGS who subsequently produced a searchable online index to names and streets during that time period on their website. The OGS plans to celebrate the launch of this important new research tool for mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Toronto at the Archives in early 2005.

(8) Many of the Archives' staff gave presentations to outside groups which included the following:

- Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto: Presentations on photographic collections at the Archives and the digitization program
- University of Toronto Art History class: Presentation on the Archives photographic holdings
- Ryerson University (Graduate program on Photographic Preservation and Collection Management program): Presentation on archival program and nature of archival work
- Toronto Postcard Club: Presentation consisted of an overview of the Archives and discussion about the City's historic postcard collection.
- The Toronto Historical Association: Presentation included a tour of the building, a display of archival records and discussion about the role of Archives in relation to heritage organizations.
- Science for Girls: A voluntary organization to expose young girls (10 –14) to careers in science. This group was introduced to the field of archival conservation at the Archives.
- George Brown certificate program in archival and records management: Presentation provided by Archives conservator on collection assessment including detection of vinegar syndrome, mould and bug infestation and issues around storage and access requirements.

(9) Designed and developed intranet site for the Archives which describes the various activities of the program, resources available to the corporation, and information on Archives' exhibits and educational programming.