

## ***The Diplomatic Acquisition Portfolio at Library and Archives Canada***

### ***Retired Heads of Mission Association (RHOMA)***

*Elizabeth Miron et Patrick Latulippe, 19 October 2016*

The goal of our presentation is to gain more awareness of our organization and collection and establish connections with those who have served as Ambassadors and Heads of Mission in the Canadian Foreign Service.

### **Introduction : Library and Archives Canada (LAC)**

#### *Brief History*

- Under several names the National Archives of Canada has been acquiring material for over 140 years.
- Library and Archives Canada is the result of the amalgamation of the National Library and the National Archives in 2004.
- The headquarters is located at 395 Wellington Street, in Ottawa, but the majority of our archival collection is located in a high-tech facility in Gatineau.

#### *Mandate of Library and Archives Canada:*

- to preserve the documentary heritage of Canada for the benefit of present and future generations;
- to be a source of enduring knowledge accessible to all, contributing to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada as a free and democratic society;
- to facilitate in Canada co-operation among communities involved in the acquisition, preservation and diffusion of knowledge;
- to serve as the continuing memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions.

### **Governance and Political Archives Section**

- At LAC we have two main sources of archival material: private & government.
  - As we are mandated to preserve the documentary heritage of Canada, government departments are required to send us material which we have deemed to be archival.
  - Private material comes from individuals or private organizations and groups which are not government departments.
- We are both private archivists and are responsible for documenting the personal papers of individuals who are nationally significant.
- As we mentioned, we work in the Governance and Political Archives Section, which is made up of 4 different teams.
  - The political team is responsible for the private papers of elected officials such as Prime Ministers and Members of Parliament.

- The military team acquires private records from individuals who have served in Canada's military.
- The non-LAC act team is responsible for government institutions which are not subject to the Library and Archives of Canada Act.
- And finally our team, which is the governance team.
- The governance portfolio includes individuals who have played important roles in government, but are not elected officials. We are responsible for the private archives of ambassadors & diplomats, Governors General, Federal and Supreme Court Justices, and high-ranking public servants.

### **Examples of private diplomatic fonds**

- Here are a few examples of archival fonds from former diplomats we have been working on in recent years. We are currently working on the Arthur R. Menzies fonds. Mr. Menzies was a Canadian Ambassador in China, Vietnam, Australia, NATO and for Disarmament.
  - Interesting fact: during the processing of this fonds, we discovered the presentation he made to this organization in 2000 titled, "An Asianist in Old External Affairs"
- Another fonds we are processing is the Leighton McCarthy fonds (1<sup>st</sup> Ambassador to the United States – 1941-1945).
- Other fonds we have recently acquired: Raymond Chrétien, Albert Edgar Ritchie, Marcel Cadieux.
- To identify persons of interest for our collection, we follow the media for news of any nominations or retirements of ambassadors. We remain apprised of current events in the field of international relations in order to identify key countries or regions, and prominent individuals.
- There are two ways we could receive archival material:
  - The first, is the initial contact is received directly from the donor or their family through our contact centre. They are then asked to fill out a form which briefly describes the potential donation.
  - The second way is if we identified an individual who could possess material of national significance. In this case, we initiate contact, usually in the form of a letter.
- In the two cases, the proposed donation is evaluated by archivists. If the material is in line with our mandate and collecting policies, we then proceed to an acquisition. It is at this moment, we sign the 'Deed of Gift' with the donor or their representative. This is the legal document which transfers ownership of the material to LAC.

### **Arrangement, Description and Access**

- Once the evaluation and acquisition is complete and the Deed of Gift has been signed, we begin the arrangement and description of the records to ensure long term preservation.

Archivists go through all of the donated material and arrange and describe it in a way that makes it findable by researchers.

- We try to acquire records from the entire life of the individual. This often includes records related to childhood, education, early and later career, organizations they are involved in, and even post-retirement.
- We receive material in a variety of formats including: physical textual records, electronic, audio-visual, and photographs
- Some examples of records we commonly see include: diaries, correspondence, personal records from diplomatic postings, notes, annotated reports, and speeches.
- During the arrangement we also remove any duplicate records or records which are deemed to be ‘non-archival’. This often includes:
  - Non-annotated research articles; non-annotated documents which are considered strictly government and will therefore arrive at LAC through the government department; publications; and sensitive personal records such as financial or medical information
- If the donor wishes, archival donations can be appraised for their fair market value which can result in a tax receipt.
- It is important to mention, that private records are not subject to the Access to Information and Privacy laws. However, we establish access conditions for private records in the spirit of the ATIP legislation and in collaboration with the creator of the records. As many of our donors worked for the government, we frequently see sensitive government and personal information, which cannot be opened to the public for some time. While reviewing the records, we create a *Restricted Access Form*, which establishes which records can be opened right away, which records will be closed or restricted, and for how long.

### **Current Acquisition Priorities**

- Diplomats who have worked in some regions or in certain international organizations are better represented than others in our collection. The diplomatic collecting portfolio must ensure fair and equal representation of Canadian society.
- We must try and establish a balanced representation between the archival fonds of francophones and anglophones, men and women, and ensure individuals from various cultural communities are represented, which is not currently the case.
- Heads of Mission from the United States, Great Britain, and France are well represented in our collection. However many other regions in the world including countries in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, where Canada played a key role in international relations, require better representation.
- The majority of the diplomats represented in our collection served as Heads of Mission in the 1940s to 1960s therefore we are looking to acquire archival collections documenting more recent years.

### **Conclusion**

- We have several areas in our collection which are under-represented, in terms of gender, time period, and geographic area. We do hope to eventually fill these gaps and be able to offer Canadians a more comprehensive collection that documents the diversity of the Canadian Foreign Service.
- It is also important to mention that Patrick and I are the entire governance team and we can only acquire and process a few archival collections per year, depending on their size and complexity.
- As we stated at the beginning of the presentation, we are hoping to gain more awareness of the diplomatic collecting portfolio at LAC. We feel this is a crucial area to document and offers researchers an insight into the personal perspective of ambassadors and diplomats, and enriches the official government records in LAC's collection.

LAC contact information for offers of donation:

Phone: 819-934-5793

Email: BAC.Dons-Gifts.LAC@canada.ca