

**THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY-BASED ETHNIC ARCHIVES:
A RESOURCE IN DEVELOPMENT**

BY

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**A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS

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Abstract

Archives are entrusted with the difficult task of capturing the nation's history. Obtaining an accurate reflection of a diverse nation through the documentary evidence they choose to retain is a great challenge. For much of its history, Canada's National Archives has concentrated its collecting efforts on documenting an Anglo-French perspective of Canadian history. This has resulted in a lack of archival heritage of Canada's more marginalized groups in society including women and first nations people. The group that this thesis addresses is that of Canada's ethnic communities. Ethnic people did not see their experiences and contributions to Canada reflected in the nation's heritage. Therefore, many groups took it upon themselves to establish their own archival repositories. These early efforts met with difficulties including lack of resources and professional knowledge. The introduction of federal multicultural policy served as a catalyst for the growth of ethnic-run archives in Canada. The Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives serves as a working example of the evolution of a community-based ethnic archives. As well, two surveys were conducted in order to better understand the beginnings, evolution and persistence of the country's ethnic archives. These surveys, and the associated literature review, demonstrate some of the most valuable uses and potential applications of ethnic archival materials. This thesis extols the value of Canada's ethnic-run archives in this period of government austerity.

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Introduction

A people which remembers and honors its past will perpetuate and glorify its future.¹

Canada's archives are entrusted with the momentous task of chronicling the nation's history. Documenting Canada's diverse, expansive and ever-changing history is a formidable endeavor. One of the most difficult factors inherent in attempting to preserve a country's history is ensuring that all aspects of the nation's history are addressed. Collecting materials that represent an accurate portrayal of its people and institutions is a daunting assignment. Inevitably, due to biases, inadvertent overlooking, and directed collecting efforts, some segments of Canadian history have been omitted, disregarded or ignored. The part of that history that this thesis will address is the area of ethnic archival materials. It will explore the reasons why they were overlooked and later embraced and their relationship to the ethnic communities within which they have been created. The primary focus of the thesis will be to seek to understand why several of Canada's ethnic communities felt compelled to establish an archives and what impact this has had on their community and the greater Canadian community.

The ethnic archives that this thesis concentrates on are maintained by ethnic communities. While the national and provincial government archival repositories and even some university archives have components which define themselves as ethnic archives, their institutions are not entirely devoted to the acquisition and retention of ethnic archival materials or maintained within the framework of an ethnic community in the same way

¹Winston Churchill in Treasures of a People: The Synagogues of Canada, by Sheldon Levitt, Lynn Milstone, and Sydney T. Tennenbaum (Toronto: Lester & Orphen Denny's Limited, 1985): 116.

an ethnic community archives is. For these reasons there is a vast difference between community-run ethnic archives and ethnic archival programs or collections within a public or university archives. I have also included the Centre d'Etudes Acadienne Archives in New Brunswick as a distinctive ethno-cultural group within the French-Canadian community with its own unique heritage and culture.

The National Archives of Canada (NAC), by virtue of its size, budget, scope of its collection and human resources, has been a formidable influence within the Canadian archival community.² Its practices have often set the standard for other, smaller archival repositories, especially the NAC's provincial counterparts. One of the most profound influences of the NAC has been in the area of record acquisition. As chapter one shows, in the first decades of the history of the NAC its collecting practices centred on documenting British-French contributions to Canadian nation-building. It chronicled the growth of Canada through a largely Anglo-French historical understanding. The NAC collected records which documented achievements and attributes of Canada's "two founding peoples." This affirmed the prevailing perceptions about where the country had come from and what it should be like. This conception of the country's history was shared by other smaller archives throughout the nation who largely documented the country's history through an English or French vantage point.

During the first century of NAC's existence (1872-1972) it failed to capture the true diversity and complexity of Canada's ever-changing social complexion. As a result the country's history books conveyed a distorted version of history, filtered through a British-French lens. Canadian society's

²Before 1987, the National Archives of Canada was known as the Public Archives of Canada and was headed by the Dominion Archivist. In 1987, the latter was given the new title of National Archivist of Canada.

marginalized groups, first nations' communities and immigrant groups from other than Britain and France went largely unrecognized and undocumented.

In contrast to the absence of much ethnic and other materials at the NAC, and other government-funded archives in Canada, a small number of Canada's ethnic communities began to collect archival materials generated within their own communities. While enthusiasm and good intentions were there, many of these archives were beset with shortages of money, human resources and professional knowledge and skills. They did possess, however, a desire to create an identity for themselves by creating and disseminating a collective memory and history of their group. Establishing a collective consciousness based on past experiences served as an important first step for many communities as they sought to gain recognition and advance their interests in their new homeland. The examples of the Finnish and Mennonite community-run archives reveal the trials and accomplishments of some of Canada's first ethnic archival endeavors and the determination which propelled them forward.

The watershed in the collection of ethnic archival materials in Canada occurred in 1971 with the adoption of federal multicultural policy. It injected a great deal of much needed money into ethnic communities to pursue cultural interests. It also initiated a new ethnic archives collecting program at the NAC. The combination of both new efforts at collecting ethnic materials proved to be a mixed blessing. The policy also initiated decades of sometimes bitter disagreement between different archives vying for the same records. The debate over where is the "best" place for ethnic records to reside has been political, symbolic, contentious, emotional and is ongoing.

Chapter two discusses contemporary concerns of ethnic archives. Two surveys were undertaken for this thesis in 1994 and 1995 to explore the practical and philosophical dimensions of the creation and maintenance of ethnic-run archival repositories across Canada. The surveys sought to understand the beginnings, evolution and persistence of the country's ethnic archives. The answers to these surveys, combined with a literature review traversing a variety of academic disciplines, flesh out some of the most valuable uses and potential applications for ethnic archival materials both within ethnic communities and society at large.

The final chapter is a case study of a major ethnic archives - the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives (CJCNA), one of the country's oldest ethnic-run archival institutions. The CJCNA provides a working example of the issues explored in the other chapters of the thesis. The CJCNA, established in 1919, illustrates the difficulties and satisfactions associated with establishing and maintaining an archives within an ethnic community. The evolution of this particular archives, like other archives, was tempered by movements within the ethnic community, exigencies of world and national events, trends within the Canadian government and archival community, and the needs of the archives own sponsoring organization.

Chapter 1

The Canadian Archival Context, 1872-1971

Without archival institutions . . . to preserve Canada's documentary heritage, there would be no record of our past, no understanding of our present, and no foundation for the future. Archives represent the official, or documentary memory, of Canada.¹

For most of the first hundred years of Canada's archival tradition little significance was attached to the documentary heritage of the nation's ethnic peoples. The National Archives of Canada and other government archives paid little attention to ethnic materials before the advent of multiculturalism. Ethnic communities, while making some efforts to collect archival materials and recognizing their importance, did not do much to establish formal archival programs until around the time of multiculturalism.

The National Archives of Canada has had a major impact on Canada's archival tradition. Its evolution has shaped the growth, scope and direction of Canada's other archival institutions. For the first century of its existence Canada's national archival repository concentrated on the collection of records of its sponsoring organization as well as records deemed historical by virtue of their connection to Canada's charter groups, British and French, and their contribution to the building of Canada. The country's national repository as well as its provincial counterparts chronicled the building of Canada through an Anglo-French historical understanding. For almost a century after Confederation the nation's public archives neglected to collect materials relating to groups on the periphery of the country's "nation builders", including ethnic peoples among others.

¹Brian W. Spiers, "Canadian Public Archives," *Canadian Archives in 1992*, eds. Marcel Caya, Marion Beyea, Stan B. Hanson (Ottawa: Canadian Council of Archives, 1992) :17.

During the early years of the evolution of the public archival system in Canada ethnic communities were taking their first tentative steps towards establishing their own archival tradition. Ethnic groups were also not entirely sensitive to the importance of maintaining archives during their early years in Canada. They did, however, begin to exhibit a strong understanding of the importance of preserving and garnering recognition for their communities' histories in Canada and the contributions they had made to the country. While the effort and sentiment was there, there was little formal archival activity within ethnic communities until the late 1960s.

It was not until the inception of federal multicultural legislation in 1971 that the face of Canadian archives began to change. Not only did multiculturalism compel federal institutions to adapt their policies to reflect multicultural initiatives, but it also empowered many of the nation's ethnic groups to follow their own cultural pursuits, one avenue of which was archives. Archival repositories began to protect the history of ethnic communities and their contributions to Canada in a significant and enduring way.

Several notable historians, including Michael Frisch, Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosensweig, have all argued that the products of memory and historical research reflect a subjective process rather than an objective reality,² or that history has often been a reconstruction of the past rather than a re-telling based on facts. In the introduction to Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public it is argued that the history that is most

²Ana Maria Alonso, "The Effects of Truth: Re-Presentations of the Past and the Imagining of Community," Journal of Historical Sociology, 1. 1 (1988): 33-57; Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosensweig, "Introduction," Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public, eds. Susan Porter Benson et. al., (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986): xv-xxiii; Michael H. Frisch, "Memory and History," in Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public, eds. Susan Porter Benson et. al., (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986): 5-17; David Thelen, "Memory and American History," The Journal of American History, 75. 4 (1989): 1117-1129.

often publicized and perpetuated is a version of the past "that affirm[s] dominant values and institutions."³ This can result in "historical amnesia" or a version of history that is most palatable to those in positions of power and the public at large.⁴ Ana Maria Alonso graphically refers to this phenomenon as the "cannibalization" of history which results in the more marginalized members of society's history being, omitted, covered over or ignored.⁵

The national archival collection began with the establishment of an archives branch within the federal Department of Agriculture. Douglas Brymner, a journalist, was appointed the first archivist on June 20, 1872. He was entrusted with the responsibility to "gather, classify and make available for researchers the Canadian records."⁶ Brymner focused his attention on acquiring records in Europe that were pertinent to Canadian history. Brymner was able to transfer to Canada papers from several European sources, including the British War Office. He also compiled lists of sites of historically significant collections housed in Britain. His assistants copied official and private records from sources he could not secure. Brymner's acquisitions constituted the foundation of what would become Canada's national and largest archival repository.

A fire in the west block of the Parliament buildings in 1897, and the resulting loss of many valuable Canadian government documents, caused the government to consider a separate and permanent home for an archival repository. An archives building was opened on Sussex Street in 1906 to accommodate the growing collection and provide it a safe environment.

³Susan Porter Benson et. al., xviii.

⁴Michael Frisch, 8-11.

⁵Ana Maria Alonso, 45.

⁶Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, Canadian Archives: Report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada by the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives (Ottawa: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1980) : 20.

During Brymner's tenure as archivist, federal public records were the responsibility of the "Keeper of the Records", who reported to the Department of the Secretary of State. Other archives fell within the realm of the Dominion Archivist. In 1903, an Order-in-Council merged the positions of Dominion Archivist and Keeper of the Records in an attempt to breakdown bureaucratic entanglements and expedite the acquisition and organization of records. This brought all records of national significance together under one authority.

In 1904, Arthur Doughty, a former journalist and librarian, was appointed Dominion Archivist and Keeper of the Records. Doughty ushered in a period of tremendous growth and expansion for the archives. He envisioned the archives as a means to promote the writing of Canadian history. He advised Prime Minister Laurier that he sought to make the archives ". . . an important factor in the development of our national life."⁷ Doughty's zealous belief in his cause propelled his success in acquiring a wide variety of new and high profile collections from sources throughout Canada and Europe. He also initiated an active publication program to make archival documents more widely available. Doughty's legacy was the creation of an ambitious vision for Canada's national archives. Brian Speirs justly asserts that during Doughty's tenure ". . . the institution's cultural role -- to preserve the collective memory of the nation -- was consolidated."⁸

Doughty was succeeded by Dr. Gustave Lanctot (1937-1948). Lanctot was restricted by financial constraints precipitated by the depression and World War II. Dr. Lanctot did, however, despite these limitations, initiate the collection of new types of media (film and sound recordings) and maintain

⁷Ibid., 21.

⁸Speirs, 18.

the archives at their same level despite the exigencies created by the depression and the war years.⁹

In 1948 Dr. Kaye Lamb, a distinguished librarian, archivist and historian, succeeded Lanctot and became one of the most memorable and influential Dominion Archivists. A colleague of Lamb's, William Ormsby, has described Lamb's tenure as an age of "development and progress."¹⁰ Lamb injected PAC with his enthusiasm and inspirational ideas. He realized that PAC had the potential to play a central and influential role in the Canadian archival community. Lamb was instrumental in initiating a modern records management program for the federal government which added a significant new responsibility to the archives and fulfilled Lamb's goal of having a "full-fledged public record office."¹¹ A 1966 Order-in-Council entrusted records management to the Dominion Archivist and authorized him, under the direction of the Treasury Board, to direct scheduling, destruction and transfer of public records, and to review and assess records management practices in government departments.

In 1956 a records centre was erected in Ottawa to act as a "half-way house" for unprocessed government records.¹² Ormsby contends that Lamb considered this one of his most significant accomplishments as Dominion Archivist.¹³ The records centre made it easier for archivists to discern what records should be destroyed and what had archival value.

The advances made under Lamb's direction would not have been possible without a marked increase in the PAC's budget. The budget

⁹Juliette Bourque, "The Public Archives of Canada, 1872-1972," Canadian Library Journal, 29. 4 (1972): 331.

¹⁰William G. Ormsby, "The Public Archives of Canada, 1948-1968," Archivaria 15 (1982-1983): 36.

¹¹Canadian Archives, 24.

¹²Ormsby, 40.

¹³*Ibid.*, 41.

increased from \$200, 000 in 1951 to \$2 million in 1968 and the staff increased from 60 in 1951 to 260 in 1968.¹⁴ The archives had obviously gained new "stature and respectability" in the eyes of the political establishment and in turn garnered new support within society at large.¹⁵ One of Lamb's most substantial accomplishments was realized with the opening of a new, large, and modern Public Archives and National Library building in 1967. The new facilities provided additional space for preservation and research. The imposing building on Wellington Street in Ottawa serves as a monument to Lamb's perseverance, fortitude and vision for the country's archives.

Lamb was also responsible for the widespread use of microphotography at the PAC. This vastly expanded the scope and volume of records that could be made available to researchers and sent to other archives. It ended the arduous task of transcribing documents by hand. Lamb also oversaw the publication of preliminary inventories of records groups (which he also established at PAC) so that users across Canada and around the world could determine whether PAC had records relevant to their studies.

Lamb is also credited with expanding the manuscript collection. During Lamb's twenty years as Dominion Archivist acquisitions in the Manuscript Division almost equaled the "total extent of holdings acquired since the inception of the archives in 1872."¹⁶ Collections in all media doubled.¹⁷ In fact, in 1965 separate public and private records sections had to be established to deal with the large influx of records. Despite the great strides made by Lamb, and the far wider scope of records being collected, the

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Michael D. Swift, "The Canadian Archival Scene in the 1970s: Current Developments and Trends," *Archivaria* 15 (1982-1983): 47.

¹⁶Ibid., 44.

¹⁷*Canadian Archives*, 25.

records of ethnic people were still not an important part of PAC acquisitions during this period.

The PAC served as a role model for public and private sector archives throughout Canada. Due to its size and the scope of its activities, other archives looked to it for guidance and direction and followed its precedents. Marta Khan notes that Canada's national archival repository "by virtue of its size, mandate and nature of its services and programs influences the rest of the archival system."¹⁸ The limited collecting scope of the archives in its first century was mirrored in the meager collecting efforts of the few public and private sector archives throughout Canada.

There is a variety of reasons that could be offered for this limited effort. There was a lack of recognition in society at large of the importance of collecting and maintaining archival records. Special interest, cultural or community groups may have not yet been established enough to address the area of archives. Groups with the potential to maintain private sector archives may not have possessed the financial means to do so. While these factors likely contributed to the dearth of private sector archives in the first century of the Canadian archival tradition, there is probably a much simpler underlying reason: those entrusted with making decisions regarding archives did not believe most private sector archival material was worth protecting in formal archives. Marion Beyea justly asserts in her article on the evolution of the Canadian archival system that "there seemed to be little recognition by the federal and provincial archives that other archives should or could exist, let alone work in concert."¹⁹

¹⁸Marta Khan, "The Development of Canadian Archives and the Role of the National Archives of Canada," *The Archivist*, 19. 2 (1992): 2.

¹⁹Marion Beyea, "The Canadian Archival System," *Canadian Archives in 1992*, eds. Marcel Caya, Marion Beyea, Stan B. Hanson (Ottawa: Canadian Council of Archives, 1992) : 59.

The Public Archives of Canada cannot be wholly blamed for intentionally or unintentionally omitting to collect records reflecting ethnic experience in Canada. Its collecting policy reflected the interests and values of the general Canadian community. Canadian archives reflect the communities they serve. Canadians generally did not recognize the important, positive influence of ethnic Canadians.

While the nation's governments and archival institutions were concentrating on creating a nationalistic depiction of its country's heritage based on the British/French experience, members of Canada's ethnic groups were beginning to delve into their community's history in Canada, many of which spanned several decades, some almost as long as the British and French themselves.

A brief glimpse into the archival tradition of two of Canada's ethnic groups, the Finnish and Mennonite communities, as seen through the eyes of the ethnic archivists of those communities who were on the front lines of the struggle to establish ethnic archives, illustrates the recognition on the part of some of Canada's ethnic communities of the importance of creating some kind of repository or body to ensure that their community's history would be preserved and in turn documented and disseminated. Despite the difficulties and politics inherent in establishing a record of "their community," which was far from homogeneous, these groups persevered to some degree of success. Their greatest accomplishment, however, is that because of their efforts, the records they collected are maintained and in use today.

Edward Laine says that Finnish-Canadians "brought with them a well-defined awareness of a native Finnish archival tradition."²⁰ The Finns, argues

²⁰Edward W. Laine, "Kallista Perintoa -- Precious Legacy!": Finnish-Canadian Archives, 1882-1985," *Archivaria* 22 (1986): 75.

Laine, possessed a great sense of identity as a people and a historical consciousness concerning the past and present, individual and communal. As well, they were a highly organized and literate community. These factors worked together to contribute to the development of an archival tradition at a grass roots level within the Finnish community.²¹

Finnish-Canadians made a concerted effort to create and preserve archival materials, including those of individuals, families, businesses, Finnish organizations, and Finnish-language publications which documented the Finnish presence in Canada. This was a remarkable endeavor considering that the Finnish community was a relatively small ethnic group. The Finnish-Canadian community started and wholly supported several small archives in Toronto. As the community became smaller and subject to financial constraints, the archival holdings of the Finnish-Canadian community were eventually turned over to the Public Archives of Canada and the Multicultural Historical Society of Ontario.

The Finnish community was interested in archives long before they became a priority for public repositories. Laine contends that most traditional, or what he calls "mainline" archives and archivists, have tended "to assume that none of the ethnocultural communities have ever developed any sort of independent archival tradition of their own."²² The efforts of the Finnish community, however, dispel this myth.

The Mennonite community has been a significant ethnic group in Canada since the late nineteenth century. Lawrence Klippenstein, a Mennonite archivist, maintains that the "Mennonite community has always

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 77.

Edward Laine, "Archival Sources Relating to Finnish-Canadians," *Archivaria* 7 (1978): 110-116.

had a strong sense of identity and a concern for passing that feeling on to the next generation."²³ By the beginning of the twentieth century, not long after their arrival in Canada, members of the Mennonite community began to gather archival materials such as memoirs, and village histories and to encourage others to collect similar materials.

Collecting archival resources and establishing archival repositories within the Mennonite community proved to be a difficult endeavor for many reasons. Mennonite communities were scattered throughout Canada and ideological and religious sub-divisions within the community further divided resources and inhibited cooperation. Each group had its own distinct identity and perspective as well as its own records. Consequently several Mennonite archival repositories were established throughout Canada. Their holdings include a vast variety of documentation on a multitude of media ranging from documents created by church congregations, Mennonite organizations and individuals, and collections of family archives brought from the Ukraine and Russia to records created by the government such as homestead registrations and vital statistics.

One of the greatest stimulants to the growth of archives within the Mennonite community was the creation of Mennonite colleges, namely the Mennonite Brethren College (1945) and the Canadian Mennonite Bible College (1947). Academics from these campuses recognized the significance of archival materials for their own research and writing as well as for heritage education. Both campuses aggressively pursued archival collections. Subsequently, academics began to publish accounts of Mennonite history in Canada. With the success of these projects and the introduction of

²³Lawrence Klippenstein, "Mennonite Archives in Canada," *Archivaria* 31 (1990-1991): 37.

multicultural legislation, archival preservation gained an increased priority within the Mennonite community.²⁴

Canadian society is constantly changing. Diversity is characteristic of Canada. Recognition of Canada's many peoples and traditions did not fully evolve until the mid 1960s. Several factors contributed to this change and a variety of theories have been offered to help explain this increased awareness.

Liberalization of immigration laws following World War II initiated a period of heavy immigration. Between 1945 and 1961 over 2 million people, most of whom were of neither British nor French origin, came to Canada.²⁵ Canada also experienced rapid economic growth following the war. The sociologist Raymond Breton argues that decreased socioeconomic differentiators such as financial disparity and education "allowed other lines of social differentiation to come to the foreground."²⁶ The post World War II period was also a time of great socio-political mobilization on the part of various interest groups. In the United States there was the civil rights movement. In Canada, the emergence of Quebec nationalism and a separatist movement forced other groups to question where they fit into the "evolving Canadian configuration."²⁷ Ethnic groups looked at the struggles of other groups as a point of reference to question their own status and encourage themselves to follow their own goals.²⁸

²⁴Ibid., 41.

²⁵Raymond Breton, "Canadian Ethnicity in the Year 2000," Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations, ed. James S. Frideres (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1989): 150; Freda Hawkins, "Recent Immigration Policy," Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism, ed. Howard Palmer (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1975): 71-75; Freda Hawkins, "Canadian Multiculturalism: The Policy Explained," Canadian Mosaic: Essays on Multiculturalism, ed. A.J. Fry and Ch. Forceville (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1988): 12.

²⁶Breton, p. 150.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Jeffrey Reitz, Raymond Breton and Victor F. Valentine, Cultural Boundaries and the Cohesion of Canada (Montreal: Institute For Research on Public Policy, 1980) : 379.

Breton also attributes increased government awareness of Canada's diversity on what he terms "demand", "supply" and "symbolic" interpretations. The "demand interpretation" posits that the increase of an ethnic population and the rise of activism among ethnic communities compels the government to respond to the demands made on the state. Ethnic community members were also beginning to attain some of the hallmarks of success such as high levels of education, wealth, and entering into important professions which commanded attention by the government.²⁹ The "supply interpretation" theory contends that as the ethnic population became a significant segment of the population, politicians want to secure their political support.³⁰ "Symbolic interpretation", a theory developed by Breton, asserts "that the main driving force for the Multiculturalism policy has been the strongly felt need to restructure the symbolic order of Canadian society."³¹ People, believes Breton, want to see themselves and their values reflected in the nation's public institutions.³²

Events and circumstances in the first two decades following World War II highlighted the importance of ethnocultural communities in Canada. In 1963 a federal Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was established to study the relationship between English and French Canada in an attempt to foster a distinct Canadian identity.³³ This commission aroused

²⁹Raymond Breton, "The Evolution of the Canadian Multicultural Society: The Significance of Government Intervention," Canadian Mosaic: Essays on Multiculturalism, ed. A.J. Fry and Ch. Forceville (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1988) : 28-29.

³⁰Ibid., 29. Several academics have argued that one of the reasons the Liberal government introduced Multiculturalism was to garner ethnic support in Western Canada, a region with a large ethnic population. See Jean Burnet and Howard Palmer, "Coming Canadians": An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart in association with the Secretary of State and the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services, Canada, 1988): 176.

³¹Ibid., 31.

³²Ibid., 32.

³³Augie Fleras, "Toward a Multicultural Reconstruction of Canadian Society," American Review of Canadian Studies, 19 . 3 (1989): 308; Marie F. Zielinska, "Multiculturalism in

indignation and complaints from people representing ethnic groups in Canada. They too wanted to be recognized by the Canadian government and have their history, culture and traditions accorded the attention they felt they deserved. As a result of the growing ethnic presence and the power of their voice, the commission responded to their call for action. Book IV of the report entitled The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups proclaimed Canada as a multicultural mosaic within a bilingual framework. In Book IV the commission asked:

what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution?³⁴

The recommendations made in Book IV fell into two categories -- legislative prohibition of discrimination and financial support of cultural organizations that support ethnic groups.³⁵

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism motivated the federal government to reexamine Canada's multicultural character. In 1971 a multicultural policy was announced in the House of Commons by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Trudeau outlined four ways in which the government would lend its support to multicultural communities: 1) assist cultural groups to develop and grow; 2) ensure that members of ethnic communities are not prohibited from enjoying full participation in Canadian society; 3) promote interchange among ethnocultural communities; and

Canada: A Review of the First Decade," Ethnic Forum: Journal of Ethnic Studies and Ethnic Bibliography, 2. 2 (1982) : 84.

³⁴Canada. Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Book IV: The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups, Ottawa, October 23, 1969: 3.

³⁵Heather Chan, "Multiculturalism and Archives," MA Thesis, School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of British Columbia, August, 1993 : 13-14.

4) help immigrants to learn one of Canada's official languages.³⁶ The Multiculturalism Directorate was established within the Department of the Secretary of State to administer multicultural programs such as grants and non-grant initiatives which fostered retention of cultural distinctiveness rather than full integration, and cultural sharing rather than cultural suppression.³⁷ In 1973 the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism was established to serve as an advisory body to the Multiculturalism Directorate. Multicultural policies were also soon adopted by most of the country's provinces. The importance of multicultural policy was later confirmed in the Canadian Human Rights Act (1977), the Citizenship Act (1977), which abolished preferential treatment for British subjects, and more profoundly in Canada's Constitution Act of 1982, which was the first recognition of multiculturalism in federal legislation in the Canadian constitution. It called for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to be interpreted in a way that "preserves and enhances the multicultural heritage of Canada."³⁸ The ultimate recognition of multiculturalism came with the Canadian Multicultural Act of 1988.

The introduction of multiculturalism had a profound effect on Canada's ethnic communities. Their contributions and place in Canada had been validated by the most important litmus test available, the nation's highest governing authority. The policy gave new national legitimacy to ethnic activities, organizations and leaders. Augie Fleras astutely observes

³⁶Pierre Elliot Trudeau, House of Commons Debates, October 8, 1971, 8545-8546.

³⁷Greg Gould, "Multiculturalism: The Real Thing?" Twenty Years of Multiculturalism: Success and Failures, ed. Stella Hryniuk (Winnipeg: St. John's College Press, 1992): 10.

³⁸Gould, 10. For a more detailed discussion of multiculturalism and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms see Joseph Elliot Magnet "Interpreting Multiculturalism," Multiculturalism and the Charter: A Legal Perspective (Toronto: Carswell Company Limited, 1987) :145-153 and Huguette Labelle, "Multiculturalism and Government," Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations, ed. James S. Frideres (Westport: Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1989) :1-7.

that the "entrenchment of Multiculturalism has accelerated trends in redefining government-ethnic relations, in the process transforming and reshaping the reconstruction of Canadian society along pluralistic lines."³⁹

Multicultural policy also influenced public institutions, including the country's national and provincial archives, to introduce multiculturalism in their institutions. Point 6 of the recommendations made in the Book IV of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism recommended that the federal government should promote multicultural initiatives in "such bodies as the National Library, the Public Archives of Canada and the National Museum of Man."⁴⁰ The report even goes as far as to say the Public Archives of Canada had not given adequate attention to archival materials created by groups which were considered less dominant in Canadian history.⁴¹ To overcome this deficiency the federal government set aside money for the PAC for the specific purpose of increasing its holdings relating to Canada's ethnic groups and their activities:

The Public Archives will be given funds to acquire the records and papers of all the various ethnic organizations and associations which are significant documents of Canadian history.⁴²

From that statement emerged the National Ethnic Archives programme of the PAC . Archives which had previously not collected ethnic materials opened their minds and doors to a whole new world of collecting.

In 1968 Dr. Wilfred I. Smith was appointed the new Dominion Archivist. Smith embraced the idea of "total archives", or the attempt to

³⁹Fleras, 307.

⁴⁰Robert F. Harney, "Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada: Problems of Bibliographic Control and Preservation," *Ethnic Forum*, 2. 2 (1982): 15.

⁴¹Canada, *Book IV: The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, 222.

⁴²Canada, *Multiculturalism and the Government of Canada* (Ottawa: Ministry of State for Multiculturalism, 1971) :54.

collect records that reflect the total complexion of Canadian society documented through a variety of media. Smith was responsible for increasing the collection of private sector records. An aggressive acquisition program began to delve into areas that had previously been missed, neglected or ignored. These steps amounted to the first concerted attempts on the part of PAC to acquire records of Canada's ethnic peoples, among other groups. Juliette Bourque argues that the new avenues of acquisition initiated by Smith increased the "breadth and . . . depth of Canadian history."⁴³

Multiculturalism encouraged Canada's ethnic groups to explore new opportunities and look inward without feeling guilt or alienation. The policy, asserts Victor O. Buyniak, "gave ethnic groups in Canada greater impetus and desire to pursue their linguistic and cultural development."⁴⁴ One of the avenues in which ethnic communities began to explore the contributions they had made in Canada was through the establishment of community-run archives. While some ethnic groups, such as the Finns and Mennonites, had archives in their communities for several decades, multiculturalism and the emphasis and money it brought to ethnic communities accelerated their archives' growth and vitality.

Memory and the recovery of the past have always been an important means of retaining their culture for many ethnic communities. Often a great deal of reverence, symbolism and a strong compulsion to understand their past has been an vital movement within ethnic groups. David Thelen argues that people often establish a sense of community or relatedness by "identifying, exploring and agreeing on memories."⁴⁵ It is this challenge that

⁴³Bourque, 332.

⁴⁴Victor O. Buyniak, "Fifteen Years of Official Multiculturalism in Canada: Its Impact on Heritage Languages and Cultures," *Hungarian Studies Review*, 13. 2 (1986): 75.

⁴⁵David Thelen, "Memory and American History," *The Journal of American History*, 75. 4 (1989): 1117-1129.

confronts many ethnic communities. Many groups seek to recover their past and introduce it to the present as a way of creating an identity for themselves within the greater Canadian community. This is often achieved by the creation or "construction" of a collective memory for the group.⁴⁶ Charles S. Maier defines collective memory as "the memory that resonates among members who share some common orientation and allegiance."⁴⁷ This collective memory might pertain to a group or a section of a group as ethnic groups are not homogeneous. Communities can utilize their collective memory as a "ideological backdrop" from which to resist change, assert a position or call for reforms. Groups can also seek validation of their experiences and memories as a way of attaining recognition and public honor within their new communities.

The recovery of memory and its translation into history can also have an impact on the general public. Challenges and changes to popular perceptions can have a large impact on the way contemporary groups, events and institutions are perceived.⁴⁸

Archives have been an important vehicle in ethnic groups recovery of the past. They can provide the foundation for exploration into group history, both in the country of origin and in the new homeland. An ethnic archival repository can also serve as a symbol of the diversity and scope of group activities and achievements in a way that is meaningful and enduring. An

⁴⁶Ibid., 1125.

⁴⁷Charles S. Maier, "A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial," History and Memory, 5. 2 (1993): 136; Ana Maria Alonso, "The Effects of Truth: Re-Presentations of the Past and the Imagining of Community," Journal of Historical Sociology, 1. 1 (1988): 40.

⁴⁸Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosenzweig, "Introduction," Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public, eds. Susan Porter Benson et. al., (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986): xvi.

archives also allows people other than those affiliated with the ethnic group to conduct research into the group and its place in the society.

The emergence of a growing multicultural consciousness in Canada since the 1960s resulted from the convergence of a number of factors. By then a number of Canada's ethnic communities had entered the second and third generations of their history in Canada and were equipped with the knowledge and resources to demand more of their government and assert a distinct place for themselves in the Canadian community. The French/British issue raised heightened awareness of the diversity and demands of Canada's diverse groups. A wider North American trend, largely initiated by the Civil Rights and Quebec nationalist movements in the United States and Canada, encouraged special interest groups to reconsider their position in society and take steps to safeguard their future. Ethnic groups became more proactive and began to express a collective consciousness using archives, among other vehicles. Ethnic archives containing collections of ethnic histories, documentation pertaining to ethnic organizations and individuals and other like material, provided ethnic communities with the tools to begin to let Canadians know about the contributions ethnic communities had made to their shared country.

Chapter 2

The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada: Survey Responses and Further Prospects

By the early 1970s, the various ethnic communities in Canada had achieved the measure of prosperity and political influence required to cause them to take renewed pride in their contributions to Canada and to win more formal recognition for them in government policies such as the federal multiculturalism policy. The increased willingness of government archives in Canada to acquire ethnic community archives is one expression of these social and political changes. They have also been expressed in the emergence of a number of formal, accessible archives administered by ethnic communities themselves. These archives have played a distinct and significant role in their communities. Government agencies have not been able to duplicate this service and, given budget cuts, are not likely to be able to increase their acquisition of ethnic archival materials. Indeed, they are not likely to be able to maintain it at current levels. The task of serving the archival needs of ethnic communities and the users of ethnic records is likely then to fall more heavily on the ethnic archives themselves. The emerging question is: will they be able to undertake this responsibility? This chapter argues that the roles played by ethnic archives are highly valuable and justify their existence. However, as the results of the surveys undertaken for this thesis show, these archives face significant difficulties in carrying out their roles.

As a result of multiculturalism a number of ethnic archives emerged or were significantly expanded. In order to evaluate the present state of ethnic archives in Canada, two surveys were conducted of a number of the most

prominent ethnic archival repositories in Canada.¹ These surveys were necessary to determine: (a) the evolution of ethnic-run archives in Canada, namely, the impetus behind their creation, their mandates and purposes; (b) the problems they have encountered; (c) how ethnic archives serve their communities and others; and (d) how they are perceived and see themselves.

Very little has been written about ethnic-run archives. This makes it virtually impossible to conduct serious inquiry into ethnic archives without contacting the archives themselves. Archival literature lacks reports and studies which discuss the history and current state of ethnic archives in Canada. This information needs to be collected in order to investigate the rich tapestry of Canada's ethnic archival repositories and to strive to understand their beginnings, evolution, uses and users, sources of funding and their future in the face of financial constraints and the option of publicly funded archival repositories.

The objectives of the surveys were simple. The surveys were conducted to prompt archives representing a variety of ethnic groups across Canada to address questions about the practical and philosophical dimensions of their archives -- questions that others have not yet asked and which archives do not often ask themselves. The surveys, because of the absence of archival literature on the subject, were exploratory. The first survey, conducted as part of course work in the master's programme in archival studies at the University of Manitoba, was sent out in 1994 and consisted of nine questions. The second survey, conducted in 1995 for this

¹The archives surveyed were: Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes Archives, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia/Nemetz Jewish Community Archives, Mennonite Archives of Ontario, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Montreal Jewish Public Library Archives, Ontario Jewish Archives, Ottawa Jewish Historical Society, and the Ukrainian Canadian Cultural and Educational Centre. One other surveyed archives wished to remain anonymous.

thesis, was a more detailed and refined version of the first survey and consisted of 28 questions.² A protection of privacy clause was included in the second survey. This clause gave the archives the choice of anonymity on specific questions, for the archivists, for the institution or for both if they chose. It was felt that this option would provide the most uninhibited and accurate answers to the question. The archives selected to be in the study were chosen from the Guide to Canadian Archives produced by the Canadian Council of Archives. The archives chosen are administered by a specific ethnic or ethno-religious group.³ The surveys encompassed 13 archives representing 6 provinces. This reflects the concentration of ethnic archives in a few provinces, predominantly, Manitoba (4) and Ontario (3) . Therefore, a significant percentage (54%) of the respondents came from those two provinces. The remaining representation came from Quebec (2), British Columbia (2), Saskatchewan (1) and New Brunswick (1). The results reported in the following sections are from both questionnaires. Not all of the archives surveyed answered both questionnaires. This survey is not a scientific investigation of Canada's ethnic archives but rather a method of trying to understand better and to "get a feel for" the general state of ethnic archives in Canada.

The findings of the surveys are interspersed with examples of some current and potential applications for ethnic archival materials within a variety of disciplines. While not all of the archives surveyed have adopted all of these practices, the examples serve as recommendations and valuable ways in which these repositories' documentary heritage could be used.

²For a copy of both questionnaires see the Appendix.

³Some of the archives in the study fall into both categories. For instance, the Jewish and Mennonite communities are both religious and cultural groups . The Centre d'Etudes Acadienne Archives was also included in the study as the Acadiennes represent a distinct culture within French-Canadian society.

Most of the archives attribute their creation to the vision of a few members of an ethnic community of the importance of preserving and disseminating information about their community. These individuals realized that significant documents were being lost and community memories were dying with the elders of their communities as they passed away. In many cases the nucleus of an archival collection was gathered by an ethnic historian, interested individual or historical organization that recognized the importance of documenting ethnic history and ethnic peoples' contributions to Canada at the time when other members of their ethnic communities or public archival institutions did not. The Ottawa Jewish Historical Society Archives, writes Shirley Berman, its archivist, was started by a

small group of people who feared the community history would not survive unless preserved. They did not appreciate the concept of an archives but founded a historical society. It was not until they involved a secretary to administer the society that the secretary implemented the idea of a systematic archival system.⁴

In the case of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, archivist Sam Steiner explained that his archives collection began with materials historian Lewis J. Burkholder collected in 1935 to write a history of the Mennonites in Ontario. The materials Burkholder collected for his project were stored in a "Mennonite box" at the Ontario Archives until a Mennonite archives was established in 1958.⁵ This box became the starting point of what would grow into a significant archives. The collection of materials of what was to become

⁴ Shirley Berman, Ottawa Jewish Historical Society, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁵ Sam Steiner, Mennonite Archives of Ontario, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

the nucleus of the Ontario Jewish Archives was created when Dr. Stephen Speisman, in the course of conducting research for a book on Toronto Jewry, found that there was no formal archival body responsible for Jewish records in Ontario.⁶ Speisman encountered people in his research who were interested in donating materials, but he could not direct them to an archives. As a result, Speisman orchestrated the Canadian Jewish Congress Central Region and the Toronto Jewish Historical Society, both of which had archives committees, to merge and create an archives. In 1973, shortly following the inception of multiculturalism, the CJC Central Region Archives was established with Speisman as its archivist.⁷ Since publicly funded archives were not collecting ethnic materials in a substantial way, many ethnic communities took their own initiative and allocated a portion of their budgets to this endeavor.

An important question in the survey addressed the issue of the archives' mandates. The primary mandate of the majority of ethnic archives is to document the presence of their ethnic group in Canada and to make their materials available for researchers both from within and outside of their communities. The scope of their collections usually includes all aspects of organizational life, both on a religious and secular level, the papers of individuals within the community and documentation created by agencies or administrative bodies that work within the ethnic community. Ten of the 13 archives stated that their mandate included a provision for educational outreach and public awareness programming. For instance, the mandate, of the archives which wished to remain anonymous, reads that it is

To provide educational use of the collection by the

⁶Stephen Speisman, "The Keeping of Jewish Records in Ontario: Toronto Jewish Congress / Canadian Jewish Congress Ontario Region Archives," *Archivaria* 30 (1990): 161.

⁷Ibid.

public and outreach programming whenever possible and to increase public awareness and appreciation of the history and development of the . . . community of Western Canada and . . . [its] contribution . . . [to] Canada.⁸

One archives even described the need "to encourage churches and other institutions to maintain an adequate historical record of their activities."⁹ Educational programming was identified as an important dimension of ethnic archives for two main reasons. First, archival resources and in turn ethnic history, can be a vital link in ensuring cultural continuity. Archives can provide a rich and diverse chronicle of ethnic history. Second, ethnic archives can fulfill an important public relations function for their community. Their resources can be used to inform the community at large of the contributions members of their ethnic group have made to Canadian society and thus help to dispel misunderstanding and promote tolerance.

Ethnic archival materials can play an important role as educational tools. Multiculturalism, because of the nature of today's classrooms, is an important component of the curriculum of Canada's schools. Archival resources have been adopted by many educators to provide a new and innovative learning experience. Building on the success of the relationship between archives and education, ethnic archival materials can be integrated into the school system to help promote greater understanding and tolerance among students.

Schools have become an increasingly important constituency for archives. Facsimiles of archival documents have become a popular resource for teachers in the instruction of a variety of subjects, predominantly history.

⁸Anonymous, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁹Anonymous, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

As Canadian archivist Hugh Taylor says, use of such documents makes history more immediate to the students than a textbook allows.¹⁰

Archives increasingly have to justify their existence. Several archivists have suggested that archives should give greater attention to schools as they are a relatively new and expanding archival constituency.¹¹ In the past, the primary educational role of archivists was to foster scholarly research. Often, a great expenditure of money and time was spent to prepare a collection only to find out that it did not garner the number of users that were anticipated.¹² Archivists must be sensitive to the educational needs of all of their patrons. "Archivists," argues Howard Applegate, in relation to American archives, "should be important professionals in the significant process by which new ideas and concepts of American history and culture are transmitted to all segments of the population."¹³

The establishment of a link between schools and archives provides both institutions with a number of benefits. First, archives can provide valuable materials for teachers that can be used as a resource for improving the quality of teaching. Second, by working with students, archivists can build a knowledgeable and sympathetic new user base and create greater public awareness of archives. Third, it allows students "a chance to appreciate and benefit from the evidence and the records upon which its sense of identity and continuity depends."¹⁴ In essence, archives and schools have a common

¹⁰Hugh Taylor, "Clio in the Raw: Archival Materials and the Teaching of History," *American Archivist*, 35.3-4 (1972): 329.

¹¹Ray C. Turnbaugh, Howard L. Applegate and Ken Osborne all argue that the use of archives in the classroom can create a new and significant user base. See Howard L. Applegate et. al. "Wider Use of Historical Records," *American Archivist*, 40.3 (1977): 331-335; Ken Osborne, "Archives in the Classroom," *Archivaria* 23 (1987-1987): 16-40; Ray C. Turnbaugh, "New Constituencies for Archives: Windows to the Past, 1818-1880," *The History Teacher*, 17.2 (1984): 207-218.

¹²Turnbaugh, 207.

¹³Applegate et. al., 331.

¹⁴Osborne, 17.

goal. They both aim to foster historical consciousness and a sense of national and regional awareness and cultural identity.

In the 1970s a new approach to the instruction of history termed the "new history" was widely adopted. This approach moved away from the old style of history teaching which stressed memorization and regurgitation of information. The new teaching of history encouraged students to develop the skills of analysis, research and investigation. Another aspect of the new history approach was the idea that students should not only "learn" history but that they should "do" history.¹⁵ This was encouraged by a shift away from teacher-centered instruction by lecturing, to student-centered learning through discussions. Greater emphasis was put on regional or local history as opposed to national history. It was argued that local history was "much closer to students, physically and therefore intellectually."¹⁶ Greater emphasis was also placed on teaching social history.

Learning materials had to be revamped to accommodate this new approach to learning. Textbooks were revised to include excerpts from primary sources. Archives were encouraged to help create educational tools by compiling collections of documents in facsimile form on a specific topic or theme.

The use of archives in the classroom can make subjects more tantalizing and involving. History teacher Robert G. E. Wood asserts,

Archives units can add vivid illustration to a 'traditional' history lesson, but there can be little doubt that their most exciting potential is in enabling pupils . . . to taste something of the fascination of history at first hand.¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid., 21.

¹⁶Ibid., 22.

¹⁷Robert G. E. Wood, "Archives Units for Teaching History," Teaching History 3. 9 (1973): 41.

Canadian archivist Hugh Taylor, who shares Marshal McLuhan's emphasis on the medium of communication as an object of study, suggests that we should consider the form of the document, or document as artifact. Introducing these aspects of documentation into the classroom would also enhance the educational experience. The texture, size, and shape of documents all add significance to the item.¹⁸

Local history is another valuable tool for the instruction of a variety of school subjects. The study of local history can teach students how their communities have changed over time. A city or town is not a static entity that has always had the same social composition and appearance but rather, it is dynamic. The study of local history can be used to examine social change. Public schools in Madison, Wisconsin, for example, developed a history curriculum based on census data about their black population to illustrate the rural-urban and south-to-north migration of American blacks in the twentieth century.¹⁹ A similar project could be undertaken in Canada using a variety of archival resources to investigate the changing complexion of, for example, Western Canada during its period of major immigration from 1890 to 1914. The study of local history has also been recommended for technical and methodological reasons. The West Texas Council of Social Studies believes the study of local history fosters such skills as learning to use libraries and archives, learning to take notes from a variety of sources, developing writing skills, and teaching students the skills involved in evaluating historical evidence, such as critical thinking, detecting bias,

¹⁸Taylor, "Clio in the Raw," 319.

¹⁹Matthew T. Downey and Fay D. Metcalf, "Local History in American Education," Local Historian, 15. 4 (1982): 205.

verifying information and dealing with conflicting evidence.²⁰ These skills can be applied to many aspects of life.

The idea of using archives as an educational resource is not new. Countries with a long archival tradition such as Britain and the United States have been exploiting the use of archives for many years. In Britain, in 1980 the Essex Records Office (ERO) replaced an annual exhibition of local history with visits to local schools. Instead of bringing the students to the archives, the archivist brought the records to the students. Ian Masson, the archivist responsible for this project, observed that his "first impression was there is almost universal joy in being confronted with the genuine survival from past."²¹ Students of all ages reveled in old documents that contained earlier forms of handwriting, famous signatures or were related to significant historical events. Mr. Masson believes that taking original documents into classrooms has many benefits. Unlike an exhibition, he could tailor the documents he chose to bring to fit with the school's area of interest or concern. He was given the opportunity to expose young people to the importance of archival materials. Also, Mr. Masson was able to demonstrate that knowledge in archival documents was not the preserve of adult academics but can be discovered by anyone with the right approach.²²

In 1982, the Illinois State Archives (ISA) initiated a program called "Windows to the Past: 1818-1880." It provided a curriculum packet composed of facsimiles of local government records and an accompanying instructor's manual to be used by secondary school history classes. "Windows to the Past" was introduced by the ISA as an attempt to deal with the decrease in users of

²⁰Ibid., 206.

²¹Ian Masson, "The 'Records Road Show' or Documents in Essex Classrooms," *Teaching History*, 31 (1981): 4.

²²Ibid., 6.

the archives over the course of several years.²³ The archives received a positive response from the schools. The teachers' comments stressed the usefulness of the packages with students who had proved to be unresponsive to textbook approaches to learning. Students felt the archival materials helped to personalize the past for them.²⁴

The use of archival materials in classrooms has made archives realize that there is no need for them to remain tethered to a passive, insular role. Archives can have a dual role, as repositories of information, as they have been in the past, and as innovative disseminators of information, to cultivate new users.

Canada has been a multicultural nation for much of its comparatively short history as a federation. The number of people of neither French nor British origin, has been steadily growing since 1867. The youth in today's classrooms represent a variety of countries of origin, ethnic backgrounds, and religious affiliations. Multicultural education has been instituted in most Canadian schools to sensitize students to the heterogeneity of the classroom as well as the society in which they live.

John Edwards attributes a "motherhood" quality to multicultural education.²⁵ He argues:

One would be hard pressed to deny, in theory at least, the utility and justice of an educational thrust which aims to alert children to the varied world around them-- which may exist, in microcosm, in their own classroom--- to inculcate cross-cultural respect and to form a bulwark against racism and intolerance.²⁶

²³Turnbaugh, 207.

²⁴Ibid., 213.

²⁵John Edwards, "Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education in a Contemporary Context," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 24. 3 (1992): 29.

²⁶Ibid.

Schools can act as agents of change by imbuing their students with respect for others whose customs and values may differ from their own. Albert Shanker passionately asserts, "If you want to feel convinced about the value of multicultural and global education, all you have to do is look at the strife bred by ethnic, racial and religious differences."²⁷

There are two broad approaches to multicultural education. One is the "show and tell" method in which cultural emblems such as food, dance and clothing are displayed or experienced. The other is an approach in which the students are encouraged to investigate and discuss different people's histories, commonalities and "shared solidarities."²⁸ The later approach has been deemed to be more effective, yet, it is the former approach which is the most common in the school system today.²⁹

Ideally, multicultural education is applied in a holistic fashion through every aspect of schooling.³⁰ That is, elements of multicultural learning should be integrated into every subject from art to math to history.³¹ Gretchen Klopfer describes multicultural education as the "art of adopting multiple perspectives."³² Multicultural education, argues Greenbaum, "should offer both students and teachers the opportunity to learn *from*, and

²⁷Albert Shanker, "The Pitfalls of Multicultural Education," Education Digest, 56 (1991): 5.

²⁸Edwards, 30.

²⁹Frank H. Echols and Donald Fisher, "School Action Plans and Implementation of a District Race Relations Policy," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 24. 1 (1992): 68.

³⁰Gretchen Klopfer, "A Multicultural Approach to High School History Teaching," Social Studies, 78. 6 (1987): 273; Nicole Flood et. al. "Teaching the Whole Enchilada: Enhancing Multiculturalism Through Children's Literature in the Content Areas," Reading Horizons, 33. 4 (1993): 557-565.

³¹For a good discussion of the some of the innovative ways multicultural learning can be integrated into a variety of subjects see Flood et. al. "Teaching the Whole Enchilada." Some examples provided in the article are: i) while studying nutrition, students could look into the differences between American food groups and Mexican food groups; ii) in physical education class they could learn dances from other countries or ethnic groups; iii) in language arts, they could write to pen pals in another country.

³²Klopfer, 273.

not just *about*, minority perspectives".³³ Sociologist Shmuel Shmai conducted a study which looked at the academic achievement of Canadian students of ethnic and British origin. Those deemed as "under-achievers", or who fell below the mean of academic achievement, did so because, argues Shmai, the education system was not geared to their learning needs.³⁴ Shmai asserts:

The schools are dominated by the Anglo-Saxon or francophone culture . . . [the ethnic] culture is being marginalized. The hegemonic curriculum is based on the 'WASP' point of view . . . the interest of the dominant society is to control the subordinate society through (among other institutions), the education system.³⁵

While Shmai's comments may be strident his statistics speak for themselves. Children learn better with examples that resonate within.

In February 1996 the Quebec Ministry of Education took steps to rectify the absence of black Canadians and their more than three hundred year history in Canada from school textbooks and curricula. The creation of Some Missing Pages, a resource book filled with original documents, letters, photographs and newspaper articles that document the struggles and accomplishments of blacks across Canadian history, was the result of demands made by high school students studying black history. Walter Baslyk, a social studies consultant with the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, describes Some Missing Pages as a "first step to sensitize people that black Canadians have had an important role to play in the history of Canada."³⁶ Sam Allison, a social studies teacher at Centennial Regional High

³³Ibid., 274.

³⁴Shmuel Shmai, "Ethnicity and Educational Achievement in Canada 1941-1981," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 24. 1 (1992): 43-57.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Jennifer Lewington, "Quebec Provides Missing Pages of Black History," Globe and Mail, 26 February 1996: 7.

School, said that "A lot of black kids are hostile. They see history as white history and [will use] any excuse not to do the work. Now, he said, more students black and white, are eager to explore the past."³⁷

Another innovative program is being adopted in Ontario schools. A new teaching kit called "Untying the Knots of Prejudice" has recently been designed to teach students "to recognize and eliminate bias and racism."³⁸ The kit is different from other teaching methods that have been used in the past to teach about racism because the anti-racism message is woven into every subject area.³⁹ This method, asserts Sherry Ramrattan Smith, teacher and co-author of the kit, allows the instruction of awareness to be an ongoing process rather than an "add-on or a one-day experience."⁴⁰ The aim of the kit is to teach students to recognize bias and stereotypes that exist in the world around them and take steps to create and disseminate accurate and current information.

Given the great heterogeneity of our classrooms, some of the best resources for multicultural education are the students themselves.⁴¹ Educational administrator Paul Robinson feels that school systems should attempt to utilize the talents of members of local ethnic communities to help to build resources.⁴² Robinson, who was responsible for developing a school curriculum for the North West Territories that incorporated First Nations'

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Virginia Galt, "Kit Helps Teachers Fight Racism," Globe and Mail, 16 August 1996: 8.

³⁹Ibid., Ms. Smith suggests, for example, that when students are studying statistics they could analyze the percentage of white men in power positions compared to members of racial minorities.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Cynthia Greenleaf et. al. "Learning From Our Diverse Students: Helping Teachers Rethink Problematic Teaching and Learning Situations," Teaching and Teacher Education, 10. 5 (1994): 521.

⁴²Paul Robinson, "Multiculturalism: The Curriculum, the Community and the School," Multiculturalism: A Handbook for Teachers, ed. Peter L. McCreath (Halifax, Nova Scotia: McCurdy Printing & Typesetting Limited, 1981) :15-16.

resources and perspectives, believes that "by involving community people in the education of their children it seems possible to give back to people a little of their pride and self-confidence."⁴³ Rosalind Zinman adds:

While an intercultural/multiracial approach to education is not a panacea, it can be a positive and ameliorative move away from assimilative and conformist policies. It offers a range of new possibilities such as employment equity, curricular innovations, enhancement of the student, emancipatory visions.⁴⁴

Students will more likely stay in school and excel academically in an environment that they feel is welcoming and tolerant of their uniqueness. The marriage of ethnic archival materials and multicultural education is a union with the potential to produce such an environment. The integration of archival sources into mainstream curricula can inject new life and vibrancy into stale and often remote methods of teaching multicultural learning. Archival materials bring an intimacy, uniqueness and alluring quality to education to which many students, often those unresponsive to other methods of teaching, would respond. As well as enriching current educational thrusts, using ethnic archival materials would equip students with new skills such as researching, critical analysis, detecting bias and possibly, learning to navigate their way through using an archives. These same students could become archival users based on their first-hand experience with archives.

The majority of the archives in the survey were established in the late 1960s and the 1970s (62%). A few archives, most notably, the Jewish Public Library Archives in Montreal (1914), the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives also in Montreal (1934), the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg

⁴³Ibid., 21.

⁴⁴Rosalind Zinman, "Developments and Directions in Multicultural/ Intercultural Education, 1980-1990, the Province of Quebec," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 23. 2 (1991): 176.

(1933), and the Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes in Moncton (1940s) were founded in the early decades of the twentieth century. The creation of the majority of the archives in this survey, not surprisingly, corresponds to the Canadian government's multicultural initiative. It was during this period that ethnic Canadians, many of whom were now second or third generation, began to have a more open and confident sense of ethnic consciousness. This forged a new intensity of purpose to safeguard a record of the contributions that their parents and grandparents had made to Canada. The nation's government-run archival institutions also began to collect ethnic archival material during this period. It is not clear whether their example and interest in acquiring ethnic archives, served as an impetus for ethnic communities to begin collecting their own archival materials or whether these communities began their archives on their own initiative to safeguard their archival materials, which is what the case study of the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives will show in the next chapter. The example and competition from the Public Archives, coupled with money injected into ethnic communities by the Multiculturalism Directorate, may have prompted many other ethnic communities to engage in ventures they had never thought possible.

The age of the holdings of the surveyed archives ranges from seventeenth-century materials, housed at the Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes, to those that continue to be collected from current activities. Most of the holdings, however, were produced in the twentieth century with a significant portion from the second half of the nineteenth century. The age of the holdings is a testament to ethnic groups' longevity and varied participation in Canadian society.

Many of the archives report they have legally significant documents in their collections. For example, at the Canadian Jewish Congress National

Archives, the United Restitution Organization records are used to help Holocaust survivors collect restitution from the German government for the horrors they suffered.⁴⁵ The Ontario Jewish Archives has in its possession legally significant records regarding religion in public schools in Ontario as well as documentation relating to the prosecution of anti-Semites and other violators of human rights.⁴⁶

Many of the archives surveyed are run under the auspices of a representative ethnic organizational body such as the Canadian Jewish Congress. The archives, therefore, also collect the records generated by their organizations. These records can be used to enhance the administration of their institutions.

The value of ethnic archives extends well beyond the practical realm. Ethnic archival materials possess a symbolic quality as well. In the 1980s American archivist Frank Burke challenged the archival community to answer the pertinent but difficult question of why people keep archives. He asked, "Is the impulse a purely practical one or is there something in the human psyche that dictates the keeping of a record, and what is the motivation for that act."⁴⁷ James M. O'Toole feels that Burke's challenge has largely gone unaddressed. He maintains:

Archivists should now focus attention on those aspects of the records-creation process which are not practical, if only because such an expanded view will be valuable to them in their daily work.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Janice Rosen, Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁴⁶Dr. Stephen Speisman, Ontario Jewish Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁴⁷James M. O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives," *American Archivist*, 56 (1993): 235.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 237.

Archivists, contends O'Toole, must look at what he calls the "symbolic" nature of archival records.⁴⁹ O'Toole asks "Are there cases in which records contain practical information, but in which the real significance is larger and more symbolic."⁵⁰

Robert Shuster, Director of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College Archives, concurs with O'Toole. Shuster contends that archivists must attempt to go beyond the documentation of human activity in their collecting activity and strive to capture the spirit of people, events and movements.⁵¹ "Experience," argues Shuster, "consists not only of what is done but also why it is done and how it is perceived."⁵² Shuster compels archivists to look beyond the evidential value of records and strive to document the "environment within the heart and head."⁵³

There are certain kinds of archival holdings whose symbolic value outweighs their practical value. Family bibles with inscriptions of family trees are part record and part artifact. The assembly of the family in written form demonstrates personal links in a format that transcends time.⁵⁴ School diplomas also serve a similar symbolic function. They contain little practical information and are seldom used. However, they are important to many people because they symbolize an achievement that represents years of hard work.

Often the physical form of records invests them with an important symbolic meaning. O'Toole uses the example of church records. Church records which contain practical information are often recorded in an

⁴⁹Ibid., 238.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Robert Shuster, "Documenting the Spirit," *American Archivist*, 45. 2 (1982): 137.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 139.

⁵⁴O'Toole, 238.

impractical format. Parish records can be found in huge, heavy books rendering them difficult to use and preserve. O'Toole asserts that the books may have been created so large to "underline the authority of the record by giving it a physically impressive appearance."⁵⁵ Or it is plausible, maintains O'Toole, that the book's size provides a conscious or even unconscious connection to the biblical Book of Life.⁵⁶ Therefore, in this case, the medium contains a message of its own. Seals and other aspects of the appearance of documents also affect the symbolic significance of records. Seals or elaborate calligraphy can make a document seem more important. There are more modern aspects of appearance such as letterheads which contain meaning. For example, the letterhead on the stationary of many ethnic and other organizations lists all of the names of the members of the board of directors, even though that takes a lot of space. The list of the directors, however, conveys the strength and prestige of the organization, especially if important individuals are associated with it. The appearance of documents, argues O'Toole, can have both a "noticeable and lasting impact on the mind."⁵⁷

The symbolic significance of records is often derived from the record making process rather than the record itself. Writing a personal letter, asserts O'Toole, carries more importance or weight with its recipient than an e-mail message, phone call or pre-printed letter or postcard because of the effort involved.⁵⁸ Signing one's name to something is also sometimes a symbolic act in addition to its practical importance. Many people's signatures are not even legible and many important documents, such as cheques, contain mechanically produced signatures.

⁵⁵Ibid., 240.

⁵⁶Ibid., 241.

⁵⁷Ibid., 243.

⁵⁸Ibid., 243-44.

Record use can also be symbolic. Documents are frequently used for ceremonial or religious purposes and rituals. Great religions have enshrined their beliefs in holy writings. "Religious texts," contends O'Toole, "were believed to capture and fix God's own words and intentions, they possessed an authority that was harder to challenge than purely oral traditions."⁵⁹ As well, recording religious beliefs in books promotes their authority and acceptability. Religious books are still given a very prominent position in many religions. In Judaism, for example, the holy book, the Torah, is kept in a special ark (aron hakodesh) and there is even a special festival which honors the Torah (Simchat Torah).

When documents are used for religious or ceremonial uses, the records are often valued as objects rather than for their content. The Domesday Book is a document whose meaning exceeded its contents. For the medieval Normans, says historian Michael Clanchy, it was important principally as a "majestic and unchangeable memory."⁶⁰ In North America corollaries of the Domesday Book are the original US Declaration of Independence and the Canadian Constitution. They symbolize the country's independence, the strength of its governments and the rights of its citizens.

Records, contends O'Toole, can be despised as much as they are revered. Destroying records is often an important instrument of war, politics or religion. In many Eastern European countries, when their Communist regimes were overthrown, people stormed government buildings to wreak havoc on their contents. The records of these countries represented the all encompassing control of their citizens and their systematic violation of human rights. "To destroy records, or at least to scatter them around the floor

⁵⁹Ibid., 246.

⁶⁰Ibid., 237.

and to feel the satisfaction of grinding them underfoot," says O'Toole is both symbolically and psychologically empowering.⁶¹

Records do not have symbolic meaning, however, to the exclusion of their practical meaning or use. Rather, symbolic meaning supplements use and widens the contextual knowledge of record creation. Information about the symbolic nature of records allows archivists, in O'Toole's words, to "see the entire picture."⁶² All facets of archival work, from appraisal to reference, can be enriched by a fuller understanding of both the symbolic and practical roles records have played.

Ethnic archives, in particular, are imbued with the qualities of symbolism about which O'Toole writes. Not only do ethnic archives document the contributions of cultural groups, but they lend them prestige and importance. The fact that records generated by a group's activities are deemed important enough to be preserved and protected, can be very empowering and a source of great esteem for the group. Also, ethnic archival materials document a sense of belonging for ethno-cultural communities. Whether they are the records of ethnic cultural organizations, churches, temples, mosques or synagogues, members of the ethnic group can experience, like the families referred to in O'Toole's example of the family bible, a sense of community and continuity.

Ethnic archival materials can be used by ethno-cultural groups to instruct younger generations about their history and heritage. The ethnic sources can be used to write ethnic histories, conduct genealogical research, set up cultural displays and provide visual depictions of past practices and traditions, among many other uses. These sources can be used to impress

⁶¹Ibid., 255.

⁶²Ibid.

upon those who may not be familiar with their ethnic heritage the sense of continuity and history of their cultural group and this can strengthen their knowledge and ethnic identity.

In recent years, some psychologists have focused on the relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem. Psychologists such as Jean Phinney and Victor Chavira say that self-esteem and ethnic identity are significantly related.⁶³ In fact, a study conducted by Phinney and Alipuria that examined the ethnic identity of those considered ethnic minority students, found that these students consider ethnicity a "central identity concern, above religion and politics."⁶⁴ Phinney has conducted research that shows that an individual's self-esteem is enriched when he or she has attained what she calls "ethnic identity achievement," or "a secure commitment to one's group, based on knowledge and understanding obtained through an active exploration of one's cultural background."⁶⁵ One reason offered to explain the relationship between a strong ethnic identity and self-esteem is that a strong ethnic identity can serve as a buffer against negative experiences such as discrimination or racism. Chavira and Phinney found that adolescents with a strong ethnic identity dealt better with discrimination and stereotyping than those with low ethnic identity.⁶⁶

Ellen Garrison, in her article "L'il Abner Revisited: The Archives of Appalachia and Regional Multicultural Education," provides an example of how archival materials can be used to enhance the pride and self-esteem of the community they serve. Archival materials can also be used to enhance the

⁶³Jean S. Phinney and Victor Chavira, "Ethnic Identity and Self-Esteem: An Exploratory Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Adolescence*, 15. 3 (1992): 271.

⁶⁴Jean S. Phinney and L. Alipuria, "Ethnic Identity in College Students From Four Ethnic Groups," *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 13 (1990): 183.

⁶⁵Phinney and Chavira, "Ethnic Identity and Self-Esteem," 272.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 274.

culture of a region and not just an ethnic group. Archival materials were used in the school curriculum in the Appalachia region of the United States to help promote cultural self-esteem in an area where loss of cultural identity was a significant problem. Multicultural education in the United States was developed in the 1960s when studies demonstrated a substantial relationship existed between self-esteem and academic achievement.⁶⁷ The purpose of a multicultural curriculum in the United States was to erase negative self-images born of ethnic stereotypes. Studies proved that this type of education "served to develop a sense of belonging to a historical tradition, but also helped create a positive self-image for students and an environment where learning was possible."⁶⁸ The children of Appalachia suffered from the effects of generations of negative stereotyping. Poor self-image manifested itself in low academic achievement scores, high drop-out rates, and lack of community support for education. The media, literature and photography had all served to create the stereotype of Appalachians as simple-minded, backward, and poor.

The Archives of Appalachia, as part of its commitment to serve the people of Appalachia, embarked on a program to use archival materials to support multicultural education in the schools of the Appalachia region. The archives creator, Dr. Arthur H. Rosier, believed that "before people can appreciate others, they must first learn to appreciate themselves."⁶⁹ The archives created slide, tape, musical and document presentations which depicted the positive aspects of Appalachian culture and Appalachia's contributions and importance to the rest of the world. Garrison asserts:

⁶⁷Ellen Garrison, "L'il Abner Revisited: The Archives of Appalachia and Regional Multicultural Education," *American Archivist*, 50 (1987): 237.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

These programs neither glorify nor denigrate Appalachia, but rather analyze the roots of local traditions and values and the adaptation -- and sometimes exploitation -- of the region's lifestyle.⁷⁰

In Garrison's sympathetic and heartfelt words, documentary sources used in a beneficial way "heal the wounds of generations of stereotypes, helping the region's youth not only to build but also to control a better future."⁷¹

Most ethnic archives are fairly small in size. The smallest archives have less than 300 metres of materials while, the largest, at the Centre d'Etudes Acadienne, has 1.2 kilometers. Others, like the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives and Mennonite Heritage Centre, fall in between these ranges.

All of the archives reported they collect a variety of media. Eleven archives reported having a small portion of their records on microfilm. Microfilming, due to its expense, is usually a luxury rather than a common practice for most ethnic archives. Very few archives, however, with the exception of the Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes Archives and the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, have yet to enter the arena of the acquisition of electronic or digital media.

The majority of archives retain one or two full-time staff members and additional part-time or contract employees. The overwhelming majority of the employees is from the ethnic group whom the archives documents. Obviously the archives attract individuals who have a strong connection to their ethnic communities and believe in the work it does. Therefore, there is not only a strong professional impetus and drive behind their work but a

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., 238.

personal one as well. Volunteers also play an important role in many ethnic archives and undertake a significant portion of the more routine aspects of retrieval, description and reference work. In fact, one of the archives in the survey depends solely on volunteer workers. The remaining twelve utilize volunteer help. Volunteers perform up to 20% of the work in the majority of these archives. Four of the archives even reported that their archives could not function without volunteer help.

The presence of volunteers within an archives has both drawbacks and benefits. Lawrence Klippenstein of the Mennonite Heritage Centre feels volunteers play an essential role in the operation of the centre's archives. He reported that they "allow us to keep the 'clean-up' work done, and help a lot with more routine bits of tasks that otherwise would be left undone."⁷² Another archivist, at a different institution, felt that volunteers are very dedicated to the archives and can be an important resource for activities such as fundraising. Volunteers from within the specific ethnic community of the archives can also be a valuable resource for translation of foreign language materials. Every archives in the survey reported that it had at least two and up to five foreign languages in their records. Zenon Hluszok of the Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre Archives in Winnipeg articulated a point felt by many ethnic archivists. The use of volunteers, asserted Hluszok, "requires me to use up a large amount of preparatory, actual supervisory and post-volunteer work time."⁷³ Echoing a similar sentiment, Janice Rosen, archivist at the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives in Montreal,

⁷²Dr. Lawrence Klippenstein, Mennonite Heritage Centre, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁷³Zenon Hluszok, Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1994.

maintained that her archives often has to schedule its "tasks around the availability of the regular volunteers whenever possible."⁷⁴

All of the archives in the survey reported that the largest percentage of archival users were members of that particular archives' ethnic community. A significant number of these individuals use the archives for genealogical research. Ethnic archives often can provide much richer and more detailed resources on ethnic communities than can a public repository with a more diverse collecting mandate. The Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, for instance, has retained all of the case files of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, an organization that was responsible for helping Jewish refugees and immigrants from the around the world to resettle in Canada. A larger repository with a more diverse mandate would likely not have the luxury of maintaining in its entirety such a large and highly specific collection. Other patrons of ethnic archives are students, academics, amateur historians, members of the media and members of the archives' sponsoring organization.

All of the ethnic archives surveyed believe that they are thought of favorably by the ethnic community whose records they preserve. Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc says that the "Acadienne community is proud to boast such an institution."⁷⁵ Dr. Stephen Speisman contends that the Ontario Jewish Archives has "come to be seen as an essential element in our community structure."⁷⁶ While not all archivists spoke as glowingly about their archives as LeBlanc and Speisman, all declared that their archives were supported by

⁷⁴Janice Rosen, Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1994.

⁷⁵Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁷⁶Dr. Stephen Speisman, Ontario Jewish Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada, February 1995.

those in the ethnic community who knew about them. Like other types of archives, ethnic archives often still suffer from invisibility, even within the ethnic community that the archives documents.

With the exception of three archives, the archives believe that their collections are being well utilized by the ethnic community they serve. Many concede, however, that there is room for improvement and recognize the need for better promotional activities, especially ones geared toward reaching elementary and high school students. The number of users per year varies from up to one hundred per year (2 archives) , up to 250 per year (3 archives), up to 500 per year (1 archives), up to 1000 per year (3 archives), and in excess of 1000 users per year (3 archives).

There are several ways in which ethnic archives serve the community with which they are affiliated. All of the archives in the survey actively engage in genealogical programs by providing information and assistance on how to conduct genealogical research through hands-on assistance, leaflets, or seminars. All but one of the archives produce some type of publication, ranging from newsletters to books.

Ethnic archives also have the ability to shape the ethnic communities they document. An archivist at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies asserted that his archives helps to create an "understanding of our history and heritage" and gives its community "a sense of identity and purpose."⁷⁷ Similarly, Dr. Stephen Speisman reported that his archives, the Ontario Jewish Archives, "is a resource for research, its various aspects of our community and consequently enhances public awareness of issues past and present."⁷⁸ One archivist described the archives under her care as the

⁷⁷Anonymous, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁷⁸Dr. Stephen Speisman, Ontario Jewish Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in

"cultural soul" of its ethnic community.⁷⁹ All of the archivists agreed that their archives holdings have contributed to the number and scope of writings in Canada about the ethnic groups they document. This has ramifications for both the ethnic community and society at large since it enhances the extent to which ethnic people can learn about themselves and share this information with others.

Documents enshrine and validate ethno-cultural groups' experiences and contributions to their new home in a substantial way. They serve as reminders of their struggles in a new and alien land, their failures and successes, and their dreams of grandeur and disappointments. The documents of ethnic communities represent a peoples' pride and honor in their heritage. In fact, the use and collection of ethnic archival materials can even be a therapeutic experience. Ethnic archival collections can also be used to promote cultural esteem, strengthen ethnic identity, ensure cultural continuity and plan for future generations. Archives, asserts Kenneth E. Foote, have the power to "sustain cultural traditions and values."⁸⁰

The institution of archival collections of two of the United States most prominent ethnic groups, the African-American and Mexican-American communities, has had a profound effect on the communities they document. They have helped these groups attain a new sense of admiration for their heritage. These collections have also help dispel misconceptions surrounding the character and activities of the people who make up these ethno-cultural communities.

Canada," February 1995.

⁷⁹Anonymous, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁸⁰Kenneth E. Foote, "To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory and Culture," *American Archivist*, 53 (1990): 379.

One of the earliest and richest collections of non-traditional archival materials is an American collection pertaining to the early Afro-American population of the United States. The collection was amassed through the tireless efforts of Carter G. Woodson. Woodson (1875-1950) was a noted scholar and pioneer in the field of black history. He aggressively promoted the collection and preservation of documents related to the black experience in order to write about it accurately. He wanted to promote the writing of black history from a black perspective. It had conventionally been studied through white perspectives in, for example, plantation records and the letters of white planters.⁸¹ Woodson embarked on a self-proclaimed mission to promote black history and educate the general public and scholars about the need to preserve and collect sources that "accurately reflected the feelings, thoughts and experiences of Afro-Americans."⁸² Woodson's mission possessed him his entire adult life.

Woodson maintained that without black source material, scholars would have to "depend on the testimony of observers who saw the race only from afar and misunderstood most of what they saw."⁸³ This was because black sources had gone uncollected. Woodson felt these sources were in jeopardy because their owners often did not recognize their value. Despite many obstacles, Woodson collected a wide range of materials produced by African-Americans. Woodson also had abundant voluntary support from the African-American community. Volunteers were sent all over the United States to collect letters, diaries, photographs and oral histories that would depict various aspects of African-American history, and especially slavery.

⁸¹Jacqueline Goggin, "Carter G. Woodson and the Collection of Source Materials for Afro-American History," *American Archivist*, 48. 3 (1985): 262.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid., 264.

Woodson's collection includes everything from information about slavery to race relations, religion, and business affairs. He asserted that the collection was

valuable for various kinds of studies whether historical, economic, social, psychological, or anthropological. In them are found just the things that investigators need to understand a large neglected element of this country.⁸⁴

Woodson began donating the materials he collected in 1929 to the Library of Congress because it was one of the few repositories in the United States at the time which would house black American archives. The collection has stimulated scholarship and enabled the exploration of new perspectives on American history. Also, Woodson and his army of volunteers can be credited with saving many valuable sources that would likely have been lost.

Woodson accumulated a formidable archival collection, whose very presence in the Library of Congress was designed to foster the African-American community's sense of dignity and pride in their history. The fact that black papers, diaries, and photographs, had been deposited with the Library of Congress, a federal government agency and one of the country's most highly respected cultural institutions, validated the black experience as a significant element of American history. It could by no means erase the discrimination and persecution African-Americans had experienced in America, but it was a step towards overcoming past injustices and ensuring that they would not happen again. Woodson's archival collection symbolized the determination of a people to strive towards a better future through greater knowledge of its past.

⁸⁴Ibid., 269.

The Mexican-American population is also a significant ethnic group in the United States. However, historians and archivists have been slow to document its history. The Houston Metropolitan Research Center (HMRC) saw this gap. Since the late 1970s, the HMRC has been building a collection of materials relating to the history of Houston's Hispanic population, including papers of Mexican-American Houstonians, organizations, institutions, and cultural groups and oral histories. To implement its collection strategy, the HMRC built a local support network and has become involved in public outreach. The Hispanic population has supported this project enthusiastically.

As was the case with the African-American community, most archival sources relating to Mexican-Americans were those written by non-Hispanics, such as census reports, school reports and records of agencies and individuals that dealt with Hispanic people. These holdings, however, do not reflect the more personal side of the Mexican-American community's evolution, nor do they provide a balanced understanding of their contributions to American society. Thomas Kreneck, author of "Documenting a Mexican-American Community," says that the Mexican-Americans are a particularly interesting ethnic group because they are a people caught between two cultures.⁸⁵ This is especially true in Houston, Kreneck's focus, where Mexican-Americans are a large part of the American population yet also geographically near to Mexico. Not only have Mexican-Americans been a potent force in the workforce and business world, but they have also had a great impact on the culture of the United States.⁸⁶ Their presence therefore, should be reflected in archival repositories. Kreneck

⁸⁵Thomas H. Kreneck, "Documenting a Mexican American Community: The Houston Example," *American Archivist*, 48. 3 (1985): 274.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*

argues that one of the reasons archivists have failed to document the history of Hispanics in America is that many have erroneously believed that ethnic groups such as Mexican-Americans were illiterate and left no written legacy.⁸⁷ The HMRC project sought to dispel this notion.

The HMRC enterprise was based on a grassroots approach. The HMRC publicized its efforts and established a program of community outreach to convince Houston's Mexican-American community of the importance of preserving their materials so that history could be accurately documented from all perspectives and so that it could not only pass on its heritage to future generations but share it with other groups as well. Kreneck says that this was a necessary component of the project since it was aimed at a people who had been the object of prejudice and discrimination and had learned to distrust groups with a government affiliation.⁸⁸ Word of mouth communication within the community, therefore, contends Kreneck, was the most important means of acquiring materials. It was important that the community realized the importance and implications of their donations. Donations, argues Kreneck, were not taken lightly by people of a culture whose family structure and belief system hold sacred remembrances of things past.⁸⁹ However, through the combined efforts of the HMRC and representatives of the Mexican-American community, a substantial collection was amassed. In fact, the holdings resulted in the creation of a Mexican-American studies program at the University of Houston as well as many historical projects, academic works, seminars, conferences and exhibitions. The collection became one the most valuable repositories of the evolution of an ethnic community in America.

⁸⁷Ibid., 275.

⁸⁸Ibid., 276.

⁸⁹Ibid., 278.

Like the Woodson collection, the HMRC Mexican-American collection was also seminal in the field of ethnic history. The HMRC collection, which covers the spectrum of the Mexican-American community, served to dispel misconceptions about one of America's largest and most vibrant ethnic communities. The Hispanic community's politicians, business people and entertainers could be used as role models. For the general community, those same individuals could be used as examples of the spheres of influence that the Mexican-American community had entered and the contributions they had made.

Both the HMRC and the Woodson collections were responsible for unearthing treasures about America's ethnic communities that had been buried for decades under layers of ethnocentrism, prejudice and misconceptions. Kenneth Foote argues that "a critical role for archives may well be to serve as a countervailing force to effacement"90

Despite the tremendous contributions ethnic archives make, it is not always easy for them to establish a strong position among the priorities established by the ethnic communities in which they are established. Although the ethnic community may be in favour of supporting an archives, other concerns, such as education and services for the aged, often take precedence over the archives, whose benefits are not always thought to be as concrete. Sam Steiner, archivist of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, maintains that his archives is "seen as important, but not relevant to current concerns. This relates, "to our inability to maintain any significant profile in the community."⁹¹ Ethnic archivists have to continually prove their worth and attempt to make themselves indispensable to their sponsoring

⁹⁰Foote, 392.

⁹¹Sam Steiner, Mennonite Archives of Ontario, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

organization or the ethnic community with whom they are affiliated in order to maintain their support.

One of the important thrusts of ethnic archives is educational outreach. This function is promoted through historical lectures and programming, and the creation of displays of educational materials. Public outreach and programming is an excellent public relations vehicle for ethnic archives both within and outside of their own communities. It has the double benefit of making people aware of ethnic history and in turn the services the archives provides, as well as making potential donors aware of the work being done in the archives.

It is not certain how well known or how well received ethnic archives are among the general public. Archives tend to attract a specialized clientele and this is even more typical of ethnic archives. Most archivists expressed one of two divergent opinions regarding public knowledge of their archives. Either they felt that the general public was largely ignorant of the services provided by their archives, or they felt that the public appreciated and supported their archives and the work it does.

Not unexpectedly, and not unlike other archival and cultural institutions throughout Canada, all of the archives answered a resounding "yes" to the question of whether they were experiencing budgetary pressures. This factor has had several ramifications for archives. Many archives have had to curtail their services, hours of operation and staff. In fact, five of the archives surveyed were compelled to reduce their staff to accommodate exigencies created by tightened budgets. Most important, however, ethnic archives have had to increasingly rely on funding from outside their community. One archivist said that he has had to wrestle with the fact that he can no longer devote his entire energies to archival work. He lamented the

fact that, "I am spending a lot more time being an administrator (preparing grants, preparing contracts, supervising contract staff, preparing reports) and a lot less time looking for new acquisitions, collections management and answering public service requests."⁹² This sentiment echoes many of the comments made by other archivists. Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc of the Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes contends that the widening scope of activities falling on archivists shoulders in order to combat shrinking budgets "brings us a distance from our activities as archivists."⁹³ This is a disheartening situation currently facing archives across the country . Ethnic archivists, due to their limited number and the sources of their funding, are being forced to wear many hats. Not only are they entrusted with their archival duties, but they must act as marketers, fundraisers, and ambassadors for their communities.

The largest source of funding for ethnic-run archives is the sponsoring organization or ethnic community with which the archives is affiliated. The archives report they receive between 35% to 90% of their funding from within their ethnic community. The Ontario Jewish Archives was the only institution which reported that it receives 100% of its budget from its sponsoring community.⁹⁴ Increasingly, however, ethnic archives have had to rely on other sources, such as government grants and private donations. Ten of the archives, with the exception of the Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes, which is affiliated with a university and receives all of its funding from the government via the university, reported that they receive between 5% to 35% of their budget from government sources.⁹⁵

⁹²Lawrence Klippenstein, Mennonite Heritage Centre, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁹³Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁹⁴Dr. Stephen Speisman, Ontario Jewish Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁹⁵This number may not be entirely indicative of the total percentage of government money

The survey responses revealed that competition is a problem plaguing ethnic-run archives. All but two archives, the Jewish Historical Society of B.C./Nemetz Jewish Community Archives and the Jewish Public Library Archives, report they have experienced competition for acquisitions either from a government archives (federal, provincial and/or municipal) or another ethnic archives that also collects documentation about the same ethnic group. Seemingly, ethnic archival materials have gone from being viewed as an uninteresting mass of materials in a variety of foreign languages, to a veritable treasure trove of captivating collections that document Canada's rich past. Obviously there is an overlap of mandates among many public and private archival institutions. It is good to know that ethnic archival materials have become so "popular" but it is disconcerting that competition must be one of the symptoms of its popularity. There is one way in which ethnic archives report to be interacting with other archives -- in the distribution of their finding aids. All of the archives surveyed distribute their archival finding aids to all or a selection of other ethnic archives (both of the same and other denominations), other privately run archives, government archives of all levels, and university archives. This is a simple and positive measure for ensuring cross-archival cooperation and of providing users with other locations to pursue their research.

When asked "how they thought the Canadian archival community views private sector ethnic archives", ethnic archivists expressed a variety of opinions. Some felt that ethnic archives are respected by their public sector peers. Shirley Berman, archivist of the Ottawa Jewish Historical Archives, believes that the archival community even favours small archives. Evidence

that makes up the archives' budgets. Many of the ethnic communities with which the archives are affiliated may receive their own government grants for their general operating budget of which a portion is allocated to their archives. Thus the total amount of government money funding is likely to be higher than simply government grants directly to the archives.

of this, she argues, is the grants provided by the Council of Canadian Archives (CCA) and provincial governments to small archives.⁹⁶ Others believe large, public archival institutions are out of touch with their smaller, private sector ethnic brethren. Ms. Berman says:

I find that the large archival institutions (governmental and university) lose sight of the lack of funding and the primitive conditions that most private sector ethnic archives exist under.⁹⁷

Other archivists expressed ambivalence. It seems many feel they are caught between dual loyalties -- to the archival community and to their own ethnic community. Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc of the Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes says:

I do wonder what these other archival institutions think of the Centre, but in a way, it matters little, for we feel that our role is indispensable to our community. On the other hand, it is true that we sometimes feel left out by public archives. The RAD Committees for example, were almost exclusively composed of archivists working in these institutions.⁹⁸

All of the archives surveyed recognize that they must undergo changes and reexamine their strategies to meet the pressures of the present and the needs of the future. The three major areas of change identified by the archives are: 1) trying to maintain their work at the same level with less money and while working to supplement their budgets with outside funding from groups or individuals sympathetic to the work of the archives;⁹⁹ 2) increasing efforts at publicity through press releases, newspaper articles, school visits,

⁹⁶Shirley Berman, Ottawa Jewish Historical Society, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

⁹⁹The Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes Archives, for example, is considering establishing a trust fund that might one day enable the archives to function independently of government funding.

teacher seminars and displays; and 3) exploring the expansion and introduction of newer forms of information technology in the archives. Dr. Stephen Speisman contends that ethnic archives must learn to be more selective about what they acquire in order to deal with the exigencies created by shrinking financial resources while still striving to improve their archives.¹⁰⁰

All of the archivists surveyed expressed the opinion that the best place for archival material relating to ethnic groups in Canada is in an archives run by the ethnic community. Many felt that archivists in a community-run archives have greater understanding of the records in their care.¹⁰¹ Others asserted that members of an ethnic group have a greater measure of confidence and exhibit more cooperation when dealing with an institution within their own community.¹⁰² Dr. Stephen Speisman contends:

Our interest is abiding and not governed by political expediency. Ethnic collections are best housed in the context of other holdings of the same community and tended by those who can best interpret them to researchers.¹⁰³

These responses are indicative not only of where many ethnic Canadians feel the proper place for ethnic archives resides, but also, the appropriate place for ethnic affairs in Canada. While all ethnic communities applaud and appreciate the steps the federal government has taken to recognize ethnic peoples, ethnic groups would like to work in concert with

¹⁰⁰Dr. Stephen Speisman, Ontario Jewish Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

¹⁰¹Diane Rodgers, Jewish Historical Society of B.C./ Nemetz Jewish Community Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995, Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, Centre d'Etude Acadienne, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

¹⁰²Sam Steiner, Mennonite Archives of Ontario, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

¹⁰³Dr. Stephen Speisman, Ontario Jewish Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

the government and help to direct and guide the cultural elements of their own communities. Essentially, the feeling conveyed by many of the archivists surveyed was that ethnic groups would like wider recognition within Canadian society and support from the government. However, it is also important to maintain control of their own community development and insure that it retains its own autonomy within wider society. Since the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, many ethnic groups have been vocal about the place of ethnic communities in Canadian society. Unlike the past, when restrictions were put on who could come to Canada, attend its universities, and rise to the upper echelons of Canada society, ethnic Canadians do not want to be restricted in the ways they express themselves and the measures they take to ensure cultural continuity. Even the help provided by government programs and initiatives such as multicultural grants subjects ethnic communities to 'restrictions' and 'controls' placed on them by the granting bodies. Some ethnic groups seem more reticent about this kind of help than others. Some of the smaller, less established ethnic groups do not have the community resources or the 'know how' to navigate the bureaucracy of government programs in order to attain the grants. Therefore, it has been Canada's older, more established, wealthier and organized groups which have achieved the greatest sense of autonomy. There is division between Canadian ethnic communities over the degree to which the community should accept public sector or outside support. Archives, interestingly, have been a small flashpoint for this. The following chapter examining the evolution of the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives will demonstrate this phenomenon. Archives, like ethnic Canadians themselves, have had to tread the fine line between remaining autonomous and finding a place for themselves in Canadian public institutions.

Sometimes this involves compromises such as giving ethnic archival materials to a government-run institution. In the current climate of budgetary restraint, public archives will not be able to accommodate as many private sector groups and archival materials as they have in the past. Ethnic archives may have to assume more of the responsibility for their own archives. These are the kinds of issues the archival community is facing today. What ethnic archives and public archives should do at this turning point in Canadian archival history is one of the greatest issues Canadian archivists will have to grapple with. The archival community is just embarking on this issue. How it will resolve itself is still up in the air.

All of the archivists surveyed expressed similar sentiments about what they felt was the importance of ethnic archives in Canada. They asserted that ethnic archival sources are essential to understand the history of ethnic Canadians and in turn, reveal the true spectrum of Canadian history. The following selection of excerpts are poignant examples of what ethnic archivists from around the country felt, both as ethnic Canadians and archivists, about the importance of ethnic archives:

Anonymous

By collecting and presenting the history of an ethnic community in Canada, an ethnic archives is contributing to the knowledge of the history of our country. It is presenting the ethnic mosaic of the Canadian system, which is the basis of our society.¹⁰⁴

Dr. Stephen Speisman

Ontario Jewish Archives

Just as Canadian society is enriched by the various cultures which comprise it, so too do ethnic archives enrich our society by preserving important elements of our documentary heritage.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴Anonymous, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

¹⁰⁵Dr. Stephen Speisman, Ontario Jewish Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in

Dr. Lawrence Klippenstein

Mennonite Heritage
Centre

I feel ethnic groups need to put forth the effort to maintain their records, not only for their own use but so the larger community can benefit when it feels led to extend its interest to a particular group.¹⁰⁶

Sam Steiner

Mennonite Archives of
Ontario

They [ethnic archives] help retain the collective memory of the group. They help the group's self-esteem by preserving important "stories" and images of the group.¹⁰⁷

Carol Katz

Montreal Jewish Public
Library Archives

The importance of ethnic archives in Canada is that they preserve the heritage of ethnic communities for future generations. Ethnic archives add an important dimension to the Canadian cultural community and are vital to its multi-cultural heritage. Canadian ethnic archives disseminate important information about general Canadian history.¹⁰⁸

Shirley Berman

Ottawa Jewish Historical
Society Archives

Canada seeks to promote multiculturalism. It must then promote preservation and use of ethnic archives. . . . If we are to provide a unified population who understand and appreciate each other we must preserve . . . ethnic history and accomplishments.¹⁰⁹

Canada," February 1995.

¹⁰⁶Dr. Lawrence Klippenstein, Mennonite Heritage Centre, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

¹⁰⁷Sam Steiner, Mennonite Archives of Ontario, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

¹⁰⁸Carol Katz, Jewish Public Library Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

¹⁰⁹Shirley Berman, Ottawa Jewish Historical Society Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

Diane Rodgers

Jewish Historical Society
of BC/Nemetz Jewish
Community Archives

Given the steady reduction in funding to government institutions, the records of ethnic communities are unlikely to be preserved in the volume and variety necessary to articulate the community's history unless ethnic archives step in to acquire, preserve, and make these records accessible.¹¹⁰

Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc

Centre d'Etudes
Acadiennes

Having worked in the field for the past twenty years or so, I feel that ethnic archives are as important as government . . . archives. Furthermore, they are living proof of the true nature of the country, in all its complexity being composed of various cultures, each of which has a contribution to make in the better advancement of Canada as a nation. What would this country be without the Inuits, or the Ukrainians, or the Jews, or the Acadians. . . .¹¹¹

The questionnaires vividly illustrate the main promise and problems of Canada's ethnic archives. Several of the nation's ethnic groups have felt strongly enough about retaining and protecting their community's documentary heritage to establish archives. As well, the country's national archival repository belatedly acknowledged the importance of collecting materials related to this strong and vital sector of Canadian society. As the case study in the following chapter shows, at worst, this has left some members of the archival community, people who should be working together and not against each other, at odds over where ethnic archival materials should reside. At best, this two-pronged approach reveals a fundamental and deepening dilemma facing ethnic archives. Ethnic communities are

¹¹⁰Diane Rodgers, Jewish Historical Society of BC / Nemetz Jewish Community Archives, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

¹¹¹Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes, survey, "The Value of Ethnic Archives in Canada," February 1995.

caught between incurring the expense of maintaining an archives in order to keep the materials within their community and giving them to the National Archives, a government-run provincial repository, or a university archives, enjoying the prestige that brings and passing on the expense, but losing the benefit of community custody of their archives. The public archives have also been caught in the bind of wanting their records to reflect Canada's entire community without being so aggressive in acquiring ethnic archives that they offend the very people they are trying to serve. However, government and university archives may be much less able, even now willing, to take on this responsibility due to budget reductions.¹¹² What then should be done to protect ethnic archives?

What is needed is better cooperation among archives to ensure that this problem is alleviated. Although it may sound idealistic, it is much more beneficial to archives and their users if members of the archival community can work together to see that there is an appropriate division of records collection to ensure all aspects of ethnic life are documented.

Ethnic-run archives, despite the obstacles they face, continue to collect and maintain materials documenting the presence of ethnic Canadians in this country. It is clear that they believe strongly in their importance and right to exist. The current and potential applications for ethnic archival materials are wide-ranging. What is lacking however, appears to be a genuine collegiality between ethnic-run archives and between ethnic archives and public archival institutions. Maintaining good relationships among public and private sector archives coupled with the shrinking budgets are the greatest problems facing

¹¹²Eldon Frost, "Acquiring Private Records in a Shrinking Archival Universe," *The Archivist*, 112 (1996): 24-26.

ethnic archives. The two issues are inextricably linked. Cooperation is necessary but without funding there is not much to cooperate on.

Ethnic archival repositories house a variety of significant collections. These collections are utilized as resources for a number of historical, cultural, symbolic, legal and administrative uses among others. Ethnic archival documents have been used to disseminate accurate information about Canada's ethnic peoples and to counter stereotypes and misconceptions. Their emerging use in the realm of education will have a significant impact on the nation's students and their opinions about the people they encounter in the world around them. They have also been used to heighten ethnic consciousness through a greater understanding of the nation's ethnic group's contributions to Canada. Ethnic archives maintain a distinct role in the Canadian archival community. While other archives, especially public archives, have attempted to parallel some of their collecting efforts they have not been able to do it in the same way or sometimes the same scope as ethnic-run archives. Public archives are less likely to be able to collect as many private sector archives in the future due to budgetary constraints. This coupled with the shrinking number of government grants being given to ethnic-run archives leaves the responsibility of securing ethnic archival documents increasingly with the ethnic communities themselves.

Chapter 3

The Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives: The Evolution of an Ethnic Archives, 1919-1990

The Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives (CJCNA) is one of the oldest, largest and most used ethnic archives in Canada. Its evolution demonstrates how a major Canadian ethnic archives became a large and viable institution. The history of the CJCNA serves as a case study which demonstrates the inception, growth and continued existence of a Canadian ethnic archives. The CJCNA's experiences both parallel and contrast with the development of Canada's other ethnic archives.

Thousands of Jews from across Canada cheered wildly as the inaugural plenary meeting of the Canadian Jewish Congress began on March 16, 1919 at the Monument National in Montreal. This event stands out in what has been a dynamic and vibrant history of Jews in Canada. The congress was the first representative national Jewish body in Canada. The difficulties the Jewish people faced both in Canada and abroad served as the foundation for the pride, spirit and determination that this organization embodied.

The first Jews came to British North America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to work as merchants and traders. Many quickly became influential members of the business community. As their numbers began to grow, they influenced the government to accord them greater rights and freedoms. With their increased liberties, the Jewish community began to flourish.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the face of Canadian Jewry was dramatically altered by the arrival of thousands of Jews who were fleeing the pogroms of Russia. These Jews, who were much poorer than most other

Canadian Jews, had strong and distinctive religious convictions and deeply rooted cultural practices. The growing number of Jews in Canada and their differences from the dominant Christian society aroused anti-Jewish sentiment among many members of Canadian society. This sentiment prompted the Jewish community to band together to protect its interests. One avenue for this became the creation of a democratically elected, representative Jewish body. Many factions within the Jewish community vied to lead the community. After many years of competition between different sectors of Canadian Jewry the Canadian Jewish Congress was formed in 1919.

One of the most significant projects of the new congress was the formation of a national Jewish archival repository. The archives was to serve not only as a repository for the community's documentary heritage but as an educational and public relations vehicle to reach both the Jewish and Gentile communities. The defamation and genocide being committed against Jews in Europe and the anti-Jewish propaganda being disseminated in Canada reinforced the need for this type of body to exist.

The 1930s through the 1960s were years of growth for the archives. During these decades the Canadian Jewish Congress began to court the different organizations and people in the Jewish community to acquire collections for the repository. As the congress's archives began to accumulate a sizable collection, the need for an archivist became pressing. This issue was not resolved quickly.

The contentious relationship between the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives and the Public Archives of Canada (now the National Archives of Canada) in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in the necessary financial and human resources being accorded to the Jewish archives by the congress. The congress's archives and the Public Archives of Canada had an adversarial

relationship throughout much of the 1970s and 1980s. The root of this problem lay in the fact that both institutions were competing for many of the same records and both archives felt their repository was the best place for collections of national Jewish significance. While the CJCNA was established considerably earlier than most of Canada's other ethnic archival institutions, it also struggled until the late 1960s until a more united Jewish community, greater prosperity, and multiculturalism placed it on an improved footing. In this way, the CJCNA was very similar to most other ethnic archives. The inception of multiculturalism had a dual effect on the CJCNA, as well as other small and budding archives throughout the country. Multiculturalism focused greater attention on ethnic communities and their history. This resulted in the injection of money to support new programs within ethnic communities but also impelled the federal government to reflect the new multicultural policy in all facets of government, including its archives. Competition for ethnic records would not be a problem indigenous to the Jewish community.

Once Judith Nefsky, the congress's archives first professional archivist, came on staff, the problems with the Public Archives began to abate but they were not wholly resolved. Nefsky counteracted the Public Archives' competition by making the congress's archives more professional. She sought to systematize and upgrade archival practices so that they would be on par with Canada's other prominent and progressive archival institutions. Her efforts seemed to pay off. During her tenure the archives became computerized and a number of significant collections were acquired and processed. Nefsky also sought out greater involvement in the archival community, especially with her Quebec counterparts.

The Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives symbolizes the convictions and fortitude of many of Canada's early Jewish pioneers. For many the archives represents the continuity of the Jewish people in Canada and their aspirations for the future. The impetus for the establishment of a national Jewish repository went beyond the confines of the Canadian Jewish community and its history. Rather, it was a natural outcome of Judaism's long history and the strength of the Jewish people's conviction about the importance of history and learning.

The history of the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives (CJCNA) has two primary themes: 1) the influence of the social context of the Canadian Jewish community on the development of the CJCNA ; and 2) the institutional growth of the CJCNA. Both themes illustrate a community struggling with forces both within and outside itself in an effort to maintain its history by establishing an archives. Despite the obstacles inherent in setting up a private sector archives, the CJCNA help to unify the Canadian Jewish community behind an issue which superseded inter-community conflicts -- enshrining and protecting the history of the Jewish community in Canada.

The Canadian Jewish community had a very auspicious beginning. The first documented Jewish person in Canada was Esther Brandau, a young woman who disguised herself as a boy to find work in New France. Jews, however, were not allowed to become residents of New France unless they converted to Roman Catholicism. Brandau was eventually sent back home after she failed to succumb to the efforts of church authorities to convert her.¹ Brandau's fortitude and pride set an important precedent for her successors.

¹Irving Abella, A Coat Of Many Colors: Two Centuries Of Jewish Life In Canada (Toronto: Lester & Orphen Dennys Limited, 1990): 2.

Jews were forbidden in New France from 1600 to 1759 and the advent of British rule. The British were more accepting of Jewish settlers. One of Canada's leading Jewish historians, Irving Abella, asserts that the British recognized the acumen and expertise of Jews in the business world. While Jews were denied citizenship in England they were granted naturalization in the colonies under a special act of the British Parliament passed in 1740.² Over the next century, Jews came to British North America to work largely as traders, merchants and other members of the business community. Abella argues that Jews, although they were small in number, played a vital role in developing trade and commerce in Canada and that no area of the business world was untouched by the Jewish presence.³

Despite these contributions and the liberties granted to Jews they remained in "legal limbo." Jews did not enjoy full rights of citizenship. For example, Jewish births, deaths and marriages were not recognized by the government of Upper Canada. Under pressure from some of Canada's most notable and influential Jews, the "Act to declare persons professing the Jewish Religion entitled to all the rights and privileges of the other subjects of His Majesty in this Province" was passed in 1832. Abella notes:

The proclamation of religious and political freedoms was not simply a victory for the Jews. It was a victory for future generations of Canadians and helped build the foundation of this country's religious and political freedoms. Upon it would be constructed a whole series of acts, judgments and amendments guaranteeing full liberty to every Canadian.⁴

² Ibid. , 5-6.

³ Ibid., 10-12.

⁴ Ibid., 35.

The Jews who united their community and engineered action against the government had the same determination as Esther Brandau.

The decades following the Act were years of growth and opportunity for Canadian Jewry. Jews became involved in all facets of business, political and cultural life. Especially significant during this period was the emergence of the foundation of a substantial religious and cultural Jewish community. Synagogues and cultural and philanthropic organizations began to blossom. Montreal, and to an increasing extent Toronto too, became the centres of Jewish life in Canada. By the late nineteenth century Jewish communities began to establish themselves in other centres throughout Canada such as Winnipeg, Victoria and Vancouver.

At the close of the nineteenth century, the social complexion of Canadian Jewry was dramatically changed by the over one hundred thousand Russian Jews who sought refuge in Canada from the vicious pogroms in their homeland. These Jews were imbued with a strong attachment to their religion, traditions and customs. They differed in significant ways from their coreligionists of German and British origin who had preceded them to Canada. These different groups of Jews differed over their level of Jewish observance, ideological stances and cultural traditions.

As the number of Jews in Canada began to increase, so did opposition to their presence. Anti-Jewish sentiment began to gather strength at the beginning of the twentieth century. In response, the Jewish community began to band together. The new influx of Jews, coupled with the growth of anti-Jewish sentiment, prompted the creation of a wide variety of religious, cultural, social, fraternal, philanthropic, political and ideological organizations. Yiddish newspapers and theater groups, fraternal and mutual

aid societies, religious and educational institutions, and political and ideological movements appeared throughout Canada.

The Jews were not the only group to face persecution and discrimination in Canada. Other ethnic groups, including the Mennonites and Ukrainians, also endured these injustices in Canada. They too formed a number of associations to ease their transition to Canada and maintain a connection to their home countries.

According to Abella, it was also at the turn of the twentieth century that "a revival of Jewish consciousness, of a feeling that Jews must take control of their own lives" began to emerge.⁵ The idea of a national Jewish body began to awaken after 1897 when the first Zionist Congress was held in Basle, Switzerland.⁶ Jews around the world realized that the congress concept could be applied to causes other than Zionism. The ideas stimulated by the Zionist Congress took hold in the minds of forward-thinking individuals at both ends of the religious, financial and ideological Jewish spectrum. Two movements preceded the formation of what was to become the Canadian Jewish Congress. The Canadian Jewish Alliance (CJA) was formed in 1915 at a meeting of the Poal Zion, a Jewish labour movement. According to Abella, the Poal Zion "saw the national struggle of Jews as part of a larger class struggle."⁷ This group was composed largely of the newer Russian immigrants. Their leader, Reuben Brainin, was the editor of the Kanada Adler, an influential Yiddish newspaper. The CJA proved to be the genesis of what would ultimately become the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC).

⁵ Ibid. 148.

⁶ Judith Nefsky, "The Prehistory of the Founding of the Canadian Jewish Congress, 1897-1919," Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal, 8. 1 (1994): 73-84. The Zionist Congress was an umbrella organization for organizations from around the world that worked to raise money and awareness for the promotion of a Jewish state in Palestine.

⁷ Abella, A Coat of Many Colors, 154.

The Canadian Jewish Committee was also created in 1915 by the Canadian Zionist Organization in order to counter the efforts of the CJA. This group consisted of representatives of well-established "uptown" Jews who did not want to have their power challenged by the larger group of newer Russian Jews. Their vision of a national organization did not involve the democratic election of leaders, one of the hallmarks of the CJA's vision, but rather the appointment of selected individuals.

The two camps of Canadian Jewry conducted their affairs and promoted their causes independently, despite their similarity, and both denounced each other's legitimacy. While both groups had similar agendas, according to Gerald Tulchinsky, "there were wide gulfs in the priorities and methods" of the groups.⁸ H.M. Caiserman, chronicler of Canadian Jewish Congress history and a leading figure in the movement to establish the congress, writes that the result of the conflict between the two groups was

that no one acquired the mandate to speak in the name of an organized Jewry and with the sadder result, that the energy and enthusiasm of the Jewish masses had been spent without a purpose, and that instead of unity, bitterness and distrust between the factions made any congress activity impossible.⁹

The Jewish community was similar to other Canadian ethnic groups in that it was divided by class and ideology. During this period in Canadian history both the Finnish and Mennonite communities, among others, were wrestling with establishing representative bodies which, like the Jewish community, took more than one form.

⁸Gerald Tulchinsky, Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community (Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited, 1992): 267.

⁹ H.M. Caiserman, "The History of the First Canadian Jewish Congress," The Jew in Canada: A Complete Record of Canadian Jewry From the Days of the French Regime to the Present Time, ed. Daniel Hart (Toronto: Jewish Publications Limited, 1926): 465-492.

The creation of the American Jewish Congress in 1917 spurred the Canadian Jewish community to create a similar body of its own. The Poal Zion organization in Western Canada conducted an enthusiastic campaign for the idea of a congress. Many of the once detractors of the congress changed their minds as a result of the American example. The Zionist Federation, the umbrella organization that represented all Zionist organizations in Canada, began to support the congress idea and passed a resolution in 1918 to keep informed of the congress question and to take steps to cooperate with the congress in the event that one was to be held.

In 1918 a provisional congress committee led by H.M. Caiserman was created. The committee's mandate was to arrange a meeting of all Jewish organizations in Canada. Caiserman became the driving force behind the creation of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Caiserman asserted:

I realized the success or failure [of the movement to form a congress] depended on my ability to reconcile the three important groups of Canadian Jewry, namely, the Labour Movement, the Zionist Organization, and the wealthy community of which a great majority, like the majority of the organized labour movement of the time, were antagonistic to any Jewish national programme.¹⁰

In January 1919, in Montreal, 125 organizations representing the different political, religious and cultural persuasions of the Canadian Jewish community met to formally recognize the need for a united Canadian Jewish Congress and elect a committee to organize the congress on a democratic basis. Lyon Cohen, a respected Montreal business man, was approached by the committee to be the presiding officer of the first congress. His selection was approved by all sections of the Jewish community because of his fairness

¹⁰Caiserman, 469.

and respect for others. On March 2-3 of the same year, elections were held throughout the country to elect delegates to the congress. According to Caiserman, nearly 25 000 ballots were cast, an astonishing number considering the total Jewish population in Canada at the time numbered only 125 000.¹¹

On March 16, 1919, the first Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) was held in Montreal. Two hundred delegates from across Canada and over 2,500 visitors were in attendance on this promising occasion. The first ever Canadian Jewish Congress began with great pomp and circumstance and accolades and orations were given by prominent Jewish and non-Jewish leaders from throughout Canada.

In his opening address to the congress Lyon Cohen articulated the hope many Jews across Canada had for the new congress:

My friends, I regard this as a most auspicious event Spontaneously from various parts of the country, the idea emerged, and all classes of Jewry were obliged to answer the call to discuss our problems. Figuratively speaking, it means the realization of the prophet Ezekiel's vision of the dead bones come to life again

It is a coincidence that this Congress opens on the historic Jewish festival of Purim, which commemorates the deliverance of our ancestors from the perfidious scheming of the enemy Haman. We hope that history will continue to repeat itself, and that the modern Hamans, in the shape of the leaders of pogroms and anti-Semitic agitations, will suffer the fate of their ancient prototype.¹²

A wide variety of topics were discussed at the congress; preeminent were immigration and Palestine. Some of the most important resolutions passed made a commitment to send CJC representation to the World Jewish

¹¹Tulchinsky, 269.

¹²University of British Columbia Archives, SPAM 4413, First Canadian Jewish Congress March 1919: 3.

Congress at the peace negotiations in Versailles, pledged to support a Jewish homeland in Palestine, called for Canada to maintain an open-door immigration policy, and for the creation of the Jewish Immigration Aid Services, proclaimed the CJC's loyalty to Canada, and urged that the CJC be established as a permanent body.¹³ Lyon Cohen became the first president of the CJC and H.M. Caiserman became its General Secretary.

Erna Paris, author of Jews. An Account of Their Experience in Canada, describes the formation of the CJC as "a bold expression of Canadian cultural pluralism."¹⁴ She asserts that this was a "daring act" as many of the primary participants in the creation of the congress were Jews who had been persecuted in their native countries for asserting their Jewishness.¹⁵

Like Esther Brandau, CJC's early pioneers wanted to establish better lives for themselves and persevered to accomplish something in which they strongly believed. Men and women from across Canada had united despite the obstacles of different ideologies and visions, pasts and future aspirations and a variance of opinions and causes. Their common religion and pride in their heritage propelled Canada's Jews to achieve the difficult task of creating an organization to speak in a clear and forceful voice on behalf of a heterogeneous group of people. This was a task accomplished by few other ethnic groups of that time.

In the closing speech to the congress Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky, a pioneering proponent of the congress, made an astute observation about the precedent the formation of the congress created. He contended that

This congress has risen to lofty spheres of progressive
nationalism and idealism and would be the pride of

¹³Ibid, 8-14. Caiserman, 273-278.

¹⁴Erna Paris, Jews. An Account of Their Experience in Canada (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1980): 40.

¹⁵Ibid.

Jewry the world over, inasmuch as here was sown the seed of a very delicate plant, but because it is delicate, it must be taken care of continually, so as it would yield a fruit, helpful alike to the healthy development of Canada, and its Jewry.¹⁶

Zhitlowsky's words about "a very dilicate plant" foreshadowed more than he likely anticipated at the time. Amid the enthusiasm and deliberations at the congress, one very necessary element to insure the sustenance of the newly born congress had been overlooked. The congress failed to secure the money necessary to establish an organization to conduct its business. This proved to be a serious handicap. Due to its financial difficulties, the CJC began to disintegrate and virtually dissolve.¹⁷

The CJC was spurred back to life in 1933 in response to the increase of anti-Semitism in Canada and abroad. Abella contends anti-immigrant sentiment was largely a product of the fact that many of Canada's new citizens had not assimilated to the extent that the government and many Canadians anticipated they would. He asserts that Jews were doubly resented. Not only were their language and customs different, but so was their religion.¹⁸ Compounding this problem was the increasingly alarming persecution of Jews in Germany.

On January 27, 1934, the second CJC was convened in Toronto. Jews representing all sectors of the Jewish community came together to discuss the

¹⁶Caiserman, 477.

¹⁷Tulchinsky, 274. Tulchinsky offers three main reasons for the dissolution of the CJC. First, he asserts that the war had ended and anti-Jewish activities in Eastern Europe had eased. Second, he argues that the CJC had a leadership problem. Caiserman did the executive work but Tulchinsky contends that the congress lacked a "cadre of community leaders who would mobilize support from all sectors of Canadian Jewry and represent the organization to the Canadian public and to the federal and provincial governments." (274). Third, Tulchinsky argues that although Lyon Cohen was a capable leader, he lost interest in the organization. Other key people, like Cohen, were affected by the business recession in the early 1920s and turned their attention to their business concerns.

¹⁸Abella, 167.

issue of anti-Semitism at home and in Europe. The urgency of the situation precluded the historic tensions within the Jewish community that had plagued the original CJC. Both sides of the Jewish community, the more established "uptown" Jews and the more recent and poorer arrivals, or "downtown" Jews, made compromises as a means of getting pan-Jewish support for a national organization that would lobby against anti-Semitism, an issue that affected them all. It was decided that it was the congress's responsibility to keep pressure on the Canadian government to allow Jewish immigration, fight anti-Semitism at home, urge the British to give Palestine to the Jewish people, and to find ways to help fund various religious, cultural, and educational activities within the Jewish community.¹⁹ This agenda became the foundation for the congress's work.

The second plenary also marked the congress's first foray into the archival world. At this plenary passage of resolution 18 provided for the establishment of an archives mandated to collect documentation concerning Canadian Jewry. The members of congress were acutely aware of the importance of maintaining a record of their history and contributions to Canada, especially in the face of anti-Semitism. Jews have always had a strong commitment to history and traditions. This is likely because history is an indigenous element of Jewish heritage. Many of Judaism's festivals celebrate historical events.²⁰ As well, Jews have endured many dark periods in their history and have always felt strongly about promoting remembrance of the bad as well as the good. Saul Hayes, an early Executive Director of the CJC

¹⁹Ibid., 190.

²⁰Two examples are the holiday of Passover and Chanukah. Passover celebrates the ancient Jewish people's escape from Egypt and the forty years they spent in the desert on the way to Canaan (the present day Israel). Chanukah is a Jewish holiday that celebrates rededication of the temple and religious freedom.

and long-time supporter of the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives (CJCNA), described the establishment of the CJCNA as "the identification of . . . men and women with the remarkable continuity of thousands-years-old Judaism."²¹ Resolution 18 reads as follows:

On Canadian Jewish Archives

The Canadian Jewish Congress, a united representative body of all Canadian Jewry, assembled at Toronto Canada, taking counsel (in order) to protect the cultural and spiritual interests of the Jews in Canada, takes into consideration,

WHEREAS, there are in Canada numerous documents and other historical material of the utmost value to the history and cultural achievements of the Jews in Canada,

WHEREAS, this material of great significance is scattered over all parts of the country and is in possession of various individuals and groups of people,

WHEREAS, there is a great danger of this valuable material becoming lost or destroyed in which case it would be impossible to replace it,

AND WHEREAS, it is necessary for this material to be collected and stored in a place so that it may be made easily accessible to students, or the Jewish historian, for the purpose of study and reference,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this Congress recommends:

- (a) That it is for the general interest and well being of Canadian Jewry that this historical material be preserved, and
- (b) That in order to accomplish this, a committee be appointed to whom this mission may be safely entrusted, and that this committee finds ways and means to finance such an enterprise.²²

Notably, this resolution and every resolution regarding the maintenance of the archives in the history of the CJC has been unanimously approved.²³

The archives also served as a unifying factor for all sectors of the Jewish community. The archives represented a project, the retention and recognition

²¹Saul Hayes, "Foreward," Canadian Jewish Archives: Early Documents on the Canadian Jewish Congress 1914-1921, listed by David Rome (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, 1974): II.

²²Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives (hereafter CJCNA), Canadian Jewish Congress Collection, Plenary Records, Series AB, Resolution 18 Archives, January 27-29, 1934.

²³CJCNA, Plenary Records, Series AB, May 1-4, 1980.

of its history, which the entire Jewish community could embrace. Despite the varied backgrounds of the Canadian Jewish community's members they all recognized that they all had a common history.

Many of Canada's ethnic groups which had faced external threats, both in their country of origin and in Canada, were more likely to suppress internal differences and work together to establish a community archives. These groups also tended to have more distrust of the government and other outside bodies than other Canadians, an instinct they may have developed in their countries of origin. For this reason, they felt it was imperative that they establish an archival presence in their community to accurately document their history in Canada.

The basis for the CJC archival collection was donated by the congress's General Secretary, H.M Caiserman, a devoted collector of Jewish community documentation and ephemera. It is often the case in many ethnic communities (for example, the collection accumulated by Lewis Burkholder in the Mennonite community) that one person's commitment has been the foundation for the community's archival collections. Other ethnic group's collections were initiated by decisions made by groups in the community such as historical societies, as in the cases of the Ottawa Jewish community and Finnish community, among others. In February 1935 an article appeared in the Jewish Daily Bulletin entitled "Early Data on Jews Sought by Canadian Congress in Appeal." The article announced that a circular had been sent out by the Canadian Jewish Congress Archives Committee urging "every individual Jew and organization throughout Canada, ... every Jewish community, be it large or small, that they must join us in our work."²⁴

²⁴CJCNA, General Archives, Series DA 11 A, 1935-1988.

Following this newspaper article the Archives Committee began a vast appeal to collect documentation by sending letters and visiting national Jewish organizations in Montreal to urge them to donate their records to the archives.²⁵ Their efforts garnered the donation of materials from a variety of individuals and organizations. Throughout the minutes of the Archives Committee over the course of the next few years are a series of motions which describe the objectives of the committee and the formulation of a plan to achieve them. The committee envisioned the archives to be an educational and public relations vehicle. The committee felt it was important that both the Jewish and gentile communities were provided with materials that allowed an accurate portrayal of the Jewish community to counter the one disseminated by unscrupulous and hateful newspapers and propagandists, especially in Quebec.²⁶ It was also important to the committee that the archives stimulate greater interest in Jewish history within the Jewish community itself at all educational levels.²⁷ During the 1930s the archives was housed at CJC headquarters at the Baron de Hirsh Institute in Montreal. In 1941 the congress moved to new quarters in Montreal in the Holland Building. The Archives Committee minutes throughout the 1930s and 1940s were mainly concerned with discussing strategies to increase the acquisition of new materials.

In 1939 David Rome, journalist, historian and long-time advocate of the CJC Archives, issued a report entitled "The Development of the National Archives For Canadian Jews." It emphasized the importance of a Canadian Jewish Archives and chronicled the steps that the Archives Committee was taking to make the archives a reality. Rome lamented the loss of great archival

²⁵CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Archives Committee Minutes, March 12, 1935.

²⁶CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Archives Committee Minutes, June 18, 1936.

²⁷CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Archives Committee Minutes, February 20, 1938.

resources because of lack of intervention in the past. He asserted that the Jews' "national and religious culture and history" have been ignored.²⁸ He argued that despite a few works on Canadian Jewish history, "It must be recorded with both pride and regret that until the Canadian Jewish Congress was formed and turned its attention to this problem, the field remained, in its entirety, pretty well untouched."²⁹ Rome also made a plea to CJC and Canadian Jewry to assign the CJCNA the financial resources it needed to become a rich and productive archival repository. He emphatically stated that "It is well to be realistic and to recognize that an unused collection is of relatively little value, and it is high time emphasis was placed by Canadian Jewry on their own history and background."³⁰ Congress was not as quick to act as he would have liked. The CJC Archives Committee was cognizant of the problems but it did not have the means to make many changes.

During the early history of the CJCNA the Public Archives of Canada (now the National Archives of Canada) did not make a concerted effort to ensure that the history of Canada's ethnic peoples was being collected. In fact, it was not until the introduction of the federal multicultural policy in 1971 that the collection of ethnic materials became a formal part of the mandate of the Public Archives. This is not to say that the archives was not collecting any ethnic material but, rather, that the scope of its acquisitions was limited and cursory at best. The Public Archives' acquisitions reflected a general lack of interest in Canadian society in the contributions of Canada's ethnic communities to Canadian life. Before the advent of multiculturalism, it took

²⁸CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, "The Development of the National Archives for Canadian Jews, A Study by David Rome", April 1939, Archives Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, 1.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., 4.

the ethnic communities themselves to recognize the importance of documenting their history and contributions.

Throughout the years preceding and during the Second World War, the CJCNA was put on the back burner as the Canadian Jewish community focused its attention on the atrocities being committed against Jews by the Nazi regime in Europe. The CJC National Executive Director, Saul Hayes, cautioned H.M. Caiserman that the archives was not "an essential expenditure" during wartime.³¹ Attention and finances were also diverted from the archives during the postwar years as most of Canadian Jewry's money was used to help the thousands of European Jews displaced by the war.

Despite the limited funding the archives received, it actually grew during the war years. The fascist attempt to destroy European Jewry strengthened the commitment of those involved with the archives to assert its fundamental importance to Canadian Jews as a bastion of their history and culture. In an address to a joint meeting of the Archives Committee and the Canadian Jewish Historical Society given by David Rome, honorary secretary of the Archives Committee, Rome asserted,

. . . we must begin to treat the Archives as a very important trust and sphere of Congress activity. It is a matter of our communal honor. . . . If we do not treat ourselves with respect what can we expect of others?³²

At that meeting, Rome described the scope of the collection and classification system which had been implemented. He reported that the initial

³¹CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, letter from Saul Hayes to H.M. Caiserman, June 29, 1942.

³²CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, An address by David Rome, BLS, Honorary Secretary of the Archives Committee, Canadian Jewish Congress, before a joint meeting of the Archives Committee and the Canadian Jewish Historical Society, Baron de Hirsch Institute, Montreal, September 24, 1940.

classification system of the materials was based on what he called a scientific classification system, the Dewey decimal system. The adoption of this system, shows the influence of Rome, who was a librarian. He also asserted that the acquisition of materials needed to be more systematic. For example, he argued that Jewish organizations, communal workers and important figures should make regular and systematic contributions to the archives.³³

The pleas for increased funding for the archives by the many dedicated members of the Archives Committee were obviously heeded. In 1942 the national archives budget was increased to allow the archives to hire an archivist at the rate of \$800 a year and another \$200 for ancillary work. The CJCNA annual budget had dramatically increased from its previous \$300 allotment to \$1000.³⁴ For Hayes too, World War II highlighted the importance of maintaining an archives. He made new concessions that he had previously been unwilling to make.

By 1943, the CJCNA reported that it had collected files on over 260 institutions and was working on creating a bibliography of Jewish materials and a directory of Jewish religious life in Canada.³⁵

The impact of the war is obvious in the sentiment of the archives report given at the sixth plenary session of the CJC held in 1945. The crux of the report was the importance of providing the Canadian public with accurate information about Canada's Jewish community. It had observed the way the Jews of Europe were maligned and their heritage and culture distorted by anti-Semitism. The Archives Committee asserted that,

**We believe that one of the most important services
which the Canadian Jewish Congress can render the**

³³Ibid.

³⁴CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Minutes of the Archives Committee, October 26, 1942.

³⁵CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Report on Archives Department, Canadian Jewish Congress, May 7, 1943.

people of Canada and the Jewish community is to destroy the ignorance which is the soil for race hatred and anti-Semitism, especially, when they are fostered by enemies who find in such group's cleavages their finest hope of success against Canada and all democracy.³⁶

The Canadian Jewish community had not been immune to bad press. Until the creation of the CJCNA, however, the Jewish community had not had a central resource to help counter the allegations made against it.³⁷

As the archives continued to grow and prosper, it became clear that the next step that needed to be taken in the evolution of the archives was a permanent home of its own for the collection. At the twelfth plenary session of CJC in 1959 a resolution was passed that provided for steps be taken to erect a building to house the CJCNA.³⁸ The most pertinent sections of the resolution read,

WHEREAS, it is imperative that a new suitable building be erected to provide for the present and future needs of the National Archives and Library Collection, increasing the need for adequate accommodation for reserve purposes.

BE IT, THEREFORE RESOLVED that the National Executive of the Canadian Jewish Congress take steps to obtain private sponsorship to establish a foundation which would take charge of the construction and maintenance of such national institution.³⁹

A further resolution passed at the thirteenth plenary in 1962 provided that "Samuel Bronfman House, which will be erected in Montreal as the National Headquarters of the Canadian Jewish Congress, contain adequate facilities for

³⁶CJCNA, Canadian Jewish Congress Collection, Plenary Records, Series AB, January 13-16, 1945.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸CJCNA, Canadian Jewish Congress Collection, Plenary Records, Series AB, October 28-29, 1959.

³⁹Ibid.

safekeeping of the National Archives established by Canadian Jewish Congress"⁴⁰

The driving force behind the construction of an archives building was Samuel Bronfman. Bronfman, a wealthy and prominent Montreal businessman, became the president of CJC in 1939. He remained president until 1962. Bronfman brought wealthy Jews into the congress who had previously kept their distance from the organization. They brought both their money and business expertise. In 1942 Bronfman hired Saul Hayes, a young lawyer, to serve as the congress's executive director. Hayes remained in this position until 1959, followed by terms as its executive vice-president (1959-1974) and legal advisor (1974-1980). Hayes provided the CJC with the professional expertise, continuity and political finesse it needed. The building of a congress archives was made possible by a generous donation by Bronfman and the building was named after him as a tribute to his over 20 years of tireless commitment to the congress.

Prior to moving into the new Samuel Bronfman House, the CJCNA became incorporated as a museum and archives under the Canadian Corporations Act and commissioned a study by a records management company. The rights and powers conferred by the act established the CJCNA as a recognized Canadian cultural institution. This conferred greater credibility on the CJCNA and the right to obtain charitable donations. This did not mean, however, that the CJCNA had achieved the same professional status as other archives or cultural institutions.

The archives soon took steps to remedy its lack of professional archival acumen. In 1969 the CJCNA commissioned a study to investigate the feasibility of a Jewish archives in Canada and the steps that would need to be

⁴⁰CJCNA, Canadian Jewish Congress Collection, Plenary Records. Series AB, June 21-24, 1962.

taken for the archives to become a professional and more efficient institution. The study was conducted by John Andreassen, a records management consultant, and was entitled "Collection, Conservation and Utilization of the Historical Records of the Canadian Jewish Community". The report provided information on everything from an account of Jewish community organizations' willingness to deposit records in an archives, the archivist's function in an archival repository, information on permanent and durable papers, archival technology and estimated budgets.⁴¹ Andreassen's report was a judicious look at the practicality of maintaining a Canadian Jewish archives. Andreassen asserted that "It is appropriate that the "People of the Book" in Canada should make provisions for operating and maintaining a national . . . archives of the Jewish community in Canada."⁴² However, in the same report he pragmatically pointed out that "there is a Public Archives of Canada and there are ten well established Provincial Archives already in operation, paid for by the taxes of all of us."⁴³ Andreassen argued that the reason that not many other ethnic groups had set up archives is the great deal of money needed to house records and the increasing sum every year needed to maintain them. He conceded at the end of the report that the fact that the CJC archives had existed since 1934 is a testament to the Jewish community's conviction about the importance of archives. The Andreassen report served its purpose, in 1970 congress raised the archives' annual budget to \$6000.⁴⁴

With an expanded budget and a permanent home in place for the congress's archival collection, the next priority for the archives committee

⁴¹CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, "Collection, Conservation, and Utilization of the Historical Records of the Canadian Jewish Community," Records Management Company of Canada, John Andreassen, 1969.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Minutes of the Research and Archives Committee, June 25, 1970.

became hiring a professional archivist. In the June 25, 1970 minutes of the Research and Archives Committee, Saul Hayes reported that an advertisement had been placed in several newspapers inviting applications for the position of archivist at the CJCNA. Three or four people had replied, reported Hayes, but they did not have the necessary background, which included a knowledge of Yiddish and Canadian history. Hayes recommended that an individual with the linguistic and educational background could be trained in the technical aspects of the work.⁴⁵ Further to the issue of hiring an archivist, a resolution was passed at the sixteenth plenary session of CJC in 1971 that resolved that "Canadian Jewish Congress give immediate consideration to the provision of the necessary staff and financial resources to the National Standing Committee on Research, Library, Museum and Archives."⁴⁶ Hayes also drew a very interesting analogy. He said the situation of the archives reminded him of the cabin boy's question to the ship's captain: "Sir, is a thing lost if you know where it is?' To which the captain replied 'No.' The cabin boy replied, 'That's good, because your silver teapot is at the bottom of the ocean.'"⁴⁷ This vignette succinctly conveyed the issue facing the archives. It had overcome the problems of gaining the trust of the Jewish community and acquiring materials but did not have the necessary human resources or technical expertise to deal effectively with the growing collection. The issue became a double-edged sword. Without the proper arrangement and description of the materials, the archives would be in jeopardy of losing the confidence of the Jewish community as a dependable archival repository.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶CJCNA, Canadian Jewish Congress Collection, Plenary Records, Series AB, November 13-16, 1971.

⁴⁷Ibid.

Saul Hayes, congress's executive vice-president, became deeply concerned about the apparent stagnation of the archives. The archives had outgrown the congress's staff's capability to deal with it on a part-time basis, even with a coterie of dedicated volunteers. In a letter to the national officers, Hayes wrote, "I am pretty discouraged by the state of the archives, not because they do not exist but because, at the rate we are going, we will be six feet under before there is a proper inventory."⁴⁸ He went on to impress upon the officers that "A budgetary item must be provided for a full-time person to complete the kitchen work of examining the many opened crates and files so that at least we will know what we have."⁴⁹

In a report to Hayes, Rome shared Hayes' sentiment and reinforced the need to hire an archivist. Rome added that the archives lacked necessary security and access provisions, a proper inventory of the holdings, disposal of non-archival materials, and other modern methods of archival administration such as conservation measures and reformatting. Rome asserted that it is the work of the CJC to "maintain and extend this archival collection. It ought to be in adequate order, useful, accessible, indexed, publicized and growing." The only solution to these problems was to hire a professional archivist.⁵⁰

In 1973 CJCNA hired a part-time librarian/archivist, David Rome. Rome, one of Canadian Jewry's most prolific and influential historians, devoted countless hours and his enthusiasm to the archives but his work was only a proverbial drop in the bucket compared to what needed to be done. It was not until the intensification of strained relations between the CJCNA and the Public Archives of Canada and the need to run a professional archival

⁴⁸CJCNA, DA 11 a, 1935-1988, Letter from Saul Hayes to the National Officers, November 1, 1972.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Report from David Rome to Saul Hayes, December 7, 1972.

service that the necessary impetus was achieved to spur the CJC to finally take the necessary steps to obtain the services of a full-time, professional archivist.

The other primary issue facing the CJCNA from the mid-1970s until the 1980s was the archives' relationship with public archival institutions. In a position paper on the relationship between Jewish organizations and public archival institutions, Stephen Speisman, archivist at the CJC Central Region archives in Toronto (now called the Jewish Archives of Ontario) outlined the issue:

No one will deny that, as citizens, we are entitled to make the fullest use of the archival facilities provided by the various levels of government. The issue is whether or not it is wise for us to do so and what might be considered optimum use from the point of view of Jewish community interests.⁵¹

Speisman emphatically argued that Jewish archival records ought to remain in the hands of the Jewish community. He echoed the sentiment of many of those who felt the issue of the repository for Jewish archival materials centered around the issue of "amour propre." Speisman asserted that it was important to keep ethnic material "as close to its source as possible, while ensuring its survival and facilitating its use by the public."⁵² Speisman believed that the acquisition of Jewish archival material could be best accomplished by members of the Jewish community who had more direct contact with records creators. Also, he contended that in a public repository, Jewish materials could fall into the wrong hands. He warned that, "our history demands that we be cautious."⁵³

⁵¹CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, "Position Paper on the Relationship Between Jewish Organizations and Public Archival Institutions," Stephen Speisman, Director, Canadian Jewish Congress Central Region Archives, February 24, 1975.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

The conflict between CJCNA and the Public Archives of Canada became such an issue that in 1976 Saul Hayes went to Ottawa to meet with Dr. Wilfred Smith, Dominion Archivist. The conflict centered around the fact that part of PAC's general policy, as a component of the federal government's newly adopted policy of multiculturalism, was the preservation of documents created by ethnic groups in Canada. Therefore, CJCNA and PAC, both national bodies, were vying for many of the same records. After meeting with Smith, Hayes wrote to Victor Sefton, Chairman of the Archives Committee, that CJCNA should not view the PAC as the enemy or Smith as "ghoulish, or a grave robber" but the archives should become pro-active rather than reactive.⁵⁴ Hayes asserted that the way to counter competition from PAC was to, as he simply put it, "do our work!"⁵⁵ He believed that if CJCNA could offer comparable care and prestige, people would have no problem justifying depositing their records with a Jewish repository. In an attempt to establish a congenial, cooperative relationship with PAC Victor Sefton sent a letter to Smith outlining a suggested code of practices to prevent conflict related to the collection of archival materials from sources within the Jewish community. Some of the highlights of the proposals made by Sefton include:

- 1) It is in the interest of the National Archives that CJC exert all possible efforts to collect as much archival materials as possible from within the Jewish community of Canada for preservation, identification and availability to researchers.
- 2) Competition with the Public Archives in pursuit of the activities here above set out would engender conflict and should be avoided, and in recognition that the Canadian Jewish Congress national body is capable of collecting, storing and inventorizing archival material of the community it represents, the National Archives would encourage it to pursue an aggressive policy to achieve the objectives.

⁵⁴CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Letter to Victor Sefton from Saul Hayes, November 3, 1976.

⁵⁵Ibid.

- 3) Since all prospective donors have the right to deposit their archival material where they wish, the Public Archives of Canada would expect that those from Congress engaged in the work make it clear the National Archives is also available as a repository and likewise staff of the Public Archives will inform the prospective donors of the Congress' interests.
- 4) There will be a mutuality of access to materials and for interchange of copies subject to restrictions as, if and when, imposed by donors or by the Public Archives.⁵⁶

A blow to CJCNA/PAC relations came in 1979 when the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of Montreal, Canada's oldest synagogue in continuing use, deposited its records with PAC. Some members of the Jewish community viewed the transfer as a loss of a significant part of Canadian Jewish heritage.⁵⁷ Compounding the resentment was the fact that included in the transfer was a sefer torah, Judaism's most holy possession. Stephen Speisman feared that the transfer of some of the Jewish community's most prized records would give the PAC "ammunition with which to attack Jewish archival institutions by publicizing the acquisition to organizations . . . [in the Jewish community] from whom they hope to acquire materials at our expense."⁵⁸ Speisman, however, did not lay the entire blame for the incident on the acquisitive motives of the PAC. He also pointed to the apathy of the CJCNA:

. . . I am irritated by the fact that congress sits back and permits such events to transpire without a word. At the very least, there should be some statement deploring the practice of giving Jewish material away Perhaps then Jews will think twice about where to deposit material.⁵⁹

⁵⁶CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Letter to Dr. W. Smith from Victor Sefton, November 28, 1977.

⁵⁷CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Memorandum to Sol Edell, Saul Hayes, Rabbi Jonathan Plaut, David Rome, Victor Sefton and Cyrel Troster from Stephen Speisman, October 2, 1979.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

A second blow was dealt the CJCNA in a 1980 letter sent by Wilfred Smith, Dominion Archivist, to Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, CJC president. In the letter, Smith explained the mandate of the PAC and the rationale behind PAC wanting to collect materials from nationally significant Jewish people and organizations. Smith suggested that the CJCNA cease collecting such materials and transfer all existing records of national Jewish significance to PAC.⁶⁰ He suggested that congress's archives should only serve as the repository for records produced by congress itself. Smith offered many benefits of this arrangement. He cited the increased technical expertise that could be given by PAC and that collections of national significance would be housed in a repository with other like collections. He also said that copies of documents and a tax receipt for their donation would be available to CJC.⁶¹

Reactions to Smith's letter by some were emotionally charged. David Rome, one of the CJCNA pioneers, was appalled by Smith's proposal that congress forsake its responsibility for records relating to the Jewish community in Canada. In a letter to Alan Rose, CJC vice-president, Rome complained bitterly that Smith,

. . . seems to be unaware that the archives of the CJC constitute a major responsibility and *raison d'etre* of the Congress. For our institution to abnegate from this would, of course, constitute a dereliction our of duty, of our responsibility and the erasure of every unanimous CJC resolution since 1919.⁶²

Rome accused Smith of failing to understand that the CJC records are the backbone of the entire archival collection. CJC, said Rome, is part of the fundamental structure of the Canadian Jewish community. Many of the

⁶⁰CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Letter to Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut from W.I. Smith, January 9, 1980.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988. Letter to Alan Rose from David Rome, January 31, 1980.

collections with the archives are contextually related to the congress collection. According to Rome, "to separate out these elements would be to tear off limbs and organs from the body of the CJC and of the Canadian Jewish community."⁶³ Rome also took issue with Smith's insistence that placing nationally significant Jewish materials with PAC would place them in a more appropriate national context. Rome contended that

. . . the existing context of the archives of the CJC is much more pertinent, being in the context of a living, functioning, and central Jewish institution, constantly engaged in the high pursuits of the CJC, and the National Archives are interpreted in a frame of reference which is precious to Canadian Jewry.⁶⁴

Many people, such as Stephen Speisman, echoed Rome's heartfelt sentiment. Their perspective on the issue, however, was not unanimously held. Smith's offer polarized those involved with the CJCNA.⁶⁵ Some felt as Rome did, while others found merit in Smith's arguments. While the CJC National Archives Committee was unable to come to agreement over its response to Smith's letter, it was able to reach a consensus on some constructive steps that could be taken. A priority was the need to obtain the services of a professional archivist. This, they believed, would give the CJC archives the credibility it needed to both prove its worth to the Jewish community and contest Smith's contentions about the most appropriate place for Jewish records.⁶⁶

David Rome took the idea one step further and presented it in a memorandum to the entire CJC staff. While this issue was certainly not a new

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Minutes of the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives Committee, March 14, 1980.

⁶⁶Ibid.

one, the incidents with the PAC had given it new vitality and significance. In the memorandum, Rome asserted that "interested parties are acting to dispossess the community of [a]. . . major asset" and that "concrete and specific measures need to be planned" to prevent it.⁶⁷ He reasoned that congress must take action to equip itself with the necessary staff and professional tools so that it could be on a par with other archives, and this, he argued, would garner the CJCNA the respect it deserved.⁶⁸

The issue became so serious that in 1979 Saul Hayes argued that without proper staffing and expertise, the CJC would have to make up its mind once and for all and either (a) get out of the archives business all together; (b) do a mediocre, hit or miss job, the best that can be accomplished on a limited budget; or (c) dedicate the necessary money and commitment to the archives by hiring more staff to undertake the necessary work. He also made a personal appeal in which he asserted that if nothing is done he would give up on the archives because he could not in good conscience ask organizations and individuals to give materials to the CJCNA.⁶⁹ Hayes continued to explore ways to bolster the archives,

I favour Congress going out on a campaign among the community and the members of the National Budgeting Conference to suggest that we worry about our own archives in a way that is commensurate with the background of Canadian Jewry, its past performances and its reputation as one of the important communities in world Jewry.⁷⁰

Finally in 1980 the pleas of the Archives Committee were answered and the CJC's first full-time professional archivist, Judith Nefsky, was hired. It

⁶⁷CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Memorandum to Canadian Jewish Congress Staff from David Rome, August 6, 1980.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Letter to David Rome from Saul Hayes, August 29, 1979.

⁷⁰Ibid.

had taken almost ten years and a bitter feud between two archival repositories to accomplish this. Some may argue, tongue in cheek, that realizing the goal of hiring an archivist was not only long over due but rather exactly on time, Jewish time, that is.

While the CJCNA was established long before most of Canada's other ethnic archival repositories, it took the conflict with PAC and the inception of multiculturalism to raise the standards of the CJCNA. In this way, the CJCNA is similar to most of Canada's other ethnic archives in that it required the extra push of multiculturalism, whether it be monetary or adversarial, to really spur it on. In contrast, some ethnic communities, such as the Finnish community, viewed the public archival sector's embrace of ethnic archival materials as an opportunity to absolve themselves of the cost and time commitment required in maintaining an archives. Only communities, such as the Jewish and Mennonite communities, that had the financial and professional resources to maintain an archives may have had the luxury to keep an archives within their community. Some ethnic archives sought the best of both worlds. The Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada (JHSWC), for example, has housed its collection in the Provincial Archives of Manitoba in Winnipeg since 1967 while continuing to maintain strict control of the collection.⁷¹ This compromise allowed the JHSWC to maintain intellectual control over the collection while the provincial archives covered the costs and provided the professional guidance necessary to preserve and

⁷¹In 1966 the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada's representatives, Abraham Arnold and Nathan Arkin, approached the then Provincial Archivist, Hart Bowsfield, to propose that the Jewish community would begin collecting archival materials if the Provincial Archives of Manitoba would store them until the community had proper storage facilities of its own. This was accepted and the agreement was implemented in 1967. The JHSWC control the records and monitor access to them. The society plans on removing its records from the provincial archives in the course of the next year once construction of its new environmentally controlled storage space is completed. Bonnie Tregabov, letter to the author, 26 February 1997.

allow access to the collection. Incidentally, the JHSWC will be taking back its collection in 1997 when it will have its own state-of-the-art building on the newly established Asper Jewish Community Campus in Winnipeg.

Hiring Ms. Nefsky was like a rite of passage for CJCNA; it had finally reached maturity. Nefsky quickly established long-range plans to systematize the central tasks of selection and acquisition of materials, conservation, and preparation of finding aids and inventories to provide access to the materials to researchers. She established a two-year action plan centered around the establishment and implementation of new practices and plans for the archives in the areas of finance, development of processing, storage and retrieval, housing, users, acquisition of collections, and community outreach activities.⁷² Nefsky took steps to systematize the transfer of non-active congress files to the archives and ease access restrictions on materials in the archives.⁷³ Nefsky also introduced a computerized retrieval system.⁷⁴ The automation of the archives was started in 1983 and by 1994 close to 90 percent of the collection had been listed on computer. Nefsky also sought to increase the profile and visibility of the archives within the Jewish community and the community at large.

Nefsky also wanted the CJCNA to become more involved with the Canadian archival community, especially in Quebec. In a letter to Stan Urman, CJC executive director, she contended, "I believe it is important that our archival program be informed about provincial archival activities and that we be known in their circles so that our community's history is

⁷²CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Memorandum to Irving Abella from Judith Nefsky, May 4, 1981.

⁷³CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Memorandum to all senior staff from Stan Urman, October 13, 1982.

⁷⁴CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, National Archives Budget, 1982.

considered an integral part of broad Quebecois heritage."⁷⁵ To this end Nefsky began visiting archives throughout Quebec to make herself and the CJCNA known and gain knowledge of the province's archival community. Nefsky was successful in her efforts. In 1982 Jean Poirier, head of the Montreal division of the Archives nationales du Quebec (ANQ), became a member of the CJCNA advisory committee. In a memorandum to Irving Abella, chairperson of the National Archives Committee and a noted Canadian historian, Nefsky indicated that Poirier felt that "Quebec Archives has a role to aid private archives and they in turn will benefit from contact with us as an ethnic community."⁷⁶

Greater involvement with the Quebec archival community and the ANQ was a shrewd alliance. The ANQ, which was also opposed to PAC encroachments into Quebec, could serve as a formidable ally in the CJCNA's efforts to resist the PAC's attempt to acquire a greater quantity and diversity of archival materials from Quebec including those of the Jewish community.

Nefsky also became an active member of a local archivists' group whose members were responsible for private archival collections. One of the purposes of the group was to discuss acquisition policies and to come up with an agreement on general principles leading to cooperation rather than competition in the collection of private documentation.⁷⁷ The group arrived at a number of principles to further cooperation between archives. The most important principle, "To respect the mandate of institutional repositories; that

⁷⁵CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Memorandum to Stan Urman from Judith Nefsky, February 16, 1982.

⁷⁶CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Memorandum to Irving Abella from Judith Nefsky, August 24, 1982.

⁷⁷CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Memorandum to Irving Abella from Judith Nefsky, February 21, 1983. Members of this archival association included representatives from the Université de Montréal, McCord Museum, Centre Canadien d'Architecture, Jewish Public Library, McGill University, and Archives nationales du Quebec, among others.

is, not pursue collections, which rightly belong with a related institution's archives."⁷⁸ The archivists within the group decided it was most beneficial to their own archives, the other archives in the region and the community at large to focus their acquisition on what they termed "zones of excellence."⁷⁹ While this agreement was less than foolproof, especially with regard to the grey area of defining "rightly belong", it represented a progressive step in the archival community. Members of the Quebec private archival community realized that they were all essentially working toward the same goal, to preserve history, and that competition would hinder these efforts.

Once the group had confronted and resolved the issues facing their own archival community, they set their sights on attempting to deal with issues inherent in the relationship between public and private sector archives. At a November 1983 meeting of the group, Robert Gordon of PAC was invited to explain the acquisition policies of his archives in relation to the interests of Montreal archival repositories. At that meeting Nefsky reported that she was not alone in experiencing strained relations with PAC. Nefsky wrote about the meeting that,

There was a strong feeling of resentment, which was openly expressed, at the aggressive collection policies of the Public Archives of Canada. Although the group accepts the Public Archives of Canada's mandate to acquire collections of national significance, it takes issue with the Public Archives of Canada's acquisition of the papers of such institutions . . . which . . . [are] clearly of local interest.⁸⁰

An especially high profile incident reflecting the relationship between PAC and CJCNA occurred in 1983. In that year, B'nai B'rith Canada, one of

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Memorandum to Irving Abella, Jim Archibald, David Rome, Stephen Speisman from Judith Nefsky, November 24, 1983.

⁸⁰Ibid.

Canada's largest and most active Jewish philanthropic organizations donated its records to the PAC. Nefsky asserted that this was "a further blow to relations between Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai B'rith and is contrary to the principle that Jewish community records should remain in the community's hands and not in the public domain."⁸¹ Some within congress itself even blamed the transfer of B'nai Brith records on poor relations between the two organizations. The B'nai Brith, may have chosen to deposit their materials with PAC, a federal government agency and one of the country's most respected cultural institutions, because it was symbolic of the Jewish community and B'nai Brith being accepted and validated by mainstream Canadian society. This would be similar to the American example of Carter G. Woodson's decision to deposit the material that he had collected on African-Americans with the Library of Congress. Speisman feared that B'nai Brith's high profile transfer might set a precedent in the Jewish community.⁸² In response to the event, Speisman argued that CJC must do something to counteract the

concerted campaign on the part of the Public Archives to convince the Jewish public that those archival programs being operated by the Jewish community are illegitimate and . . . Congress . . . is doing a disservice by preventing all Jewish material from finding its way to the Public Archives.⁸³

Despite the continued poor relations experienced by Nefsky, the situation did begin to resolve itself. In fact, in 1983 Nefsky reported in a memorandum to Irving Abella, chairperson of the National Archives

⁸¹CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Memorandum to Jim Archibald from Judith Nefsky, November 23, 1983.

⁸²CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Letter to Irving Abella and the members of the CJC National Archives Committee from Stephen Speisman, October 27, 1983.

⁸³Ibid.

Committee, that Lawrence Tapper, head of the Jewish collections at PAC, was beginning to direct researchers to the CJCNA and she was reciprocating.⁸⁴ Such a simple gesture of cordiality signified a great deal. Although relations between the two archival bodies could never become perfect, due to the nature of their collecting mandates, their relationship had reached a new level of cooperation. After November 1983, the two archives attempted to avoid antagonistic behavior. They cooperated together, assisting researchers and did not clash again as fiercely as they had in the 1970s and early 1980s. They essentially informally abided by the guidelines set out by Victor Sefton and sent to Wilfred Smith in 1977.⁸⁵

In 1982 the CJCNA was given the opportunity for growth unparalleled in its history. It was awarded a \$225,000 grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council issued under the council's Canadian Studies Program. The money was given to CJC, the largest single grant it had ever received, to arrange and describe the records of the Jewish Colonization Services, United Jewish Relief Agencies and Jewish Immigrant Aid Services. These records document over one hundred years of Jewish immigration to Canada. An article in the Canadian Jewish News, the Canadian Jewish community's national paper, glowingly reported that the money would allow the CJCNA holdings to "be one of the most comprehensive archival collections on Jewish immigration in the Diaspora."⁸⁶

In 1992 the CJCNA became the second archival repository in greater Montreal to obtain the status of a Partnership Archives with the Archives nationales du Quebec. Partnership in the program resulted from the Quebec

⁸⁴CJCNA, DA 11 A, 1935-1988, Memorandum to Irving Abella from Judith Nefsky, December 22, 1983.

⁸⁵See page 93.

⁸⁶"Canadian Jewish Congress Get \$225,000," Canadian Jewish News, 13 May 1982.

government's Private Archives Policy of 1983 which was created to encourage private archives in the province to maintain their own records and in turn help the government to preserve and improve access to Quebec's documentary heritage. This move was heralded in the Jewish community. In an article appearing in the Canadian Jewish News Irving Abella asserted that "Only in the province of Quebec has the Jewish community been given the opportunity to profit from financial and technical assistance while retaining complete control of their holdings."⁸⁷

The current CJCNA holdings measure over 1012 linear metres and encompass all areas of Jewish life in Canada including Canadian Jewish Congress records, other Canadian Jewish institutions and organizations, and the collections of individual members of the Jewish community in a variety of media and languages. The CJCNA's five major collections are the: Canadian Jewish Congress organizational records (195 metres, 1919- current); Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) (26 metres, 1906-1978); Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) (275 metres, 1920-1975); United Jewish Relief Agencies (UJRA) (31 metres 1938-1978); and the United Restitution Organization (URO) (71 metres, 1945-1985).

The CJC organizational records provide an administrative history of the organization and the causes it has advanced throughout its existence from social action advocacy to refugee rescue and settlement among many of its projects. The JCA, an organization created at the turn of the century to facilitate Jewish immigration and settlement, assisted thousands of families, primarily from Eastern Europe and Russia, to settle in small communities throughout the world. The JCA records provide a wealth of information

⁸⁷"Canadian Jewish Congress Archives Given Grant for New Status," Canadian Jewish News, 19 April 1992.

regarding Canada's Jewish farm colonies that were scattered throughout the country. UJRA was established in 1938 to provide relief for Jewish war victims. Following World War II UJRA was instrumental in helping displaced persons find family members and bring them to Canada. JIAS was created in 1919 by CJC to encourage Jewish immigration to Canada and help immigrants to adjust to their new home. URO was established in 1953 as a world-wide legal aid organization which assists victims of Nazi persecution by submitting claims against the German and Austrian governments according to the provisions of Germany's Federal Indemnification Law. The records in this collection constitute a valuable resource for studies of the Holocaust period, including testimonials of holocaust survivors.

The Canadian Jewish community has demonstrated one the strongest interests in archives of Canada's ethnic groups. Today there are over ten Jewish historical societies and seven Jewish archives throughout the nation.⁸⁸ Many theories have been offered to try to explain the Jews' stalwart attachment to history and archives. One of the greatest Jewish philosophers, Morris Raphael Cohen, asserted that Jews have always had a veneration for learning and a keen interest in their roots and Judaic heritage.⁸⁹ Cohen also believed that learning was an underlying Judaic value. Jews, he asserts, have

⁸⁸ Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, Montreal
Halifax Jewish Historical Society, Halifax
Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia, Vancouver
Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, Winnipeg
Jewish Public Library Archives, Montreal
Ottawa Jewish Historical Society, Ottawa
Jewish Archives of Ontario (originally called the Toronto Jewish Congress/Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario Region Archives). It was established in 1973 by congress to collect records documenting Ontario's Jewish history. It was felt that so many valuable archival materials were being destroyed or neglected in Ontario Jewish communities that a separate archives solely devoted to Ontario's Jewish community was needed. Stephen Speisman, "The Keeping of Jewish Records in Ontario: Toronto Jewish Congress/Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario Region Archives," *Archivaria* 30 (1990): 160-162.

⁸⁹Leonara Cohen Rosenfeld, "The Judaic Values of a Philosopher: Morris Raphael Cohen, 1880-1947," *Jewish Social Studies*, 42.3-4, 1980: 191.

aptly been called the people of the book, "The God of Jews was a lawgiver, Moses a law teacher, and the Talmud commentaries on the law."⁹⁰

Stephen F. Brumberg, author of Going to America Going To School, explores the translation of traditional Jewish precepts to modern experiences. In the "old country", the Hebrew scholar held a place of great esteem in the Jewish community and study of the Torah and Talmud, Jewish holy books, was deemed to be the most important type of education. To adhere to a moral and ethical religious life, Jews had to study and interpret complex texts. Neil and Ruth Cowan, authors of a book on the Americanization of Eastern European Jews, contend that education was part of shtetl culture.⁹¹ In America, Jews also placed great importance on learning and history. They reshaped deeply rooted attitudes to conform to a new social and cultural environment. Even when Jewish families became assimilated into Christian America, they continued to transmit traditional Jewish values.⁹² Sociologist Robert Park describes this phenomenon as a "cultural hybrid", or a melding of two distinct cultures.⁹³ According to Brumberg, "Education, in its broadest sense, became a prime need for virtually all immigrants."⁹⁴ Psychologist Seymour Sarason attempts to connect the Jews' gravitation towards things associated with learning by arguing that,

Being Jewish was inextricably interwoven with attitudes toward intellectual accomplishment. To separate the one from the other was impossible.

⁹⁰Ibid., 191.

⁹¹ A shtetl was a tiny rural town in Eastern Europe with a large Jewish population. Neil M. Cowan and Ruth Schwartz Cowan, Our Parents' Lives: The Americanization of Eastern European Jews (United States of America: Basic Books, Inc., 1989): 79.

⁹²Alice Bloch, "Scenes from the Life of a Jewish Lesbian," On Being a Jewish Feminist: A Reader, ed. Susannah Heschel (New York: Schocken Books, 1983) :174.

⁹³Stephen F. Brumberg, Going to America Going to School: The Jewish Immigrant Public School Encounter in Turn-of-the-Century New York City (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986): 59.

⁹⁴Ibid.

This did not mean that being Jewish meant that one was smart or capable of intellectual accomplishments, but it meant that one had respect for such strivings.⁹⁵

Sarason also contends that the high value assigned to intellectual activity in Jewish life is "immune to change."⁹⁶ In the world of Cohen, whose life had bridged both worlds,

The immigrant to the New World broke the old patterns. The old limitations on the proper subjects of intellectual inquiry and discussion were removed, but the intellectual passion, the tradition of study, the high value . . . put upon learning and skill continued.⁹⁷

Another reason offered by Sarason for the strong connection between Jews and knowledge is that Jews have always known that the world can be hostile towards them and their history has caused them to fear persecution. Feminist writer Marcia Freedman writes, "Each pogrom, each expulsion, and finally the Holocaust itself has carved this lesson into the hearts of a nation."⁹⁸ Therefore, argues Sarason, they have tried to equip themselves with intellectual weapons, whether they be archives or academics, to counter those who try to defame them.⁹⁹ One of the Jewish world's most famous archives is the Oneg Shabbat Archives.¹⁰⁰ The Oneg Shabbat Archives is a collection of writings, drawings, documents, reports, and newspaper articles collected by Jewish historian Emanuel Ringelblum inside the Warsaw Ghetto in Nazi occupied Poland. The materials were placed in milk cans and hidden. This

⁹⁵Ibid., 20.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Morris Raphael Cohen, *A Dreamer's Journey* (Glencoe Illinois: The Free Press, 1979) : 94-95.

⁹⁸Marcia Freedman, *Exile in the Promised Land* (Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books, 1990): 89.

⁹⁹Brumberg, 20.

¹⁰⁰Oneg Shabbat, literally translated from Hebrew, means enjoyment of the Sabbath. N.ECK. *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd., 1971): 189.

collection constitutes one of the primary sources of information on the history of Polish Jewry under Nazi occupation.¹⁰¹ Despite the risk to himself and the others who helped him, Ringelblum was aware of the importance of collecting documentary evidence of the horrific conditions of life in the Warsaw Ghetto. In spite of the starvation and hardship in the ghetto Ringelblum understood the importance of maintaining an archives.

A profound attachment to history has always been a feature of Judaism. Many of Judaism's most religious holidays are those commemorating historical events. One such holiday is the celebration of Passover which celebrates the ancient Israelites escape from slavery in Egypt and the succeeding forty years they spent in the desert on their way to the land of Israel. Holidays like Passover, among many others, remind Jewish people that they are part of a long and proud history. The persecutions faced by Jews in ancient times are not unlike the pogroms and Holocaust of the more recent past and the turmoil Jews may be susceptible to in the future. The most forceful catalyst for the formation of a representative Jewish organization in Canada was the Second World War. Jews came together to protest against the violent crimes being perpetrated against their coreligionists in Eastern Europe. The war also created a more profound division between the earlier "uptown" Jews and the newer "downtown" Jews. The "downtown" Jews, who identified more closely with the European Jews in war torn Europe, wanted to contribute all their money to Jews in war zones, while the "uptown" Jews, who were more assimilated, were more concerned with local relief needs. Both groups began to lobby for the creation of a Jewish democratic body modeled after the Canadian Parliament to advance their interests and causes.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

The evolution of the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives illustrates two main themes: i) the relationship between the social context of the Jewish community and the CJCNA; and ii) the institutional development of the CJCNA. The two themes demonstrate the tenacity and emotional convictions behind both the establishment of a national representative Jewish body and an archives with which to chronicle that community's history and attempt to safeguard its existence.

The implications of the debate over where is the best place for ethnic materials to reside extends far beyond the realm of ethnic-run archives. The resolution of this debate will likely affect all private sector archives and force archivists, record creators and money granting bodies to re-examine the roles of both public and private sector archives. Ethnic archives do not exist in a vacuum and are likely not the only type of private sector archives to experience this difficulty. The challenge is to organize an unthreatening dialogue between the public sector and private sector archival communities. Despite the fact that these groups meet at conferences, meetings, serve on boards together, among other like functions, little concerted effort has been made to address this problem. In these times of tightening budgets and the growing scope of archival records this will be one of the most significant issues facing archivists as they move into the twentieth century.

Conclusion

Ethnic Canadians have had a long, rich and dynamic history in Canada. Many of these groups faced enormous difficulties and, like other Canadians, have had to struggle to establish roots for themselves in a new country in order to begin to flourish. Ethnic archives across the country have attempted to document the narrative of these communities in Canada. This, like other endeavors in their communities and for ethnic people themselves, has also not been easy.

Equally difficult is the challenge that has faced the archival community, encompassing both ethnic and other archives, of capturing an accurate reflection of our country's history in the documentary evidence they chose to retain. For much of the history of Canada's public archival tradition the nation's archival institutions omitted some segments of Canadian history. The segment that this thesis addresses is the ethnic people of Canada. In order to fill this void in the archival world several ethnic communities throughout the country established and maintained their own archival institutions within their communities and organizations. While some government, university and other archives acquired records pertaining to ethnic Canadians none, until the 1970s and the advent of multiculturalism, gave extensive attention to the acquisition of ethnic records and nor were they maintained within the framework of an ethnic community.

The National Archives of Canada, the country's largest archival institution, has had a formidable influence on the nation's archives. Its innovations and practices have often set the standard for other institutions across the country. For a significant portion of its history the NAC focused its collecting efforts on building a documentary heritage based largely on

Anglo-French historical understanding. This emphasis on Anglo-French records reflected the prevailing perceptions of the time which believed that those two groups had shaped and determined the scope and complexity of Canada. For this reason, many of Canada's more marginalized groups including women, first nations communities and ethnic groups were largely ignored and went unrecognized and undocumented.

A number of Canada's ethnic communities established their own archival repositories to compensate for the absence of ethnic archival materials in publicly run institutions. These archives possessed a great deal of enthusiasm and a strong conviction of the necessity of maintaining their archival heritage. They did not, however, possess the necessary funding, human resources, and skills to reach their potential.

The Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives (CJCNA) in Montreal, one of Canada's oldest ethnic-run archives, provides an example of the difficulties as well as successes of maintaining an archives within an ethnic community. Although the evolution of the CJCNA was fraught with problems it provided the Canadian Jewish community with the foundation from which the contributions and history of their community could be, validated, written about and disseminated.

Archival materials can have a redemptive quality. The voices, ideas and actions ensconced in the pages, images, and audio recordings of archival records can fill the silences left from decades of a people's history and contributions remaining largely unrecognized. National Archivist Jean-Pierre Wallot has said that,

. . . archives are indispensable to the emergence of an educated perspective and enlightened prospects, greater knowledge, broader and richer light cast on the past and on the present so that we can imagine

more clearly the opportunities of the future.¹

The exigencies created by the recent trend of government fiscal restraint has meant that archives have had to reexamine their priorities. Eldon Frost of the National Archives of Canada argues that public funding for archives of all sectors has slowly been shrinking. He contends that "the acquisition and care of private records by public archival institutions . . . may be the archival activity most affected by this development."² This has forced archivists to consider what will be the future of private records. Public archives have had to weigh the responsibility of retaining the records of their sponsoring organization with their role of preserving the nation's cultural heritage. The direction in which the public archives seem to be moving is that they are no longer able to continue to acquire private records with the same scope and volume as they have in the past. With the cuts in government funding to public archives and cuts in government funding to private archives there will be fewer resources provided by the government to maintain private sector records including ethnic materials. Private archives that are not heavily dependent on government funding and that can maintain their funding, and even increase the amount, over the next few years will have greater opportunities to collect ethnic materials as the public archives reduce their acquisition of private sector materials. The issue of competition between public and private archives over ethnic materials will be reduced. Reduced funding will also exacerbate the disparity between communities with wealth, many of whom have well-established roots in Canada, and smaller, newer, less established and less prosperous ethnic groups. This may

¹Jean-Pierre Wallot, "The 125th Anniversary of the National Archives of Canada - On the Unbearable Fragility of Our Archival Heritage," *The Archivist*, 113 (1997): 6.

²Eldon Frost, "Acquiring Private Records in a Shrinking Archival Universe," *The Archivist*, 112 (1996): 24.

lead to the reemergence of an old problem. Only those communities with the will and resources to maintain their own archives will have a record of their group's history in Canada.

6. Does your archives depend on volunteer help? If so, does this influence the activities of your archives?
7. Is your archives experiencing budgetary pressures?
Yes _____ No _____
If yes, how is it influencing the archives' activities?
8. What changes do you foresee your archives undergoing to:
- a) meet the needs of the future
 - b) expand its number of users
 - c) meet users needs
 - d) respond to budgetary problems
 - e) other (explain)
9. What do you believe is the importance of ethnic archives in Canada?

4. When was your archives established? _____
5. What was the impetus for the creation of your archives?
6. What was your total number of archives users per year over the past five years, either from formal statistics or an estimate?

Please specify the period you have taken your numbers from _____

7. Archival users. Please estimate the percentage of users from each category.

_____ students	_____ lay historians
_____ academics	_____ members of the media
_____ genealogists	_____ members of your archives sponsoring organization
_____ members of the ethnic community with whom you are affiliated	_____ others _____

8. Do you believe your archives is being utilized well by the ethnic community it serves?

_____ yes

_____ no

9. How does your archives serve the ethnic community with which it is affiliated ?

Please check the appropriate categories

_____ publications (newsletters, books etc.)

_____ genealogical information and assistance

_____ historical lectures and programming

_____ displays and educational materials

_____ funding of historical works on your ethnic community

_____ other _____

10. How many paid staff people work at your archives?

_____ (# of people)

Please specify the types (eg. professional archivist, secretaries) and number of each paid employee.

16. Do you foresee any future changes in your archives to:

a) meet the needs of the future

b) expand its number of users

c) meet user's needs

d) respond to budgetary constraints

17. Do you distribute your finding aids to other institutions?

_____ yes

_____ no

If yes, to whom ?

_____ other ethnic archives

_____ government and municipal archives

_____ university archives

_____ other _____

25. Where do you believe is the best place for archival documentation pertaining to ethnic groups in Canada to reside?

_____ an archives run by the ethnic community

_____ a government archives

_____ other archives; specify _____

_____ another repository (eg. museum, library)

Why?

26. Does your archives have any foreign language materials?

_____ yes

_____ no

If so, what languages? _____

Do you think these materials promote the continued use of these languages?

_____ yes

_____ no

27. Are the archivists employed at your institution from the ethnic group from whom your archives collects?

_____ yes

_____ no

28. **Based on your experience working in an ethnic archives, what do you believe is the importance of ethnic archives in Canada?**

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