Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre

Archives Collecting Plan

Updated June 2026



Archives Collecting Plan Overview

This Archives Collecting Plan outlines the scope, priorities, and criteria guiding the acquisition of archival records relating to Bruce County. It supports responsible, strategic collecting that strengthens existing holdings, addresses identified gaps and ensures the long-term preservation of records documenting the County's social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental history.

BRUCE COUNTY
museum & cultural centre

33 Victoria Street North,
Southampton, Ontario N0H 2L0
1-866-318-8889, brucemuseum.ca

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Background and Purpose

The Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre (BCM&CC) has collected archival records since its opening in 1955, with the purpose of preserving and providing access to materials that document Bruce County's heritage. The Bruce County Archives was established in 1979, following the donation of archival holdings from the Bruce County Historical Society.

The Archive is used by municipalities, County staff, lawyers, teachers and students, authors, journalists, archaeologists, genealogists and individuals seeking information on a variety of topics, including community histories, property history, family history, government relations, industrial history, miliary, marine, natural, education, and social history.

The mandate of the Bruce County Archives, as set out in County of Bruce By-law 3652 (1998), is "to ensure the preservation of 'archival value' documents and records pertaining, or of indirect significance, to the political or social history and developments of the County of Bruce" and to act as records manager for "those records which possess administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential and/or information value which justify their permanent preservation and are no longer of any use to the creator."

The purpose of this Collecting Plan is to complement by-law 3652 and the BCM&CC Collections Management Policy, revised December 17, 2025, and to define criteria for accepting archival materials that will strengthen the existing Collection and identify the criteria for items that should not be collected. This Plan supersedes the 2016 Collecting Plan with updated 2020 Schedules.

Collecting Mandate

Collections Management Policy

This Archives Collecting Plan complements BCM&CC's Collections Management Policy, which establishes the institution's overarching collecting mandate:

> The BCM&CC will collect two- and three-dimensional items that portray and interpret the social, cultural, Indigenous, economic, government, military, marine and natural history of what is now known as Bruce County.

The Policy further identifies factors considered when evaluating potential donations, including, but not limited to:

- Legal obligations or constraints
- Donor restrictions
- Legal ownership

- Indigenous rights of ownership, possession, access and use
- Dangers to staff, patrons or other items within collections
- Resources to safely store and care for an item
- Collection redundancies

In general, materials must be in stable condition and require minimal conservation. Items in poor condition will not be accepted unless they are rare, unique, or of exceptional significance.

Indigenous Cultural Belongings

The Collections Management Policy also outlines BCM&CC's approach to the acquisition and stewardship of Indigenous cultural belongings. The Archives may accept indigenous cultural belongings donated by Indigenous individuals who have clear ownership and provenance connected to the items. The Archives does not collect Indigenous Cultural Belongings from non-Indigenous individuals or items with unclear or inadequate provenance. In such cases, potential donors may be referred to the Saugeen Ojibway Nation Environmental Office (SON EO) for guidance and consultation.

The Archives will assist with the process of repatriation of any Indigenous cultural belongings that may already held in the Collection as laid out in:

- the Bruce County Indigenous Reconciliation Framework and
- the Bruce County Saugeen Anishnaabek Reconciliation Pathway and Action Plan.

In so doing, the Archives will follow the direction of SON EO and recommendations in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, the Canadian Museum Association's Moved to Action: Activating UNDRIP in Canadian Museums report, and the Steering Committee on Canada's Archives' Reconciliation Framework: The Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce.

Descriptive Language Statement Concerning Sensitive Items

BCM&CC's Descriptive Language Statement acknowledges that archival materials may contain culturally sensitive content, including harmful language, stereotypes, discriminatory representations, and records reflecting historical and ongoing injustices. The statement outlines how such materials are described, managed, and made accessible to researchers. The Museum welcomes and considers public feedback to identify materials within the Collection that may require additional contextualization or sensitivity review.

Collecting Plan Synopsis

Strengths of the Collection

The Bruce County Archives holds a well-established collection of private and government records, providing researchers with integrated access to materials that document the political, social, cultural, economic, and environmental history of the County. The co-location of municipal, County, organizational, business, and personal records is a significant strength, supporting comprehensive research across sectors and time periods.

The Collection's family and personal history material represent an area of strength, with extensive holdings of compiled family histories, and to a lesser extent diaries, correspondence, photographs, and other personal records. These records document everyday life, work, migration, landownership, and community participation, and form a foundation for genealogical and social history research. Partnership with the Bruce County Genealogical Society further enhances access to genealogical resources and local family history.

Collection strength in business and industrial history, lies primarily around manufacturing, with comprehensive collections of records concerning two furniture factories in Chesley, and lesser materials representing other manufacturing initiatives across the County. Late 1800s and early 1900s agriculture is represented through ledgers, diaries, photographs, and books as well.

Government records represent a significant strength of the Collection. The Archives holds extensive pre-amalgamation records for all eight lower-tier municipalities (32 former townships, towns, and villages) including council minutes, by-laws, tax rolls and other financial and governance records. These records provide comprehensive documentation of local governance, decision-making, land use, taxation, and community development across Bruce County. Transfers of County departmental records designated for permanent retention further strengthen holdings related to planning, infrastructure, service delivery, and environmental management. Collectively, these records ensure long-term preservation of the administrative and historical evidence of local government and support transparency, accountability, and public research.

The Archives possesses strong education and school history holdings, including school registers, administrative records, class photographs, yearbooks, and reminiscences. These materials support research into student experiences, educational administration, and the development of schooling across the County.

Military history is a particularly robust collecting area, strengthened through long-standing collection initiatives. Holdings include original and reproduction documents,

photographs, ephemera, and oral histories documenting the experiences of Bruce County service members and the home front. The *Bruce Remembers* database significantly extends access to information about local military service beyond the physical archival holdings.

Visual materials represent a strength of the Collection. The Archives holds extensive photographic, negative, postcard, and moving image collections documenting people, places, industries, events, and landscapes across Bruce County. Of particular significance are three large negative collections depicting the Kincardine area (1874–1922), Saugeen Shores and area (1950–1979), and broader County-wide subjects (1920s – 2002). The postcard collection, comprising hundreds of identified images, further enriches documentation of community development and tourism.

Collectively, these strengths demonstrate the Archives' long-standing commitment to preserving a wide range of record types, creators, and historical themes from across all municipalities. This strong foundation supports future collecting that addresses identified gaps, underrepresented histories, and emerging priorities outlined throughout this Plan.

Vision for Future Collecting

The Bruce County Archives' collecting framework is intentionally broad to support the discovery, preservation, and interpretation of a wide range of histories that reflect the full complexity and history of life in Bruce County. The Archives collects records dating from the earliest periods of residence to the present day; however, future collecting will place increasing emphasis on post-1950 materials, as the current Collection is disproportionately weighted toward records created before 1950. This strategic shift supports more balanced temporal representation and ensures that recent and contemporary experiences are not under-documented.

The Archives is committed to preserving the documentary heritage of businesses, governments, organizations, families, and individuals from all municipalities within the County of Bruce. Records are collected in their original formats, whether analog or digital, to retain evidential integrity and contextual value. Preserving these records is essential to safeguarding the social, cultural, economic, political, environmental, and creative history of the County, supporting accountability, community memory, research, and public access now and in the future.

A core priority of this Plan is the proactive strengthening of documentation relating to underrepresented, misrepresented, and historically marginalized people, communities, and experiences within Bruce County history and the Archives' existing holdings. Collecting efforts will seek to address gaps related to cultural diversity, gender, geography, occupation, language, faith, and social experience, ensuring that

the archival record more accurately and equitably reflects Bruce County residents' experiences over time.

The Archives also prioritizes documentation of cross-sector innovation and economic development associated with Bruce County. While early agriculture, manufacturing, and resource-based industries remain important areas of historical focus, particular emphasis will be placed on post-1950 developments and sectors that are currently underrepresented in the Archival Collection. These include, but are not limited to, agriculture, energy production, manufacturing, technology, and tourism as well as emerging professional and service industries.

Across all collecting areas, the Archives identifies the following overarching collection opportunities:

- **Improving geographic balance** by strengthening representation from municipalities, communities, and regions that are currently less well documented.
- **Expanding cultural and social representation** through the acquisition of records from diverse cultural, linguistic, faith-based, LGBTQ2+, and newcomer communities, and through materials documenting women's histories and non-traditional occupations.
- **Enhancing documentation of organizations and community groups**, particularly those serving multicultural communities, sports and recreation, agriculture, health, and social services.
- **Strengthening post-1960 business and industry, and post-1999 government records**, to better reflect contemporary governance, economic activity, and service delivery.
- **Addressing gaps in thematic coverage**, including environmental change, climate-related impacts, and contemporary community life.
- **Expanding visual and audio-visual records** from underrepresented communities, occupations, and time periods, with an emphasis on well-documented contemporary photography, video, and digital media.

Most archival acquisitions will continue to result from donation offers from members of the public, with the Archives receiving materials from approximately 100 donors annually. As resources permit, the Archives may undertake targeted outreach or limited active collecting initiatives aligned with the priorities outlined in this Plan. Education and engagement with donors, organizations, and stakeholders remains essential to encourage donations that align with identified priorities.

Archival Collecting Areas and Analysis

The Bruce County Archives collects items of relevance to the County of Bruce, including (and not limited to) its:

- Cultural and social history, reflecting
    - cultural diversity
    - First Nations
    - clubs and organizations
    - communities
    - family and individuals
- Business & industrial history
- Government and political history
    - County
    - Municipal
    - Schools and Education
- Marine history
- Military history
- Natural history

These topics are reflected through records created by individuals, businesses, organizations, and government. Primary sources, original paper records of all kinds, art, photographs, and video of all kinds, as well as secondary sources including books and newspapers.

Cultural and Social History

These records document everyday life, social structures, and community relationships. This area of history encompasses a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, the history of family, labour, gender, social movements, communities, migration, the development of communities, cultural practices, leisure, recreation, and social life, family life, domestic life, rural life, education, and health and social services.

Diversity in the Collection

The Bruce County Archives values the perspectives of the many cultural backgrounds that make up the County. The Archives seeks to actively acquire materials that reflect the cultural richness and diversity of the people who have lived, worked, and built community within Bruce County, both historically and today.

Currently, many materials in the Collection (business, personal, organizational) were created or used primarily by residents of English, German, Irish, and Scottish descent,

representing the dominant cultures of the earliest non-Indigenous settlers in the area. The full of history of immigration to Bruce County is not represented in the Collection and is an area of priority collecting. The Archives is also committed to preserving and sharing stories of the LGBTQ2+ communities' history. Women's histories, particularly women working in roles historically dominated by men also remain underdeveloped in the Collection and would benefit from expansion, particularly from the 1940s to present-day.

Artifacts that tell stories reflecting all aspects of history of these groups (cultural, social, business, industry, etc.), will be considered for acquisition.

Collection Opportunities

The Archives welcomes donations from individuals, families, organizations, and communities whose cultural heritage is underrepresented in the current Collection. By broadening the cultural perspectives reflected in our holdings, we aim to ensure that the stories, traditions, and lived experiences of all community members are preserved for future generations. We also encourage donations that document communities or residents whose histories may have been overlooked or under-documented due to systemic barriers, racism, settlement patterns, or social inequities.

Materials reflecting cultural identity, migration stories, faith traditions, community celebrations, and everyday life are essential in creating an inclusive, equitable, and representative archival record.

We invite collaboration with, and donations from, community members, cultural groups, and organizations to preserve materials that celebrate cultural identity, heritage, faith traditions, and community life. Donations related to cultural practices, festivals, family histories, faith-based activities, immigration experiences, and community leadership are particularly welcome.

Examples of materials we welcome include, but are not limited to:

- Records documenting migration, settlement, and cultural adaptation
- Religious texts and faith-related materials from a wide range of traditions
- Personal reminiscences, oral histories, diaries, and letters describing cultural identity and community life
- Photographs, videos, and documents recording cultural gatherings, celebrations, and ceremonies
- Records from businesses, cultural associations, advocacy groups, and community organizations operated by or serving culturally diverse populations

First Nations

A limited portion of the Archives' holdings relating to Indigenous experiences and First Nations were created by Indigenous people. A larger proportion consists of copies of federal government records or secondary resources created by non-Indigenous researchers.

The Archives welcomes working collaboratively with Indigenous individuals, families, organizations, and nations, at their discretion, to support more accurate, respectful, and representative documentation of Indigenous histories within the Bruce County Archives.

The Archives welcomes materials that document the treaty relationship and the impacts of colonialism from an Indigenous perspective, as they relate to Saugeen Ojibway Nation. Materials that reflect local Indigenous culture, entrepreneurship, achievement, innovation, and community life are also welcomed. Indigenous cultural belongings may only be donated by Indigenous individuals who have clear ownership and provenance connected to the items, as described in the Indigenous Cultural Belongings section above.

The Archives cares for Indigenous Cultural belongings in alignment with the Collections Management Policy, Bruce County Indigenous Reconciliation Framework and Bruce County Saugeen Anishnaabek Reconciliation Pathway and Action Plan.

Clubs and Organizations History

The Bruce County Archives encourages donations of records created by local clubs, associations, and community organizations that document their purpose, activities, and contributions to community life. Records from these groups play an essential role in illustrating how residents have come together to socialize, advocate, serve, govern, create, and celebrate throughout Bruce County's history. They may include advocacy groups, agricultural organizations, community-based groups, leisure clubs, naturalist organizations, religious groups, service groups, recreation and sports organizations, service groups, special event committees, and other organizations and associations. Collecting records from these groups also served to record cultural histories of sports, leisure, music and performance.

Their records preserve evidence of community identity, volunteerism, shared interests, and collective action. The Archives seeks materials that reflect how these groups were established, how they evolved, and how they influenced the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

Records will be accepted when they have enduring historical value, including but not limited to:

- Founding documents, mission statements, and governance materials
- Records of membership, committees, and leadership
- Minutes, agendas, awards, and annual reports
- Financial records that provide insight into operations and sustainability
- Program descriptions, event files, and project reports
- Newsletters, brochures, websites, social media content, and communications with club members or the public
- Photographs, videos, or digital media documenting activities, programs, and community events (with accompanying identification)
- Publications, promotional materials, or commemorative items created by the organization

To ensure responsible stewardship of space and resources, the Archives generally does not accept:

- Routine administrative correspondence, memos, and general thank-you letters unless they shed unique light on organizational history
- Routine financial documents such as receipts, cheques, and bankbooks (except where they have contextual or design interest)
- Drafts, working notes, and duplicate materials
- Grant applications lacking outcome documentation
- Photographs or audiovisual materials with little or no contextual information
- Large or bulky display items such as plaques or mounted objects (digital photographs of such items may be accepted)

Collection Opportunities

17% of organizations significantly represented in the Collection served or operated in communities across the County. Other organizational records held by the Archives relate to organizations serving individual municipalities, with Saugeen Shores most strongly represented, followed by South Bruce Peninsula and Kincardine. To strengthen regional balance, the Archives particularly encourages donations from organizations operating in, and serving, other municipalities within the County.

Records from organization types currently underrepresented in the Collection, such as multicultural organizations, sports organizations, agricultural associations, Chambers of Commerce, and hospital auxiliaries, are also sought.

Family and Personal History

The Bruce County Archives welcomes donations of records that document the lives, lineages, experiences, and legacies of individuals and families who have lived in Bruce County. Personal and family records provide unique insight into the County's social,

cultural, and economic history and help preserve the voices and stories that shaped its communities.

The Bruce County Archives accepts donations of family and personal history materials capturing the everyday experiences of residents across different generations, backgrounds, and areas of Bruce County. These records support genealogical research, enrich community memory, and reflect the diversity of family structures, lived experiences, cultural traditions, occupations, and social contexts within the County.

Family Histories and Family Trees

The Archives encourages the donation of formally compiled family histories, genealogical booklets, and family trees that document family origins, migration stories, community involvement, and intergenerational relationships. These records provide valuable context that enhances understanding of the County's population over time and support researchers in tracing the development of local families.

Materials summarizing research, such as bound histories, articles, written narratives, or organized family tree charts, are preferred.

Working files consisting of loose handwritten research notes or collections of reproductions duplicated from online sources or other Archives, are generally not accepted, except in some circumstances where they serve as support and source material for articles and written narratives. The Archives has sufficient examples of genealogy methodology in the pre-digital age, consisting of working files reflected in the Belcher family fonds, Hilda Downey research collection, and Audrey Webster Underwood collection, and will not accept further working files for that purpose. Individuals wishing to preserve working files may wish to consult with the Bruce County Genealogical Society.

Certificates and Awards

Certificates such as baptisms, confirmations, professional qualifications, or cultural or religious milestones may be accepted, if accompanied by sufficient context and information about the relevant individuals, and when they help document the social, cultural, or faith-based history of Bruce County residents.

Birth, marriage, and death certificates may not be collected when certificates of the time are already well represented in the Collection, or the information is available through existing provincial registrations held on microfilm and/or through the Archives' Ancestry.ca subscription.

The Archives will not accept donated common congratulatory certificates, such as MP or MPP certificates of congratulations on birthdays and anniversaries unless they form part of a larger group or records reflecting a more comprehensive story of an

individual's life. Donors may consider offering copies of such certificates to the Bruce County Genealogical Society for inclusion in their surname collection.

Collection Opportunities

Certificates in languages other than English or representing under-documented cultural or religious groups are especially welcome when they contribute to greater cultural representation within the Collection.

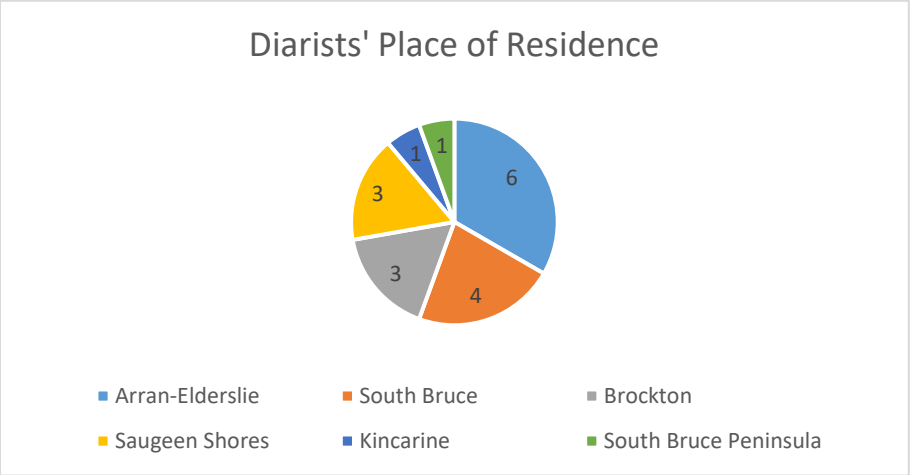
Diaries and Communications

The Archive encourages donations of diaries, letters, postcards, greeting cards, calling cards, and memoirs that reflect experiences across different communities and time periods. These materials offer firsthand accounts of daily life, personal relationships, work, travel, and community involvement. Donors are encouraged to provide biographical information about the author and the context in which the items were written.

Postcards will be evaluated based on both the historical value of the written message and/or the relevance of a local image depicted. Greeting and holiday cards will only be accepted when supported by clear context and provenance, and when similar examples from the same time are not already represented within the Collection.

To date, the personal diaries held in the Collection represent the lived experiences of white settlers and residents. 71% of diary writers identified as male; 29% as female.

As of 2026, the Collection includes personal (non-military) diaries written by residents of all municipalities, except for Township of Huron-Kinloss and Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula, as shown in the figure below:



Collection Opportunities

Materials from under-represented regions and from individuals whose stories are underrepresented—whether due to gender, occupation, cultural background, or social circumstances—are particularly welcome to ensure diverse representation in the Archives.

Each diary and letter are unique, and will generally be accepted into the Archives' Collection, provided they reflect life in Bruce County and are in legible and usable condition.

Financial and Legal Records

Personal financial records, such as account books, financial statements, ledgers, tax returns, and insurance policies, provide insight into household economies, patterns of work, land ownership, and the cost of living over time. These records support research into historical living conditions and economic trends within Bruce County.

Individual receipts or invoices are generally not accepted, except where they offer significant contextual or graphic design value (for example, printed graphic letterhead for a business not yet represented in the Collection).

The Archives welcomes donations of personal financial records when they are accompanied by sufficient context and relate to Bruce County households, businesses, or properties.

Legal records, such as contracts, wills, and court orders may also be accepted when they meaningfully document a person's lived experience in Bruce County.

Recipes & Cookbooks

Cookbooks and recipe collections, whether handwritten or published, offer insight into community identity, food traditions, and cultural heritage. They also document local events and fundraising activities.

The Archives prioritizes collection of cookbooks and recipes created by Bruce County residents. Cookbooks published outside the County may be accepted when they were used within the County, are in excellent condition, include clear context and provenance, and represent time periods or content not already well-documented in the holdings.

Collection Opportunities

While most lower-tier municipalities are represented in the Collection, with recipes or cookbooks used or created by their residents, there are currently no examples from the Township of Huron-Kinloss. Donations or recipes from that municipality, as well as cookbooks and recipes reflecting food cultures that are currently underrepresented in the Collection are especially encouraged, as they contribute to a more inclusive and representative record of life in Bruce County.

Scrapbooks and notices

The Archives accepts scrapbooks when they provide meaningful documentation of Bruce County people, places, organizations, or events. In addition to news clippings, scrapbooks may include photographs, certificates, tickets, dance cards, handwritten notes, and other original materials that contribute to the historical record.

Scrapbooks focused on a specific Bruce County organization, event, or topic will be considered for acquisition, provided the content is not redundant with materials already held in the Collection. Scrapbooks documenting subjects unrelated to Bruce County—such as the Royal Family or the Dionne Quintuplets—will generally not be accepted unless they directly support other Bruce County–related records within the same donation.

Scrapbooks containing only obituaries, memorial cards, birth notices and marriage notices will be referred to the Bruce County Genealogical Society for inclusion in their surname clipping collection. Newspaper obituaries and birth, wedding, anniversary announcements will also be referred to the Bruce County Genealogical Society, unless part of a larger family collection.

Scrapbooks organized without a clear theme are useful to researchers when accompanied by an index. Donors who are able and willing to provide indexing will be encouraged to do so.

The Archives advises donors not to create or reorganize scrapbooks specifically for donation purposes. Items are often best preserved outside scrapbook formats, and donors are encouraged to consult the Archives before assembling materials into albums.

Personal Photographs and Home Movies

Personal photographs and videos documenting identified family gatherings, community celebrations, local businesses, and significant events provide a vivid visual record of Bruce County life. The Archives welcomes photograph, film, and video materials that clearly depict people, places, and events in the County. See the Photographs, Picture Postcards and Videos section below for additional considerations.

Family History and Genealogy: Bruce County Genealogical Society Partnership

The Bruce County Archives partners with the Bruce County Genealogical Society (BCGS) to house and manage their library of material relevant to local genealogical research. The Archives house BCGS materials that reflect:

- Family histories and family trees containing references to Bruce County residents

- Surname clipping collection of newspaper birth, death, marriage and miscellaneous notices related to Bruce County residents
- Methodology relevant to genealogical research of Bruce County residents and their ancestors
- A selection of secondary sources reflecting immigration trends to Canada which include nationalities immigrating to Bruce County during time periods reflected in those sources.

To ensure responsible stewardship of space and resources, the Archives will not house BCGS materials that:

- Are duplicated in the BCM&CC collection
- Are primarily related to communities outside of Bruce County, regardless of whether Bruce County individuals have moved to those communities, including local histories and phone books.
- Are secondary resources related to general topics of immigration and emigration to Canada, which are duplicated in other online archives
- Contain tourism information related to countries from which residents have immigrated
- Contain information reflected in other resources in the Archives Collection or BCGS Library
- Consist of general, non-Bruce County specific, resource lists or genealogy research recommendations that are outdated or superseded

Business and Industrial History

Primary sources related to local businesses and industries are essential to documenting the economic, industrial, social, and cultural development of a region. These records provide evidence of how people worked, produced goods and services, organized labour, built livelihoods, and contributed to community life over time. More particularly, they document economic activity, shifts in the local economy, technological change, innovation, the evolution of production methods, entrepreneurship, management practices and decision-making processes.

The Archives holds records created by a variety of businesses including agricultural businesses and co-operatives, blacksmiths, foundries, furniture factories, general stores, hotels, jewelers, saw mills, textile factories, and other manufacturers, including those making bobbins for textile mills, brooms and brushes, hinges, plywood, and sashes and doors. Records held for these businesses and industries are not always complete; donations of additional records providing more information about business practices, services and production will be accepted.

Collection Opportunities

A wide range of historical and contemporary businesses, industries, and professional services remain underrepresented in the archival collection. The Bruce County Archives welcomes donations that document the activities, services, productivity, and community impact of businesses operating within Bruce County. Materials from businesses and industries established or active after 1960 are particularly encouraged to ensure comprehensive representation across time periods.

There is also an opportunity to collect more records reflecting the development and local impact of the significant nuclear industry in Bruce County, from the 1950s to present.

The Archives seeks to represent businesses and industries from all Bruce County municipalities, including

- **Industries** such as agriculture, lumber, construction, power, tourism, and those involved in manufacturing brushes, cement, doors and mouldings, equipment, furniture, hinges, lumber, plywood, salt, spools and bobbins, textiles, and those manufacturing other products.
- **Retail businesses** such as general and department stores, hardware and building supply stores, clothing and footwear retailers, furniture and appliance stores, pharmacies and drugstores, automotive dealerships and service stations and tourism-related retail, including gift shops, outfitters and seasonal vendors.
- **Personal and professional services,** such as those in the areas of beauty, health and wellness, financial, funeral, health, legal, photography, and technical services such as engineers and surveyors.

Some of the types of records accepted by the Bruce County Archives include those offering:

- **Operational & Strategic Insights**: Records such as constitutions, articles of incorporation, charters, by-laws, contracts, board meeting minutes, annual reports, licenses, permits, and select correspondence reveal governance structures as well as the decision-making processes and strategies that shaped the business.

- **Financial & Asset History**: Financial statements, ledgers, balance sheets, budgets, cashbooks, daybooks, sales records, insurance appraisals, stock certificates, and tax returns document financial status over time. Other records, such as leases and photographs and demonstrate use of land and facilities. (Bankbooks, cancelled cheques, and cheque books may be declined

where they duplicate information available in financial statements or other financial records.)

- **Innovation & Production**: Records and photographs detailing products and production workflow, research and development, patents, and technical drawings, show production methods, and how a company remained competitive through innovation and workflow.
- **Brand & Identity**: Historical marketing materials, logos, promotional novelties, and advertising campaigns document how a business built its reputation and connected with consumers.
- **Social & Economic Context**: Records, site and floor plans, and photographs related to employees, labour relations, and facilities shed light on the workforce and the business's impact on local communities and economy.

Donors providing business-related materials containing personal information will be asked to consider the provisions of applicable privacy legislation, including the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, and provide appropriate restriction instructions in the donation agreement. Materials to which access is restricted in perpetuity or for a period deemed by Archives staff to be beyond a reasonable limitation (such as 75 or more years) will not be accepted into the Archives.

Government and Political History

Government Records: County and Lower-Tier Municipal

The Archives is committed to working closely with County departments and lower-tier municipal partners to ensure that records of long-term historical value are transferred, preserved, and made accessible. The Archives encourages municipal offices to transfer records at regular intervals, in alignment with established retention schedules, ensuring their long-term preservation and accessibility. The transfer of municipal records ensures that the activities of local government remain transparent, that evidence of decisions is preserved, and that future generations can understand how their communities were shaped. These records also support administrative needs, legal requirements, and public research.

Records accepted are those designated by municipalities' records management programs (such as The Ontario Municipal Records Management System (TOMRMS)) either for permanent retention or subject to archival selection due to their historical value. Examples of these records those reflecting:

- **Council Considerations and Decisions** as reflected in By-laws, minutes, and reports to Council

- **Elections and Municipal Representatives,** reflected through promotional election materials, results and representative biographies.
- **Financial Operations** reflected in financial statements and audits, general ledgers and journals, and tax rolls.
- **Goals, Objectives and Accomplishments** reflected in reports and plans, such as annual reports, heritage conservation plans, housing plans, growth plans, forest management plans, mission statements, official plans, and strategic plans.
- **Changing Demographics** depicted in studies and records showing population details.
- **Economic, Agricultural, and Tourism Development** including plans and reports regarding strategies, projections, actions and results directed towards community improvement and the growth the economic base of the County and lower-tier municipalities, records regarding the development of agricultural growth and the tourism industry and efforts made to promote and encourage tourism, including brochures, maps, photographs, videos, and magazines.
- **Environmental Planning** including environmental studies with a long-range planning emphasis, storm drainage and flood control, parks and open spaces, water sustainability and conservation, pollution prevention and waste management planning. Site-specific developmental studies, plans, and archaeological assessments may also have historical context and value.
- **Residential Development** including reports, studies, and assessments of the need for affordable housing and related data, along with registered and reference plans and related studies.
- **Natural Resources Planning** including reports, studies and records regarding management and preservation of wetlands, areas of natural and significant interest, watercourses, forests, and other natural resources information.
- **Government Organization and Service Delivery** changes may be reflected in organizational charts and policies.
- **Public Relations** including recognition of significant anniversaries, reunions, and accomplishment through booklets, newsletters, news clippings, pamphlets, photographs, and videos. News releases may be preserved when reflecting a significant event, such as a pandemic.
- **Road Construction, Design and Planning** including reports, specifications, plans, and studies reflecting significant road and bridge construction or improvements. Some may include the use of new materials or technology. Traffic studies also provide statistics on changing road use trends.
- **Facilities Construction and Renovation** including consultant reports containing information of historic value about the use, location, appearance,

and condition of municipal buildings, as well as architectural and engineering drawings.

As of 2026, all eight lower-tier municipalities have transferred pre-amalgamation minutes, by-laws, and tax rolls for 31 pre-amalgamation townships, towns and villages. Five municipalities have also transferred some post-amalgamation records, such as minutes, by-laws and/or tax rolls.

Bruce County departments have also transferred records designated as permanent retention and/or select records designated as subject to archival selection.

Collection Opportunities

There is an opportunity for Bruce County to establish more regular transfers of records designated for permanent retention and those subject to archival selection, supporting their long-term preservation and public accessibility.

There is also an opportunity to formalize processes for the transfer of born-digital County records to ensure they are preserved, managed, and made accessible through the public Archives.

The Archives continues to accept both pre- and post- amalgamation records from lower-tier municipalities, as reflected above.

Government Records: Provincial and Federal Government Records

Land Records

The Archives holds land abstract books and land record copy books on long-term loan through Archives of Ontario. Original deeds of land were donated to the Archives by the Association for the Preservation of Ontario Land Registry Office Documents, a Canadian advocacy group and volunteer organization created in January 1997 to prevent the destruction of original, pre-1955 paper land registry documents in Ontario. Some of these materials are now also available online through the Government of Ontario's OnLand website.

Additional copies of deeds and mortgages offered by private donors will not be accepted where they duplicate Land Registry Office holdings, unless they directly relate to and provide contextual value for other donated materials.

Original land patents, sometimes labelled as various kinds of "Sale Grants" will continue to be accepted. Duplicate originals are generally held by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Sessional Papers

Sessional Papers are reports and documents tabled in the Legislative Assembly during a legislative session and are available at the Ontario Archives and on microfilm at University and other larger libraries. The Archives will collect Sessional Papers, or relevant excerpts, only when they contain substantive content directly related to Bruce County, as such references are not readily identifiable through copies held elsewhere.

Education and School History

The Archives collects education records that document student experiences and the development of education in Bruce County. These include government records such as historic school attendance registers, inspector reports, school board minutes and financial records reflecting the initiation and development of educational initiatives in the County. The Archives also collects materials that illustrate school life, including class photographs, yearbooks, reminiscences, and school histories.

Government records containing personal information are subject to the privacy provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

The Bluewater District School Board's transfer of registers, minute books and cash books is quite complete into the 1960s, with gaps due only to records not within their possession. The Archives also occasionally acquires School Board records through private donation and will continue to accept those when they are offered.

The Archives has not yet received these types of materials related to Bruce County schools associated with the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Boards, and would accept them should they be offered.

The Archives does not accept school textbooks and workbooks as outlined in the Book section below or homework samples and tests completed during time periods already represented in the Collection.

Marine History

From early trade routes to modern shipping, archival materials reveal how Lake Huron and Georgian Bay have influenced our communities, economies, and cultural identity. Information about navigation, business, community experiences, and the evolving relationship between people and the Great Lakes is reflected in many of the historical areas described above, such as business and industrial history, cultural and social history, and family and personal history.

Types of records collected include photographs, videos, logs and diaries written by ship captains and lighthouse keepers, vessel registers, business records, reports, nautical charts, drawings, plans, articles, family histories and reminiscences. Further

descriptions of these items is provided in this blog Navigating Bruce County's Marine Resources.

Collection Opportunities

The Archives continues to collect materials reflecting water-based business and industry, including more recent, 20th and 21st century experiences on the lakes.

For information about the Ontario Marine History & Underwater Archaeology Research Centre, see the report and presentation submitted to Bruce County Council: Ontario Marine Heritage Committee Proposal Report and the Ontario Marine Heritage & Underwater Archaeology Research Centre Collecting Plan.

Military History

The Archives collects records reflecting civil-military relations and the history of Bruce County residents' involvement in armed forces and conflicts. These records also reflect the impact of those conflicts on the County, its communities, organizations, individuals, and families. The Archives holdings reflect most conflicts in which Bruce County residents have participated, with a current emphasis on the First World War.

Some of the types of records accepted by the Bruce County Archives include those reflecting:

- **First-hand accounts of military and home front experiences**: Diaries, family histories, letters, oral and video histories, photographs, postcards, posters, propaganda, ration books, reminiscences, and curated collections of newspaper clippings reflect experiences of military personnel, local battalions, and residents of Bruce County during international conflicts.

- **Training, military qualifications, and service recognition** are also reflected through military certificates, honour rolls, pay books, training manuals, and records documenting community recognition of service.

- **Organization of local battalions and regiments** such as photographs, nominal rolls, enlistment cards, correspondence, and promotional materials.

Copies of personnel files otherwise available online through Library and Archives Canada or other institutions will not be accepted.

Collection Opportunities

Military-themed records will be accepted when they were created or used by Bruce County residents and when they contribute meaningful contextual, evidential, or interpretive value to the Archives' holdings.

The Archives seeks to strengthen its holdings through the acquisition of materials documenting the experiences other under-represented groups in military service, including women, racialized communities, LGBTQ2+ individuals, and those who served in non-combat or support roles. The Archives also seeks additional records depicting Bruce County military personnel and residents' involvement in the Second World War, the Korean War, peacekeeping missions, and more recent conflicts.

Natural History

The Bruce County Archives collects records that document the region's natural history, including its geology, botany, ecology, and the relationship between people and the natural environment.

These records provide evidence of how the landscape has been observed, used, managed, and altered over time by individuals, industries, and government bodies. Natural history documentation is reflected across government, business, organizational, and personal records.

Types of records collected include, but are not limited to:

- **Environmental Photographs:** Photographs and postcards depicting local landscapes, farms, shorelines, rivers, forests, and wetlands, which document ecological change, land use, deforestation, conservation, or restoration efforts.
- **Maps and Geographical Records:** Historical maps, atlases, survey plans, and topographic maps illustrating landforms, waterways, wetlands, agricultural development, and changes in land use.
- **Agricultural and Resource Records:** Records of agricultural societies, farming diaries, and business records from industries such as lumber, fishing, and resource extraction that document the use and management of natural resources.
- **Natural History Organizations:** Minutes, reports, publications, and membership records of local natural history, conservation, birding, and hiking organizations.
- **Municipal Records:** Records from conservation authorities and municipalities, including land-use by-laws, drainage reports, environmental studies, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest reports, and planning documents.
- **Natural Resource Management Records:** Records relating to local fishing, trapping, wildlife management, and environmental monitoring activities conducted within the County.

- **Advocacy and Community Action:** Records from environmental advocacy groups or community-led conservation initiatives reflecting public engagement with environmental issues.

Collection Opportunities

The Archives encourages the donation of records that strengthen documentation of environmental change, conservation initiatives, climate-related impacts, and the interaction between industry, agriculture, and the natural environment in Bruce County.

This includes contemporary environmental records, including documentation of recent environmental events and conservation projects, as well as scientific and research materials—such as datasets and reports—created by local researchers, consultants, or institutions that document environmental conditions or change.

Record Types Reflecting Various Historical Themes

The content of records such as

- Art
- Books, Directories, Encyclopedias, Literary Works, Manuals, Handbooks, Religious Texts, Reports, and School Textbooks
- Maps and Nautical Charts
- Newspapers and magazines, and
- Photographs and video

may reflect aspects of all historical themes listed above.

Art

The Bruce County Archives' collection of archival art, consisting of digital art and works on paper, canvas and board, supports the documentation and interpretation of Bruce County's cultural, social, and artistic history.
This collection serves to:

- illustrate the evolution of the County's landscapes, communities, and cultural, social and political life over time
- preserve artistic heritage collecting the work of local artists
- deepen the public's understanding and appreciation of art, by reflecting diverse artistic experiences and connecting people to creativity

Art forms such as sculpture, needlework, and textiles fall within the scope of the BCM&CC Museum Collecting Plan and are not collected by the Archives.

The Bruce County Archives will continue to collect archival art in digital and two-dimensional formats, representing a range of styles, media, and techniques. Works of professional and amateur artists will be collected, provided they demonstrate artistic merit, contribute to the goals stated above, and:

- depict Bruce County, or
- were created by an artist with a sustained residential connection to Bruce County
- are in stable condition, and
- can be appropriately stored and cared for within existing resources.

As of 2026, the Bruce County Archives holds 633 original paintings created by 70 artists. Most of these works (525) form the Alan Weinstein Collection, acquired in 2021 with Bruce County Council approval as a comprehensive representation of a single professional artist's body of work. Artists from all municipalities except the Municipality of Brockton are represented, with higher concentrations from Arran-Elderslie and the Town of Saugeen Shores.

While Weinstein's works are heavily influenced by modernism, other works in the collection primarily reflects landscapes, floral subjects, marine themes, buildings, and portraits, using techniques such as expressionism, fauvism, gouache, impressionism, representational styles, and still life.

Multiple works by a single artist may be acquired where they contribute distinct contextual or interpretive value. Except for the Alan Weinstein Collection, the Archives does not intend to acquire similarly large bodies of work by individual artists. Such an acquisition would again require approval from Bruce County Council.

Collection Opportunities

The Archives will continue to seek opportunities to acquire original works by artists connected to under-represented municipalities and by artists whose cultural backgrounds are currently underrepresented in the collection, to support a more inclusive and representative record of Bruce County's artistic heritage.

Books, Directories, Encyclopedias, Literary Works, Manuals, Handbooks, Religious Texts, Reports, and School Textbooks

Published texts are collected by the Bruce County Archives for their value in documenting life of the County. These materials support historical research, interpretation, and public understanding of lived experiences in Bruce County.

Books

Local history books are an integral part of the Archives' holdings, as they synthesize research, memory, and interpretation relating to communities, institutions, families, industries, and events in Bruce County. These works provide essential context for archival records and are frequently used by the public.

Wider regional publications containing substantial content related to Bruce County, or addressing themes that reflect lived experiences within the County, may also be accepted when they contribute meaningfully to local historical understanding.

Directories and Phone Books

Directories and telephone books are valuable reference sources for documenting patterns of residency, business activity, and community development over time. They provide evidence of the location and operation of businesses, as well as the presence of permanent and seasonal residents, and are widely used for research into property history, genealogy, and local economic and social change.

Specialized directories, such as church, organizational, and association directories, are also collected, as they document the structure and activities of community institutions. Directories that list community groups and local service organizations further contribute to understanding social networks, civic life, and service provision within Bruce County.

The Archives' holdings of directories and telephone books currently span from 1846 to 2000, with notable gaps, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s. Addressing these gaps is an ongoing collecting priority.

Encyclopedias

The Archives holds a small number of encyclopedias primarily for their historical and contextual value, reflecting how knowledge was compiled, interpreted, and disseminated at specific points in time. The existing holdings are sufficient to meet this purpose, and no additional encyclopedia sets will be accepted unless they demonstrate unique relevance to Bruce County or fill a clearly identified gap.

Literary Works

The Archives collects literary and creative works, including articles, biographies, essays, memoirs, monographs, musical compositions, novels, plays, poems, speeches, theses, and reminiscences, created by Bruce County authors. will be collected. These works are collected as expressions of intellectual, artistic, and cultural life and as evidence of how individuals connected to Bruce County have interpreted their experiences and surroundings.

Priority is given to work that reflect life in Bruce County. A representative sampling of works by Bruce County creators whose subject matter extends beyond the County may

also be collected to document the broader cultural and creative impact of the community.

Manuals & Handbooks

Archival holdings include instructional and reference publications, such as household remedy books, technical manuals, and professional handbooks, that document everyday practices, skills, and services used in Bruce County.

The Archives accepts:

- manuals and handbooks created by Bruce County authors
- Manuals and handbooks used in Bruce County, but not locally produced, when they:
    - relate to an artifact being accepted by BCM&CC Collections, or
    - document a unique occupation, service, or practice no longer in use, and are accompanied by detailed provenance and context.

Religious Texts

The Archives holds a representative number of English-language Bibles and other religious texts associated with Protestant and Catholic faith traditions in Bruce County. Additional English-language Bibles will not be accepted unless they demonstrate significant contextual value, such as ownership by a prominent local individual or annotations reflecting lived experience, interpretation, or community leadership.

Family information contained in Bibles not accepted into the Archives may be reproduced and donated independently.

The Archives also holds Bibles and religious texts in German and Gaelic and may accept a limited number of additional examples in these languages when accompanied by strong Bruce County provenance and when they are in better condition or offer greater contextual value than existing holdings.

Collection Opportunities

The Archives welcomes donations of Christian texts in other languages used in Bruce County, as well as texts reflecting other religious, spiritual and faith communities and beliefs.

Reports

Reports document a wide range of topics relevant to Bruce County's history. Government-sponsored reports provide evidence of decision-making, service delivery, planning, and community development. The Archives also collects selected non-government reports, including advocacy reports, business and industry reports,

consulting and technical studies, archaeological assessments, heritage impact statements or cultural resource evaluations, and academic or research reports.

Reports with clear local relevance and enduring research value will continue to be accepted into the Archives Collection.

School Textbooks

The Archives holds a substantial collection of textbooks used in Bruce County schools. At this time, no additional textbooks will be accepted until further processing, and assessment identifies gaps by decade or subject area. The Archives does not seek to document province-wide curriculum changes, but rather to maintain a representative sample sufficient to reflect the general educational experiences of Bruce County students and teachers over time.

Maps and Nautical Charts

The Bruce County Archives collects maps and nautical charts that document the physical, administrative, and economic development of the County and its surrounding waters. Accepted materials include historical and contemporary maps depicting topography, settlement patterns, roads, railways, municipal boundaries, land use, geological features, and infrastructure, as well as nautical charts showing shorelines, water depths, navigation routes, harbours, and maritime features along Lake Huron and Georgian Bay.

Collecting priority is given to original materials with clear provenance and relevance to Bruce County, particularly those that document underrepresented time periods, geographic areas, or themes.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Related Photo Collections

Newspapers and Magazines

Newspapers and magazines provide timely, first-hand accounts of events, public issues, and community life. Through news reporting, editorials, business advertisements, and announcements, they offer valuable insight into the social, economic, and cultural history of Bruce County. Because these publications reflect local perspectives and document the everyday experiences of residents, they are essential sources for understanding the development of families, organizations, businesses, and communities over time. The Archives seek to actively collect newspapers and magazines published in, or directly related to, Bruce County to ensure that this significant record of community identity, public discourse, and historical change is preserved and accessible for future research.

The Archives holds newspapers of Bruce County communities, in print and/or on microfilm format for all communities in the County with publications. The Archives

will also accept donations in born-digital formats. As microfilm versions have proven to be of insufficient quality for the creation of high-quality digital images, original copies of newspapers will continue to be accepted, even if duplicated in the Collection in microfilm format.

Newspaper Historical Photograph Collections

The Archives also collects newspapers' historical photograph collections to ensure long-term access to visual records that document the social, cultural, political, and environmental history of this area. These provide comprehensive visual documentation of local and regional history not captured elsewhere. This collecting area includes photographic prints, negatives, born-digital photographs, contact sheets, assignment logs, captions, and metadata.

Collection Opportunities

The Archives holds more than 35 newspaper titles dating from 1862 to 2026, as well as one historical newspaper photograph collection: the *Teeswater News* photographic negatives from the 1990s.

A systemic newspaper inventory is in progress, with inventory information added to Online Collections Newspapers when complete. The Archives welcomes donations that fill identified gaps. The Archives also sees potential to strengthen holdings through the proactive collection of current local publications.

Photographs, Picture Postcards, and Videos

Photographs and video recordings are essential to document all aspects of Bruce County history. Visual records provide a vivid sense of place and time and often capture details and experiences not fully represented in textual records. The Archives collects still and moving images that document identified buildings, businesses, events, industries, landscapes, streetscapes, people, places, organizations, weather events, and aspects of everyday life throughout the County from both contemporary and historical time periods.

Visual records are collected not only for their aesthetic qualities, but for their evidential and informational value, supporting research, education, exhibition, and public engagement.

The Archives accepts contributions from both professional and amateur photographers and videographers. Professional work may reflect the creator's practice and/or documented depictions of Bruce County.

Accepted formats include photographic prints, negatives, slides, motion picture film, video recordings, and born-digital images. Original-format materials are preferred, as

they retain greater evidential value, image quality, and contextual integrity than reproductions.

In cases of strong historical significance, or where images support interpretive initiatives such as the *Bruce Remembers* website, high-quality digital reproductions may be accepted when original materials are unavailable for donation.

The Archives holds a significant collection of photographs depicting scenes and individuals from across Bruce County, with over 25,000 images viewable online, and many more available to researchers for personal use and private study, but not viewable online due to copyright restrictions.

The holdings currently include these larger collections:

- Albemarle Township Historical Society photographs gathered during the creation of the 1994 book "Albemarle: A History of the Township."
- Krug family fonds photographs and postcards, featuring images from across Bruce County
- J.H. Scougall glass plate negatives, focused on Kincardine area
- Heritage Kincardine photograph collection, focused on Kincardine area
- J. Lindsay Thornburn photographic negatives, focused on Port Elgin area
- More than 45 charcoal-enhanced photographic portraits (51.5 x 40 cm) of farmers and other individuals

In addition to these collections, there are photographs and postcards depicting scenes from all regions of the County.

To support responsible stewardship of resources, the Archives generally does not accept:

- Exact duplicates of material already within the holdings, unless the offered item is in superior condition
- Large quantities of similar images depicting the same individuals or activities at a single event, where a representative selection would adequately document the subject
- Photographs or video lacking sufficient contextual information, such as place, approximate date, event, or subject matter, unless the images retain research value through other means
    - The long-term research value of photographic and video materials is directly linked to the availability of contextual information; donors are encouraged to share knowledge that enhances understanding beyond personal or family use.

    - Unidentified photographs bearing the name or mark of a known photographer may be accepted where they complement existing holdings and do not substantially duplicate examples of a photographer's work
- Independent images of Bruce County residents taken outside the County, unless they form part of a larger fonds that provides context for the individuals' lives and experiences;
- Charcoal-enhanced photographic portraits (51.5 x 40 cm) will not be accepted unless they are in excellent condition, with detailed provenance, due to space constraints and the number already within the holdings.

Donors of images in all formats are expected to provide contextual and identification information before or at the time of donation. Donors of digital files are expected to select their preferred images for donation and provide basic descriptive information, such as filenames and captions, to support long-term access and use.

Collection Opportunities

The Archives seeks photographic and video records from all municipalities within Bruce County and encourages donations that reflect under-documented communities, regions, occupations, and lived experiences.

The Archives recognizes that images and video shared exclusively on social media or other non-archival platforms are inherently transitory; those platforms do not ensure long-term preservation or accessibility. Donors are encouraged to transfer original or high-quality copies of contemporary photographs and video to support the long-term documentation of present-day life in Bruce County.

Proactive collection of contemporary photographs and video is essential to ensuring that present-day communities, landscapes, and activities are not underrepresented in the future historical record.

Contemporary Collecting and Rapid Response

The Bruce County Archives may undertake contemporary or rapid response collecting when records are at risk of being lost due to the passage of time while an event or activity is ongoing. This approach ensures the timely preservation of materials documenting significant moments in the County's history. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the necessity of rapid response collecting. Other potential circumstances include protests, emergencies, significant community events, short-lived but significant initiatives or innovations, and institutional or business closures. The assistance of the public and/or historical organizations may be sought to assist with rapid response collecting. It will be employed only in exceptional circumstances where highly significant records are in danger of being lost.

Limitations of Analysis

The Archives is currently engaged in the ongoing documentation of its holdings within a collections management database to support effective collection management, analysis, and planning. At present, a comprehensive analysis of the Collection across all historical themes, geographic areas, and record types is not feasible, as approximately 40% of the materials acquired since 1955 have been described in the database. As cataloguing work continues and additional data becomes available, this Collecting Plan will be reviewed and updated to reflect a more complete assessment of the Collection's strengths, gaps, and opportunities.