

THE ARQUIVES

Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives

Research Guide
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What is an Archive?

Archives are repositories for documentary heritage that work to acquire, preserve, organize, and give public access to information and materials in any medium. Archives are a resource for everyone to use, and a community archives like The ArQuives accepts donations from community members or any record about LGBTQ2+ life in Canada.

The difference between a library and an archives

The main difference between a library and an archive is that a library contains published works that the public can access and often take home. Library collections can include anything published in the form of a book or a serial publication (i.e. journals, newspapers, magazines, newsletters). Some libraries only have reference material, which means that they can only be consulted onsite. An archive is non-circulating and can contain published and unpublished works. An archive contains the 'behind-the-scenes' records pertaining to an organization or person's work, such as correspondence, notes, receipts, drafts etc.

What is a record?

Records are documentary by-products or records of human activity that have been acquired, preserved, and organized for their long term value. Archivists provide researchers access to these records. The definition of what constitutes a record can be wide ranging, and can include anything from textual, graphic to electronic material.

What is reproduction?

Reproduction is the act of copying an archival document. This copying can be for personal use (i.e. to display in your home, for a paper you are writing for school, for an art project etc.), for publication or display (i.e. for a journal publication, exhibit, for news reporting etc.). The ArQuives charges fees based on whether these reproductions are for commercial or non-commercial purposes.

What is Fair Dealing under the Canadian Copyright Act?

Fair Dealing is a section of the Canadian [Copyright Act](#) that protects people who are using copyrighted materials from copyright infringement. The general public uses fair dealing all the time without knowing it. The Canadian *Copyright Act* allows for the use of material from a copyrighted work such as literature, organizational records, audio-visual

works, or photographs, etc. without permission from the copyright holders. People can use fair dealing to reproduce materials for the following purposes:

- Research
- Private study
- Education
- Parody
- Satire
- Criticism
- Review
- News reporting

Users who think their use of records fall under Fair Dealing need to weigh the following factors:

- The amount being copied
- Whether the copies are being distributed
- Whether copying may be detrimental to potential sales of the original work

The Supreme Court of Canada understands that the use of copyrighted work under Fair dealing is beneficial for society and should be accessible for use. Striking a balance between the rights of copyright holders and those of users. For more information on Fair dealing and additional resources, please visit <https://fair-dealing.ca/what-is-fair-dealing/>

How to use our archive

You can now search our collection online here: <https://archives.andornot.com/> if you would like to view a particular record in person, do a keyword search, and then if desired you can filter on the left-hand side of the screen to revise your search results by collection, decade, material type, description level, etc. Once you have found a record you are interested in, select the record by clicking on 'more details' and then press 'select'. These selections will be added to 'your selections' at the top of the right hand side of the page, which can be exported as a PDF or emailed directly to the Reference Archivist at queries@archives.ca. The archivist monitoring the email will respond to you within 7 business days regarding your request.

Structure of The ArQuives

The ArQuives is divided into several sections. There are personal and organizational archival records referred to as fonds, and a number of separate collections that are made up of materials that will not be amalgamated into a fonds.

- **Collection and Fonds (Personal and Organizational archives)**
 - Textual records
 - Audio-Visual records
 - Sound recordings, moving image, music
 - Posters
 - Photographs
 - Prints, slides, negatives
 - Artifacts
 - Objects relating to the fonds
 - Artworks
 - Fiction/Non-fiction
 - Monographs
 - Academic articles and papers, pamphlets, annual reports (unbound or not traditionally bound published materials)
 - LGBTQ2+ Serials
 - Zines, newsletters, calendars, magazines, reoccurring publications

- **James Fraser Reference Library**
 - Fiction/Nonfiction
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- **Art and Artifact Collections**
 - Artifact Collection
 - T-Shirt Collection
 - Button Collection
 - Matchbook Collection
 - Art Collection

- **Reference Material**
 - Vertical Files
 - International, Canadian, and American research files, containing published materials
 - Newspaper Index
 - Newspaper clippings from LGBTQ2+ media

Anatomy of a fonds

The diagram on the right shows the different hierarchical arrangement structures that are used by archivists to organize fonds. Depending on the size of the fonds, the fonds structure can be relatively straightforward or more complex.

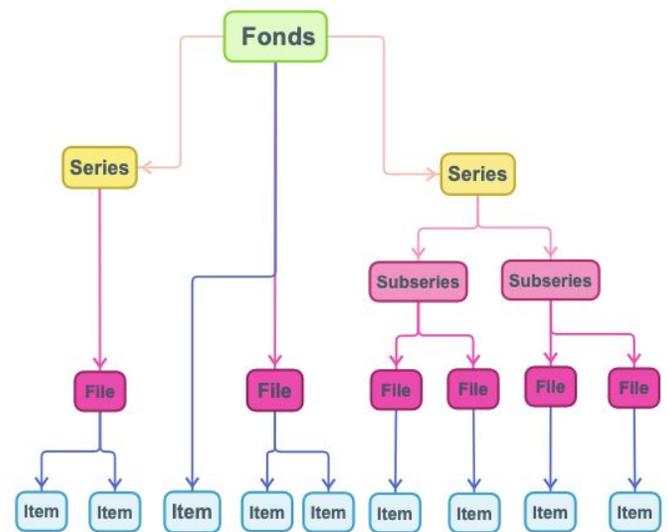
Fonds: An archival collection is referred to as a fonds. A fonds consists of a body of records created, used or collected by a single individual, group or corporate body through the course of their activities and functions. A fonds is arranged and described hierarchically.

Series: Group of records within a fonds that are linked by contextual information such as, function, activity, time period, administrative structure, or material type. Within a fonds, there can be several series of records. Common series found in a fonds are: administration, financial records, personal records, diaries, correspondence, and then more specific aspects of a person or organization's existence, like "political activism" or "naval career".

Subseries: Group of records subdivided within a series that are linked together intellectually but warrant their own groupings.

File: Smallest grouping of records within a fonds. Normally contains records filed together to reflect a particular activity, subject, material type or time period. Typically housed in a physical file folder.

Item: Lowest level of description in a fonds. This describes an individual record: correspondence, diaries and journals, a report, an individual artifact, an audited financial statement, a photograph, etc.



Finding Aids 101

Archival fonds are oftentimes unique, complex, and tricky to navigate. Through the process of appraisal, arrangement, and description, archivists transform an accumulation of records into a fonds that is accessible to researchers. Once an archivist has processed a fonds, a finding aid should be available to researchers. Designed to serve as a detailed descriptive roadmap to a fonds, finding aids facilitate research and provide contextual information on the creation and use of records. In order to make the most out of a visit to The ArQuives, it is helpful to understand how a fonds is structured, and be aware of what to look for in a finding aid.

Finding aids describe fonds hierarchically. They start with an overview of the fonds, then proceed to its components, series, subseries, file, and item. If a researcher is looking for a more detailed breakdown of the fonds, it is best to drill down to lower level descriptions. It is important to note that many fonds are not fully described to the file or even series level. Archivists are oftentimes forced to make difficult decisions on the amount of descriptive labour that should be allocated to a fonds. These decisions are generally informed by labour, resource, and time constraints.

Finding aids can range from item or file listings, to multi-level descriptions that reflect the relationship and context surrounding the use and creation of the records. In addition to simply listing the files that are available in the fonds, a variety of other components are included to provide more context and information on the source and context of the creation, use or collection of the records. Included below is a list of descriptive fields that researchers can expect to find in a finding aid. These fields are in accordance with the Canadian archival descriptive standard, The Rules for Archival Description (RAD). The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but to highlight some of the important elements in a finding aid.

- *Administrative History/Biographical Sketch*
 - Provides basic background information on the corporate body or individual responsible for the use, creation or collection of the records
 - Can expect to find details on the corporate body's history, activities, function
 - For an individual, one can expect to find information on their occupation, significant accomplishments, places of work or residence, date and place of birth and death

- Will not provide an exhaustive history of the creator, but will try to illuminate the context of the records in the fonds
- *Custodial History*
 - Provides the history of custody of the records indicating whether the records have been transferred between multiple people or institutions over time
 - Helps establish the authenticity and integrity of records, whether they have been changed, rearranged or marked up before arriving to their current institution
- *Immediate Source of Acquisition*
 - Provides details on the immediate donor of the records, the date, and method of acquisition, as well as the donor's relationship with the records
- *Scope and Content*
 - Can provide information on the type of functions and activities that led to the creation/use of records, the relationship between the records, their documentary form, subject matter, how the records have been organized
- *Dates*
 - Provides the dates of creation of the records.
 - Date ranges are generally inclusive, so there aren't necessarily records included from each year listed in the given date range.
 - If the dates are not listed or evident to the archivist, a date will provided as an approximation, which is indicated by a square bracket or circa (ca.) date
- *Restrictions on Access*
 - Provides information on any restrictions placed on the use of the records, publication of information pulled from the records or dates from which restrictions will be lifted
 - Restrictions can be placed on records for a number of reasons: donor restrictions, restrictions placed by archivist or restrictions due to preservation concerns
- *Extent/Physical Description*
 - Provides the physical details or dimensions of the records included at that level of description
 - Indicates the media types of archival material included in the unit, such as textual records, photographs, posters, artifacts, etc.
 - Knowing the extent will help researchers plan their visit and research time
- *Arrangement*

- Provides information on how records have been organized by the creator or the archivist.
- Notes whether the records have been left in their original order or whether the archivist has had to reorganize or make changes to the classification scheme to facilitate the use of the records
- *Terms of Use*
 - Provides information about the owner of the records, and/or how records may be used or published about based on copyright information
- *Conservation*
 - Provides notes on any conservation treatments used to slow down deterioration of records or improve their condition

FAQs: Preparing for a visit to The ArQuives - information to know in advance

- Conduct preliminary research to help you develop and narrow your research inquiries. This can be done through using online resources, and coming with some key names of people, organizations, events, movements, or concepts.
- The ArQuives charges researcher fees to access materials, check out the fees and pay online here: <https://arquives.ca/clga-collections/research-services/>
- Find out what the archives holds by looking in our online database. Use the available tools and guides that archivists have prepared to help you navigate their holdings - ie. databases and finding aids
 - Because fonds can contain thousands of items, archivists cannot list everything in the collection. Think creatively when looking for material. Use a variety of search terms, consider searching with out-of-date language if the records are older
- Archives *will not* have everything you may be expecting to find
- Archivists will not be responsible for doing your research for you and *will not* know everything about the collections
- Request material that is relevant to your research questions before your planned visit
 - Most of the archival records are housed offsite, it may take up to a week to retrieve your request
 - Reference volunteers on duty will not be able to provide everything you want should you walk in without at least a weeks notice
 - Archival research is time consuming, you may not get through all your requested materials in one trip

- Become familiar with The ArQuives' policies and procedures regarding reproduction, copyright, handling of material, etc.
 - Consider that not all archival materials are donated to the archives with the consent of the creator, or the person written about, displayed, or featured. Consider third-party privacy when publishing (whether under Fair Dealing or not) particularly when it comes to photographs and correspondence.
- If you request A/V materials you may not be able to listen or watch them immediately, depending on the physical state of the media. Due to budget limitations, any costs associated with the digitization will be the responsibility of the researcher.
- Take thorough citations while you work - including file number/reference code, in case you need to refer back to the records or cite them. Archivists will not be able to double check file reference numbers for you once you leave.
- You may take snapshots with your cell phone camera of most materials for reference purposes while doing research. Please consult an archivist to be sure.