



CRHA PRIVATE ARCHIVES ACQUISITIONS POLICY



1. Object

This document sets out the policy of the Archives and Documentation Centre of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association (CRHA) regarding the acquisition of private archives. The policy provides the parameters that should govern the appraisal and acquisition decisions for the private archives of the CRHA. It contains the principles, objectives, and criteria for the application of such a policy and specifies the roles of the various stakeholders¹.

This policy is part of the CRHA's mission to promote awareness and understanding of the important contribution of railway heritage to the past, present and future development of Canadian society by building, preserving and showcasing a collection of Canada's railway heritage and by fostering public appreciation of the railway experience.

2. Regulatory and normative context

[Archives Act](#) (L.R.Q., c. A-21.1).

[Copyright Act](#) (L.R.C. (1985), ch. C-42).

[Access to Information Act](#) (L.R.C. (1985), ch. A-1).

[Privacy Act](#) (L.R.C. (1985), ch. P-21).

Canada Revenue Agency, [Gifts and Income Tax](#) (P113 (E), R. 16).

3. Objectives

The Private Archives Acquisitions Policy is a privileged tool that allows the CRHA to:

- acquire the Canada's railway archival heritage necessary for the understanding of Canadian society and its history and for the development of a national collective identity;
- oversee the management of the acquisition of private archives at the CRHA;
- meet the needs of researchers and foreseeable research trends by relying on the expertise of the members of the Collections Committee and the services of the CRHA.

4. Principles

The following principles form the basis of the acquisition policy and guide acquisition priorities, fields, and mechanisms:

- Archives are acquired in accordance with the legislation governing archival practice in Quebec.
- The CRHA applies the principle of provenance and acquires primarily fonds.
- The CRHA applies, together with the transferors of private archives, the territorial provenance, which favours the maintenance of private archives in their region of origin.
- The acquisition of archives takes into account the capacity of the CRHA to make them accessible; this capacity depends, among other things, on the state of preservation of the archives and the body of documents concerned, the conditions of acquisition, the conditions of accessibility and the financial, human and material resources available to carry out the operations of processing, preservation and dissemination.

¹ Definitions of terms specific to the acquisition of private archives are set out in the appendix to this policy and form an integral part of it.



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5. Fields of intervention, orientations, and acquisition criteria

The CRHA can acquire private archives from a variety of sources and in a variety of formats and media. Textual, iconographic (photographs, drawings, engravings), cartographic, architectural, engineering, and technical drawings, sound recordings, musical scores, digital records, moving images and microforms may be acquired.

The areas of intervention and strategic orientations regarding the acquisition of private archives by the CRHA are based on its mission and the principles set out above.

The territory covered by the CRHA covers all of Canada, as well as foreign countries (where Canadian companies have had or still have operations).

Although it does not exclude any field of intervention, this policy favours the acquisition of archives of individuals and legal entities that contain significant value in terms of information, testimony or, where applicable, are representative of an activity, situation or period. These documents must reflect the realities and evolution of Canadian society, its components and its national specificities in all areas of rail transportation, in particular: engineering genius, the history of stations, the lives of workers, the growth of companies, the development of regions, etc.

Fundamental criteria:

- Significant secondary value of records arising from the information and witness functions or demonstrating sufficient typical characteristics representative of an activity, situation, or period to serve as an example.
- Complementarity of documents with existing archival holdings or development of under-represented documentary sources.
- Research needs expressed by users and foreseeable research trends, drawing on the expertise of the members of the Collections Committee and the services of the CRHA.

Secondary criteria:

- Originality (as opposed to being a copy) and authenticity of documents.
- Rarity.
- Condition of the documents (physical condition and organization which influences the cost of their conservation, processing and dissemination).
- Proposed method of acquisition.
- Restrictive conditions of access and use.
- Potential exhibition value.
- Authenticity and ownership well established.



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6. Mechanisms of acquisition

The preferred methods for the acquisition of private archives are donation, bequest and, under certain conditions, purchase.

Private archives must be acquired in two stages: (1) deposit for appraisal accompanied by a deposit slip signed by the depositor; and (2) acceptance or rejection of the donation proposed by the Collections Committee.

Any acquisition of private archives must be agreed upon in the form of a written agreement specifying the rights and obligations of the parties. In addition, each acquisition generates a file, in the name of the donor or the archival fonds, recorded in a document management system to facilitate its conservation, treatment and dissemination.

At the donor's request, official income tax receipts that can be used to claim a charitable donation on both the federal and provincial income tax returns can be issued after the acquisition and valuation of the goods at the donor's expense:

- Assumed to be less than \$1,000.00: internal evaluation is possible.
- Assumed valuation between \$1,000.00 and \$50,000.00: valuation by an independent expert.
- Valuation presumed to be over \$50,000.00: valuation by two independent experts.

7. Roles and responsibilities

The CRHA Board of Directors:

- adopts the acquisition policy.

The CRHA Executive Committee:

- adopts acquisition projects;
- adopts the policies, standards and procedures developed by the archivist relating to the acquisition, processing, and dissemination of private archives.

The CRHA Collections Committee:

- makes recommendations concerning the orientations, objectives, policies, services and measures adopted by the CRHA to acquire, treat, preserve, develop and disseminate all private archives in its custody;
- proposes acquisition projects;
- makes recommendations on the policies, standards and procedures developed by the archivist relating to the acquisition, processing and dissemination of private archives;
- ensures the revision of the acquisition policy.

Executive Director:

- recommends the adoption of the acquisition policy;
- comments on the policies, standards and procedures developed by the archivist relating to the acquisition, processing, and dissemination of private archives.



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Archivist :

- recommends the adoption of the acquisition policy;
- reviews acquisition proposals and makes recommendations;
- develops policies, standards and procedures relating to the acquisition, processing and dissemination of private archives;
- ensures the supervision and implementation of the acquisition policy;
- negotiates the acquisition conditions with the owner of the documents.

8. Conflict of interest guidelines

The CRHA staff members who wish to acquire materials covered by this policy for personal use must obtain prior written permission from the Executive Director.

9. Policy approval

This Acquisition Policy is adopted by the Board of Directors of the CRHA on July 22, 2020.

10. Dissemination and re-evaluation of the policy

At the request of any corporation or individual, the CRHA may provide them a copy of this Acquisition Policy. This policy is available on the CRHA website and may be reviewed and revised at regular intervals in accordance with the CRHA's new strategic directions.



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Appendix: Definitions

Notes: The list of sources used follows the definitions. Most of the sources are in French, therefore related definitions were translated by us.

Purchase:

Acquisition of a private archival fonds or collection by payment.

Acquisition:

- « 1. Action of receiving and accumulating documents entrusted or given.
2. The document entrusted or given.
3. Set of documents from the same source managed by an archive at a given time. » (Source 1)

Archives:

« A set of documents, regardless of their date or nature, produced or received by a person or body for its needs or the exercise of its activities and kept for their general information value. » (Source 5)

Private archives:

« Archives either of individuals or families, or of non-public institutions or organizations, or of non-public origin. » (Source 1)

Collection:

« Artificial grouping of documents from all sources, grouped according to a common characteristic, such as mode of acquisition, theme, language, medium, type of document, collector, etc. This term is opposed to fonds. » (Source 1)

Deposit:

« Deposit is the contract by which a person, the depositor, hands over an object to another person, the depositary, who undertakes to keep the object for a certain period and to return it. » (Source 1)

Document:

« A document consists of information carried on a medium. The information is delimited and structured, in a tangible or logical way depending on the medium that carries it, and is intelligible in the form of words, sounds or images.

The information may be rendered using any mode of writing, including a system of symbols that can be transcribed into one of these forms or into another symbol system. » (Source 6)

Donation:

« A donation is a contract by which a person, the donor, transfers ownership of property for no consideration to another person, the donee. » (Source 1)

Witnessing:

« Allows you to appreciate the ability of documents to provide information about their producer. In the case of an organization, the archives must bear witness to its organization, activities, operations, achievements, and evolution. In the case of an individual, the records reflect his or her personal and professional life, achievements and evolution. » (Source 2)



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Informative:

« Corresponds to the ability of the documents to inform us about the various subjects that interested the creator of the fonds. The documents may therefore be used for reference and research purposes, regardless of their value as testimony to the history of the natural or legal person producing them. » (Source 2)

Archival fonds:

« A set of documents of any kind collected automatically and organically by any administrative body or by a natural or legal person in the exercise of their activities or functions and whose value as evidence and information justifies their permanent preservation. » (Source 1)

Bequest:

« A free disposition made by a will and taking effect upon the death of the testator. » (Source 5)

Provenance (Principle of):

SEE « *Respecting the fonds* (Principle of) ».

Representativity:

Characteristic demonstrating sufficient typical elements specific to an activity, situation, or period to serve as an example.

Respecting the fonds (Principle of) :

« The fundamental principle that archives from the same origin should not be mixed with those from another origin and should be kept in their original order if it exists. It is by virtue of this principle that each document should be placed in the fonds from which it comes and, in that fonds, in its original place. » (Source 3)

Significative:

« Characteristic of information that reveals the purpose and direction of a major program or activity of an organization, the origins or causes of a significant event, the motivations for the activity of a leading individual, the main elements of a subject, etc.» (Source 1)

Medium:

«Physical element on which information is recorded (paper, magnetic tape or disk, videotape, optical disk, microfilm, etc.). » (Source 3)

Territorial Provenance (Principle of) :

« Principle derived from the principle of provenance, according to which archives should be kept in the archival services of the territory in which they were produced or, better still, in the institution producing the fonds. » (Source 3)

Primary value:

« According to Theodore Schellenberg's theory, the primary value of a record is the value it possesses by virtue of its very creation based on the business process that gave rise to it. » (Source 4)

Secondary value :

« As opposed to primary value, the value that a record has for uses other than that for which it was created. » (Source 4)



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Sources

1. Archives nationales du Québec, Normes et procédures archivistiques des Archives nationales du Québec – Sixième édition revue et augmentée, Les publications du Québec, 1996, 191 p.
2. CHARBONNEAU, Normand et Mario ROBERT, La gestion des archives photographiques, Sainte-Foy, Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2001, 306 p.
3. COUTURE, Carol, ROUSSEAU, Jean-Yves et collaborateurs, Les fondements de la discipline archivistique, Sainte-Foy, Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1994, 348 p.
4. FAVIER, Jean (dir.), La pratique archivistique française, Paris, Archives nationales, 1993, 630 p.
5. [Archives Act \(L.R.Q., c. A-21.1\)](#), latest version available, up to date as of May 1, 2020.
6. [Act to establish a legal framework for information technology \(L.R.Q., chapitre C-1.1\)](#), latest version available, up to date as of May 1, 2020.