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of Ontario

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THE THRILL
OF DISCOVERY

LE FRISSON
DE LA DÉCOUVERTE

Shifting Paradigms – creating more equitable and inclusive practices at the Archives of Ontario

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Ontario 

Who We Are

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Collect



Preserve



Promote



Make Available



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What We Have

- Ontario Government Records
- Private Records



Our Collections by the Numbers

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- 158,000 metres of textual records (286 CN Towers!)
- 6.6 million photographs
- More than 318,000 architectural plans
- Over 113,000 maps
- 39,000 hours of sound and moving image recordings
- Approximately 24 TB of digital records
- Around 2,700 works of art
- More than 84,000 library items



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Diversity in Practice: Questioning What We Do

- What role can the AO play in promoting diversity and inclusion?
- How well are all the people that call Ontario home represented in our holdings?
- How can we adjust our practices to reflect emerging expectations of citizens and community groups from government information-related services?
- How can we collaborate and work with other repositories in answering these questions?



Steps Towards Shifting the Paradigm

- Working with Indigenous communities / supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action*
- Engaging with Ontario's ethno-cultural communities / reimagining our role in developing stories about Ontario and its people
- Developing a policy to govern our approach to archival description
- Putting our collections in places where people can find them / AO's work with GLAM Wiki
- Supporting projects with similar goals

- Outreach starts at home: identify relevant materials in our collection and how to make them more publicly accessible.
- 'Finding Multiculturalism and Ethno-Cultural Communities Records' Research Guide
 - 52 government record series identified
 - 28 private fonds identified
- Submission of the Alvin McCurdy fonds to the Canadian Memory of the World Register
- Rethink GOVERNMENT Records as COMMUNITY Records
- Review restrictions policies on relevant government record series.
- Digital engagements – web archiving, digitization priorities.
- Considering practicum opportunities

- Not one size fits all and we don't have all the answers

- Pro-active outreach activities and conversations with other archives, scholars and community activists
- Relationship over custodianship: focus on developing and strengthening long term relationships rather than on acquisition of records
- Rethinking how we define provincial significance and adjusting our practices accordingly
- Developing a province-wide initiative to capture/map the ethno-cultural collection focuses across archives in Ontario
 - Public benefit – centralized database of all relevant information.
 - Archives institutional benefit – awareness can help with donation offers and assist researchers

- Principles and practical guidelines to govern our approach to describing archival records
- Major focus on equity and inclusion, with themes falling under two main categories:
 - Improving how we describe underrepresented people and communities
 - Valuing external voices and perspectives so people and communities can ‘describe themselves’

Improving our descriptions

- Respectful representation and language
- Enhanced discoverability
- Multidimensional description and expanded concept of provenance
- Transparency and accountability
- Accessibility

Listening to external voices

- Acknowledging subjectivity and limitations of our knowledge
- Participatory description

Description as an iterative process



Moving into New Spaces

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GLAM WIKI



Learn more:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:GLAM



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Our GLAM Wiki Page

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Archives of Ontario GLAM Page [edit]

Welcome to the Archives of Ontario's GLAM [i] Wiki page! The Archives of Ontario is the largest provincial archives in Canada and a premier source of information about the history of the land we now call Ontario and its people.

Here you'll find information about how the Archives of Ontario is enhancing its presence in the Wikimedia ecosystem by sharing digital materials on Wikimedia Commons [i], encouraging editors to use our resources for writing articles and improving metadata, and other forms of collaboration.

We'd love to hear from you! Please send an email to reference@ontario.ca or leave suggestions on the talk page about what kinds of collections you'd like to see uploaded to the Commons, how you've been using the images, and how the Archives might collaborate with the Wikipedia community to enhance the value of our collections and share the extraordinary stories contained in our records.


Click here for a complete gallery of images [i] available in the Wikimedia Commons from the Archives of Ontario's collections.

Projects [edit]

2020 Bulk Uploads [edit]

For its first batch of bulk uploads, the Archives of Ontario decided to feature visual records from collections in the [public domain](#) that showcase diverse subjects and record types.

- Photographs from the Alvin D. McCurdy fonds [i]
 - This collection features more than 80 uploaded images collected by Alvin D. McCurdy. Many images date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries and document the social history of the Black community of Amherstburg, Ontario. These images were selected for upload because they have been previously digitized by the Archives of Ontario and are an important resource documenting Black history in Ontario.
- Photographs from the Bartle Brothers fonds [i]
 - This collection features 40 uploaded images taken by professional travelling photographers, Simon Peter Bartle and Herman Arthur Bartle from 1895 to 1910. These images were selected for upload because they have been previously digitized by the Archives of Ontario and document life of Stormount and Glengarry Counties, including portraits of local residents.



Woman holding a child, [between 1900 and 1920], Alvin D. McCurdy fonds [i] (10024828)



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Bulk Uploads to the Wikimedia Commons

The screenshot shows the Wikimedia Commons interface for the category "Images from Archives of Ontario - F 2076 Alvin D. McCurdy fonds". The page title is "Category:Images from Archives of Ontario - F 2076 Alvin D. McCurdy fonds". Below the title, there is a description of the fonds: "A selection of images from the Alvin D. McCurdy fonds, held at the Archives of Ontario. These images are from Series F 2076-106; Alvin D. McCurdy's photographs, which consists of photographic material collected by Alvin McCurdy. Most of the older photographs were given to McCurdy, a known collector of Black history, by family, friends and acquaintances. McCurdy used some of these photographs to supplement his literary work. The series includes early views of Amherstburg and its surroundings. Also represented are many families and social organizations in the Amherstburg area. Within the collection description "local" or "Amherstburg area" are terms which include southern Ontario and northern United States including areas near Lake Michigan, Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair. These areas encompass Windsor, Essex County, Ohio (Cedar), and Michigan (Cedar)."

The page displays a grid of 87 image thumbnails, each with a file name and size. The thumbnails are arranged in rows and columns. The first row contains 10 thumbnails, the second row contains 10, the third row contains 10, the fourth row contains 10, the fifth row contains 10, the sixth row contains 10, the seventh row contains 10, the eighth row contains 10, the ninth row contains 10, and the tenth row contains 10. Each thumbnail is accompanied by a small caption and file information.

On the right side of the page, there is a sidebar for "Alvin D. McCurdy fonds [Hide]". It contains information about the fonds, including the inventory number (F 2076), start time (1000), end time (1000), and official website. There is also a "Good pictures" button and a "Help" link.

- 20/21 Bulk Uploads
- Uploads from 10 collections
- Photographs, documentary art, posters
- In total, ca. 3,000 images



Early Success & Next Steps



Highlights:

- First upload in June 2020
- 1.4 million image views during 2020/2021 fiscal year
- Most viewed image: 191K+ views

Stay Safe and Thanks



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