



Documenting Canadian Society

Library and Archives Canada 2016–2019 Acquisition Strategy

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1. Executive summary

The 2016–19 Acquisition Strategy of Library and Archives Canada (LAC) describes how the institution intends to focus its evaluation and acquisition efforts over the coming three years in the areas of published heritage, Canadian government records, and the acquisition of private archives, so as to document the evolution of modern Canadian society.

The Acquisition Strategy was developed taking into account our obligations under the *Library and Archives of Canada Act*, the principles identified in the 2016 review of the Evaluation and Acquisition Policy Framework (available upon request, soon on the Web), an in-depth analysis of the current state of LAC's collections and national and international issues that characterize Canada today. The work was carried out through a series of internal discussions and consultations with our partners in the Canadian archives and libraries network, as well as with members of our Acquisitions Advisory Committee.

Acquisitions will be selected holistically to allow documentation of developments in the various areas of activity throughout the country. Selections will also be based on strategic choices resulting from our analyses: Aboriginal peoples, regional diversity in Canada, cultural diversity, Francophone culture, minorities, and gender issues.

The primary purpose of acquisition is to document whatever constitutes the Canadian experience, regardless of the storage format. LAC also constantly gauges the challenges the digital revolution poses as well as the potential the latter represents in terms of accessibility.

2. Foundations of the Acquisition Strategy

2.1 *Library and Archives of Canada Act*

Under the *Library and Archives of Canada Act* LAC has a specific mandate to acquire and preserve Canadian documentary heritage and make it accessible to “current and future generations.” The Act contains specific provisions that facilitate carrying out this mandate, in particular, legal deposit of Canada's published heritage, the authority given to the Librarian and Archivist respecting the disposal and preservation of official Government of Canada documents, the acquisition of private archives and web resources. Cooperation with other Canadian memory institutions is an integral aspect of the institution's legislative mandate.

2.2 *Evaluation and Acquisition Policy Framework*

In 2016, LAC reviewed its Evaluation and Acquisition Policy Framework. The Framework sets out five guiding principles underlying its evaluation and acquisition activities:

- national importance
- collaborative arrangements with other memory institutions
- representativeness of Canadian society

- staff expertise
- complementarity

Documents deemed to have national importance are those that bear witness to the Canadian experience (federal or Canada-wide), those that have influenced the development of Canada, those that have a broad national scope, those that have or have had an impact on trends and events in the country, and those that illustrate Canada's contribution to and perspectives on international trends and events. Recognizing that other cultural heritage institutions may also acquire documents of national importance as a result of their own mandates, LAC collaborates with these institutions to ensure that Canada's documentary heritage is acquired by the most appropriate institution. In a broader context, our aim is to develop a collection that is representative of Canadian society and its experience, whether at home or abroad. In this respect, when making decisions on acquisition, the institution takes into account the country's research needs as well as any issues related to long-term preservation. Collaboration with other memory institutions takes on special relevance in this respect.

2.3 Research, analysis and consultation

2.3.1 Excellent knowledge of the current collection

The current Acquisition Strategy is based primarily on our experts' in-depth knowledge of the state of the collection today. The collection has been built over 140 years and is a priceless national asset. It comprises millions of text documents and millions of maps, plans, photographs, audio and video recordings, and other records. The records are available in various analogue and digital formats. To continue developing the collection, our experts analyze its primary characteristics on a regular basis. This allows them to identify the segments of the Canadian experience that are well documented in the collection as well as the areas where the documentation needs some special attention in the short and medium terms. LAC has also taken into account the different trends currently defining the way Canadians use and share documentary heritage—through social networks, for example—and the type of digital information that is universally accessible through the Internet.

2.3.2 Internal and external consultation

The current Acquisition Strategy is the result of drafts that were first discussed by the institution's staff and senior management. Eager to obtain external feedback as well, the institution consulted members of its Stakeholders Forum in 2015, and, more recently, its Acquisitions Advisory Committee, in 2016. Each of these steps yielded comments and suggestions, many of which are included in this document. As we implement our Acquisition Strategy, we intend to work closely with these stakeholders in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues affecting modern Canadian society.

3. 2016–2019 Acquisition Strategy

This document is intended to be a tool for communicating with archival institutions, libraries, government and professionals, partners and institutions that are also tasked with preserving documentary memory, as well as the general public. Above all, however, the Acquisition Strategy is the primary tool the institution will rely on to guide the work of its experts. We intend to adapt it to the realities of Canadian society over time. It will be applied in the medium term, i.e., from 2016 to 2019, and will be evaluated as we progress, with a revision due to take place in 2019.

To achieve our mandate, acquiring, processing and preserving documents from all sources—published, governmental, private and Web-based—are paramount. These processes are based on records' historical value, irrespective of the format on which they are stored. However, certain non-text formats will continue to feature prominently in specific areas targeted by the collection process: photography, audiovisual records, etc.

In developing the collection, we take into consideration the increasing tendency within our societies to create and store information digitally. The institution is increasing its capacity and expertise in this regard in order to ensure the long-term availability of digital records that are worth acquiring, processing and preserving for the future.

When information is available in both analogue and digital formats, our preference will be to acquire the digital version, which is an exceptional medium for showcasing, sharing and providing access to records. In addition, LAC will try to obtain acquisition-related metadata to facilitate processing, access and preservation.

3.1 *General acquisition strategies*

To ensure continuity, LAC will continue to acquire records by using general strategies designed to document five major aspects of Canadian life. These were chosen by taking into consideration categories in common use in the humanities: Canada on the world stage; policy and governance; the economy; society; and culture.

3.1.1 *Canada on the world stage*

This section focuses on international trade, diplomacy, North American relations, security, and international engagement and development.

LAC will continue to document relations between the federal government and foreign countries, looking, for example, at the work of ambassadors as well as that of international development organizations and Canadian humanitarian projects in developing countries. Using records from individuals, organizations and institutions within the Canadian government and beyond, we will document the role of Canada on the world stage.

In the area of safety and security, our acquisitions will document activities by federal departments responsible for defence, security and intelligence, as well the activities of military personnel themselves. Specifically, this includes acquiring records on the

activities, administration and organization of today's Canadian Armed Forces and, at the same time, using information retrieval to enhance collections on the French and British entities that preceded them.

Over the next few years, acquisitions will focus mainly on World War II, the Korean War, peacekeeping activities, and contemporary military operations. We will endeavour to identify records dealing with the personal experiences of military personnel, such as the lives of soldiers returning to the country and the effect military service has on their lives. We will also document the contribution of other Canadians who were directly affected by military deployments and those who participated therein in their capacity as journalists, photojournalists, authors, artists and activists. Contributions from private Canadian businesses working in the military arena will also be documented.

3.1.2 Policy and governance

Political institutions, which are the foundation of Canadian democracy, state administration, governance, and political engagement are paramount considerations in LAC's approach to acquisitions.

Relations between the federal government and Aboriginal peoples are a key factor of Canadian governance. Our collections already do a good job of documenting this historic relationship and all of the work in the past several decades in the area of land claims. Our acquisitions in the coming years will document further developments in this area.

We will continue to acquire records relating to contributions by individuals working in Canadian politics and institutions responsible for governance. Particular attention will be given to institutions and individuals in whom legislative, executive and judicial powers are invested. Documents include personal, political and ministerial records of national importance produced by federal politicians, prime ministers, ministers, their staff and federal political parties. Other records to be included are those of senior officials occupying key government positions or in charge of federal agencies during critical events or fundamental changes of direction, those of Supreme Court and Federal Court judges engaged in matters of national importance, and those of past or recent parliamentary affairs officers.

LAC will also acquire records from governors general and some of their staff. Our acquisitions will document the administration of justice and the role of various federal central agencies including Treasury Board Secretariat and the Department of Finance. The evolution of intergovernmental affairs will also be documented.

LAC's acquisitions will focus on political activists, lobby groups and events that have had an effect on Canadian public life. Key events such as federal elections and cabinet shuffles provide ideal opportunities for engaging extensively in proactive acquisition activities.

3.1.3 *The economy*

This component includes: employment and income; the environment; innovation and knowledge; and finance.

We will continue to develop the collection by acquiring, from Canadian government institutions, documents related to industry, regional economic development, infrastructure, the environment, the Arctic and transportation. We will also document changes in federal government policies and legislation, as well as their effect on the economy, the scientific community and the environment.

The institution's efforts will also focus on acquiring documents from private businesses, individuals, lobby groups and institutions involved in research, technological development, the creation of private enterprises, and national and international outreach.

3.1.4 *Society*

Through our acquisitions we will continue to document the Canada's development as a society. This entails acquiring records from government and private entities, as well as from individuals working in a wide range of areas such as Aboriginal community development, cultural diversity, human rights, immigration, social activism and social movements, feminism and women's movements, children and the family, health and well-being, sports, religious and spiritual life, education, intellectual life and learning, journalism and communications, along with social purpose organizations.

The institution will also continue to highlight individuals and organizations that have a major impact on the life of Canadians, whether nationally or internationally. These include Aboriginal leaders and interest groups, individuals and groups from ethnic and cultural communities that have been associated with immigration over the past fifty years, such as the South and East Asian, African, Caribbean, and Middle Eastern communities. Also included are journalists who have influenced national public and political debates, as well as individuals and groups whose records relate to concerns about social justice issues, such as the environment, victims' rights, wrongful convictions, the rights of the disabled, sexual minority rights, reproductive rights, and the right to die. We will also look at significant issues and trends in the world of sports, such as the Paralympic movement and Canada's contribution to traditional and emerging sports.

3.1.5 *Culture*

The Canadian identity is largely defined by those who shape cultural evolution in this country. They include artists, musicians, authors, painters, actors, dancers, poets, photographers and the like, as well as the individuals, institutions and organizations supporting these creative minds. Our acquisitions will continue to document their contributions of national importance.

We will, for example, increase acquisition efforts to document such things as new styles of popular music, traditional music and the oral traditions of Aboriginal and multicultural communities, and multidisciplinary art projects. We will look at cultural contributions by minority groups and the emergence of new trends, such as the green building movement.

We will also give consideration to the important role the Canadian government plays in the development of arts and culture in Canada through various institutions that support and develop artistic and cultural programs.

3.2 Specific acquisition strategies

Development of the collection will focus on the different spheres we have outlined, with particular attention being paid to important issues facing the country. A large part of our acquisitions will relate to these specific targets to ensure the collection is representative of today's Canada. These targets were identified through research and consultations carried out both inside the institution and externally. They are: Aboriginal peoples, regional diversity, cultural diversity, Francophone culture, minority voices, and gender issues.

3.2.1 Aboriginal peoples

The development of Canada's Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities raises issues of fundamental importance for modern Canadian history. The Canadian government is committed to new relationships with Aboriginal peoples, as evidenced by the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the management of land claims and the establishment of the inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. We will work with national Aboriginal organizations to ensure our collections properly reflect their contribution to Canada's development.

3.2.2 Regional diversity: Atlantic, Western and Northern Canada

To improve the current collection, LAC will join forces with, while respecting the interests of, other archival institutions to document creative forces, events, images and productions of national importance that reflect the regions and groups outside of central Canada.

3.2.3 Cultural diversity

The heritage of immigrant communities and the multiculturalism found in long-established communities throughout the country are the building blocks of Canadian society. We will make a priority of strengthening the voices of cultural groups, especially those less the collection and the various areas in which collection takes place have tended to overlook.

3.2.4 Francophone culture

Official bilingualism, the role of Francophone artists in Quebec and other provinces, and debates on Canadian duality, are central to Canadian history. We will make a priority of acquiring documents from French-language archives in various areas targeted by our collection efforts, in collaboration with other archival institutions, while ensuring the interests of the latter are respected.

3.2.5 *Minority voices*

One of the important roles of memory institutions is to ensure that viewpoints that are sometimes overlooked in the popular media are reflected in the documentation of a society's development. One of our acquisition priorities will be to strengthen the presence of marginalized voices in the various components of the collection.

3.2.6 *Gender issues*

Female and male roles are constantly being redefined, with even the existence of clear definitions being called into question. Specific gender-related issues are transforming society and human relations. When developing its collection, LAC, like all other memory institutions, must pay attention to these changes.

4. Conclusion

To determine acquisition priorities for 2016–2019, LAC examined the evolutionary nature of history, of Canadian society, and of the environment in which today's documentary resources are generated, in order to identify which resources may be acquired and which are more likely to be lost if we do not take timely action to acquire, process and preserve them.

To continue developing its collection, LAC will work with other institutions in the archives and libraries network, in accordance with the principles set out in the Evaluation and Acquisition Policy Framework in the specific areas described in this Acquisition Strategy. This will allow us to ensure that Canada's documentary heritage is preserved in the country's various regions and that it is accessible to Canadians and anyone who is interested in the Canadian experience.