

section. The photographic reproductions illustrating the text here are heavily dependent on two sources: the City of Toronto Archives and the Notman Photographic Archives (McCord Museum, McGill University). These sources have served the exhibition well; photographs such as those of the 1914 slum dwelling at 512 Front Street, Toronto, and the Montreal Maternity Hospital in 1925-26 are both apt and visually arresting. The artifacts in this section are perhaps less well coordinated thematically. The 1934 incubator of one of the Dionne quintuplets is certainly an interesting curiosity; however, the relatively close proximity of a 1980 birthing chair to an early twentieth century maternity dress does indicate a certain thematic muddle.

The ambitious scope of this exhibition, both in terms of chronology and subject matter, has meant that the display consists of a series of vignettes on a multitude of topics rather than an extended survey of any one topic. In the twentieth century section, in particular, this leads to a somewhat confusing succession of panels in an attempt to embrace a host of modern developments. Given the range of the exhibition and the limitations of the traveling display format, this is perhaps inevitable. The exhibition does steer carefully clear of recent controversies although it touches on the current midwifery dilemma. The Science Centre has featured a succession of guest speakers in January and February on strife-ridden topics such as contraception and test tube babies, but the exhibition does not tackle these subjects at all. It wisely avoids any ideological bias and thus is unlikely to provoke dissension among viewers.

More positive praise can be meted out to the considerable visual impact of the exhibition. The lighting is good, the bilingual text is easy to read, and the subject captions are both prominent and, sometimes, provocative. It is hard, for example, to resist a panel which is happily titled "Shift the clouts often for the piss and dung." There is no published commentary or guide to the exhibition, but this is a minor lacuna. Since the exhibition does not rely on a linear survey of a topic, the directional flow of traffic is likewise not of paramount importance; the intended viewing sequence in the second part of the exhibition, however, is rather bewildering. Perhaps this is due to the physical limitations of the display space in the Science Centre's Great Hall and will be improved in the exhibition's later stops. One change that is certain to transpire when the exhibition moves will be a reduction of the noise level. Unfortunately, though not illogically, the exhibition at present shares the Great Hall with a special play area for three- to six-year-olds. The uproar presents a vivid contrast to the hush, not to say somnolence, occasionally provoked by archival displays.

The exhibition moves to the Wellington County Museum in Fergus at the end of April. Thence it proceeds to the David M. Stewart Museum in Montreal in December 1987; and then opens in the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax in March 1988; the Newfoundland Museum, St. John's in May 1988; the National Museum of Natural Sciences in Ottawa in July 1988; and Science North, Sudbury in November 1988. From there the exhibition continues to the United States.

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For the Curious: The City Archives Collection. PAMELA WACHNA and ALAN MEISNER. Mounted at the Market Gallery of the City of Toronto Archives, Toronto,

26 July-12 October 1986. Accompanying publication: **The City of Toronto Archives. CITY OF TORONTO. DEPARTMENT of the CITY CLERK. RECORDS AND ARCHIVES DIVISION.** Toronto: City of Toronto, Information and Communication Services Division [1986] 32 p. Free.

Unlike museums and art galleries, archives have never been centres of visual learning. They are, after all, cerebral places — centres of recorded thought and experience over time. Their purpose has never been to entertain but simply to inform. With the exception of the National Archives of Canada, few archival institutions in Canada have the human or financial resources to venture into the sphere of visual learning by mounting exhibitions that reach the scale and expertise of those of a Royal Ontario Museum or of an Art Gallery of Ontario. It was therefore especially heartening to view the City of Toronto Archives' Market Gallery exhibition *For the Curious: The City Archives Collections*.

The Market Gallery, located on the second floor of the South St. Lawrence Market building at Front and Jarvis Streets, was opened in 1979 primarily as the showplace for the City's fine art collection. *For the Curious* is one of several exhibitions over the years which have brought the city's Archives to the general public. This particular exhibition was presented as "an opportunity to express publicly [the City of Toronto Archives'] appreciation" to the generous citizens who have donated materials over the years. As such, this exhibit represents a somewhat eclectic display of curious and interesting items from the Archives' government records, private manuscripts or "special collections," photographic, cartographic, artifacts, and fine art collections. Coordinated by the Market Gallery's Pam Wachna and archivist, Alan Meisner, the items displayed are those chosen by the archivists responsible for the different divisions. This municipal archives is also fortunate to employ the services of conservation staff to advise upon the proper display techniques for all types of material regardless of medium or format. Most paper items, including documents and photographs, have been framed and matted for proper exhibiting. Some oversize items have been encapsulated before being attached to the display panels. Low lighting in the gallery has even been explained on a discreetly placed sign.

The exhibition fulfills two functions: it introduces the tourist and native Torontonian to the history of the city and acquaints the novice researcher with the extensive resources and services of this fine municipal archives. The visitor follows the development of Toronto from its early settlement in the late eighteenth century to a thriving metropolis and sister city of Chongging, China in 1986. Government records are understandably the main stay of a municipal archives and the City of Toronto Archives is no exception. Its primary purpose, after all, is to preserve the records of permanent value of the corporation of the City of Toronto. Proceedings of the Mayor's Court, 1834-1838; City Council Minutes from 1875; and Registers of Criminals, 1873-1928 provide just a sample of the range of government records the researcher may peruse to uncover the early political, legislative, and judicial history of Canada's largest city. In another portion of the exhibit, the viewer is introduced to more precise examples of records that might be used to compile historical information on one's house or neighbourhood. Detailed captions introduce the researcher to the wealth of information in assessment rolls, registers, and street directories.

Among archival holdings, however, textual records are usually the least visually attractive. In this case they pale against the visual feast of an extensive and varied photograph collection. With over two hundred thousand images dating from 1856 to 1960 to choose from, it must have been a formidable task to make a selection for this

display. Both the Torontonians and the infrequent visitor are able to experience representative samples of such well-known nineteenth century Toronto photographers as F.W. Micklethwaite and Octavius Thompson. Other photographs document the rowing career of Ned Hanlan, the early history of the Canadian National Exhibition, and Sunnyside Beach. Rounding out the display are artifacts such as commemorative trowels and the dinner jacket and vest of former Mayor G.R. Geary; fine art pieces such as *Richmond Street Looking West 1985* by Louis Crout; cartographic and architectural records including the works of J.G. Howard, Toronto's first surveyor; and a film (converted to video) of the Regent Park Housing Project (1947-1953) by the National Film Board.

While the notion of an archives displaying its holdings is not new, it is still an activity where archivists may unwittingly demonstrate their inexperience. While *For the Curious* successfully presents to the public the resources of the City of Toronto Archives, it could have accomplished its purpose with far fewer items. One display case of neighbourhood publications in particular is a confusing mélange of pamphlets, newspapers, photos, broadsides, and other memorabilia with no apparent room for explanatory captions. This minor weakness, however, does not detract from the important role this exhibition has fulfilled as a suitable introduction to resources of the City of Toronto Archives.

An important by-product of this exhibition has been the production of a full-length booklet available free of charge at the Gallery or the Archives' reading room in the basement of City Hall. This booklet on the holdings of the City of Toronto Archives is a far cry from the usual single sheet flyer produced by most archives in this country. A decidedly non-archival lavender-coloured glossy cover enfolds thirty-two lettersize pages of information on the Archives' resources, services, and programmes. It is not therefore a catalogue of the exhibition. While it is illustrated with items from the exhibition, it is instead a descriptive summary of each of the ten collections of the Archives. These summaries, prepared by the archivists in charge, introduce the reader to the nature and extent of each collection: Government Records, Photographic Collections, Special Collections, Fine Art Collection, Cartographic Records, Architectural Records, Pamphlets, Artifacts, Illuminated Resolutions, and Broadsides. Some reference is given to alphanumeric control numbers but in no way should the researcher consider this publication a guide to holdings. As an advertisement for the City of Toronto Archives, this publication is first-rate. It is detailed enough to be a useful reference source for the serious researcher and an attractive souvenir for the tourist. It is positive, encouraging, and unencumbered with the usual pedantic litany of do's and don't's that characterize most archives publications. One can only hope that its wide distribution (five thousand copies, first printing; five thousand copies, second printing) will encourage other archival institutions to produce publications of this stature.

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Bank of Nova Scotia Archives

All About Us. HEATHER MCCALLUM. Mounted at the Metropolitan Toronto Library Theatre Department, Toronto, 14 October-25 November 1986. No published catalogue.

When we think of theatre, we imagine something magic and fleeting. Yet, in spite of the fact that each performance is quite a brief experience, theatre is a very technical endeavour and produces much lasting documentation as well as the transitory image on stage. Administrative records, publicity posters, photographs and programmes, technical plans