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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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ARCHIVES REPORT / CHRONIQUES D'ARCHIVES

Newly Available Archival Records at Library and Archives Canada

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LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA (LAC) continues to acquire and make available archival records from Canadian labour unions and prominent Canadian labour leaders and activists. This report highlights the notable additions of private archives to the LAC labour collection in the last few years. These new additions are more than 120 metres of textual records.

Private archival records are an invaluable resource. These archival documents are records of the regular activities, transactions and operations of people, families, and organizations. Unlike published materials, which are available in multiple copies, there is only one copy of archival documents, making archival documents unique records of the past. Also, unlike published materials, which have been created and edited for a large public audience, archival documents are created only for the people who will be working with those documents.

Private archives are a rich source for researchers and the public who use these documents in academic research, fiction, documentaries, feature films and genealogy, among other uses. LAC and other archival institutions rely on the donation of records of the public to create a corpus of records that documents Canada and is representative of all Canadians.

All of the archival fonds mentioned in this report are available for public consultation, subject to access restrictions. These records have been arranged and described and finding aids and online descriptive records have been created. For further details, please contact LAC Reference Services¹ and/or the LAC online catalogue.²

The report is structured as follows: newly available personal fonds will be presented, followed by newly available union fonds. The report will conclude

1. "Services for the Public," Library and Archives Canada, last modified 11 January 2022, <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services-public/Pages/services-public.aspx>.

2. "Collection Search," Library and Archives Canada, last modified 16 February 2022, <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/collectionsearch/Pages/collectionsearch.aspx>.

with mention of some older fonds that have had a sizable amount of newly processed records added to the fonds in the last few years.

Each entry includes the title of the fonds, the archival reference number (or R-number, the unique identifier for the fonds), a brief description of the records and a brief sketch of the creator (whether a person or a labour union). These entries also include the date range of the documents and the physical extent (the amount of records) of the fonds.

Personal Fonds

Ollie Borg fonds (R16551), 2014–18: 79 pp. of textual records

Ollie Borg was born in 1930. His parents had immigrated to Canada in the late 1920s and worked on a family farm in northern Ontario.

The fonds consists of a memoir written by Borg. He discusses growing up on a family farm in northern Ontario the 1930s, the lives of his parents and relatives, and his experiences working in lumber camps, truck driving, construction, maintenance, and other jobs.

Max Federman fonds (R15869), 1938–90: 1.25 m of textual records, 11 greeting cards, 1 photograph

Max Federman, labour activist and community leader, was born in Poland in 1902. He immigrated to Canada at age nineteen and found work in the fur industry in the early 1920s. He became involved in labour issues and served as manager of Local 68 and Local 82 of the Fur Workers of Union of Toronto (also known as the Fur, Leather, Shoe and Allied Workers). Throughout his life, he was also involved with the Jewish community in Toronto and Canada with organizations such as the Borochov School, Histadrut, and Poale Zion. He died in 1991.

The fonds documents the career and personal life of Federman including his position as labour activist and union leader with Local 68 and Local 82 of the Fur, Leather, Shoe and Allied Workers Union (affiliated with the Canadian Food and Allied Workers union and the United Food and Commercial Workers). The fonds also documents his activities in the Jewish community in Toronto, Canada and internationally.

Ian Reilly fonds (R16199), 1890, 1925, 1960–92: 5 cm of textual records, 5 photographs, 1 videocassette

Ian Reilly (1940–2010), labour leader, led a successful strike when he was twelve while working on a farm. After receiving lower wages than he had been promised, he convinced the other young boys and teenagers to stage a strike. The employer relented later the same day. In 1956, he was hired by Bata Shoe and became a steward and union secretary with the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union (BSWU). In 1962, he became an international representative for the BSWU. After the union merged into the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), he worked on the issue of Newfoundland fishery workers.

The fonds includes records from Reilly's career as a labour union representative with the BSWU; a video documentary and publications discussing the Newfoundland fishery union and the conflict between the UFCW and the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW); and two collective agreements (1890, 1925) acquired by Reilly.

Bonnie Robichaud fonds (R16206), 1976–2009: 3.4 m of textual records, 4 videocassettes, 1 audiocassette, 50 buttons, lapel pins and other objects

The fonds documents the life and career of Bonnie Robichaud, a civilian employee with the Department of National Defence. After having been bullied and assaulted by her supervisor, she led what would become a multiyear legal challenge that eventually led to the Supreme Court of Canada. In July 1987, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that “the employer is responsible for the unauthorized discriminatory acts of its employees in the course of their employment.”³

The records document her workplace grievances and legal challenges as well as her public speaking, outreach, and campaigns. The fonds also includes research, writings, and educational material created by academics, activists, unions, women’s organizations, and government offices.

Margot Trevelyan fonds (R16051), 1948–81: 67 audio cassettes, 1 m of textual records, 3 photographs

Madeleine Parent (1918–2012), labour organizer and social activist, was born and educated in Montréal. She joined the United Textile Workers of America (UTWA) as an organizer and, with Kent Rowley (1918–1978), organized workers throughout Ontario, Québec, and the Maritimes. After the International Office fired the entire Canadian staff of the UTWA in 1952, Parent and Rowley responded by establishing the Canadian Textile Council (CTC). In 1969, they were instrumental in the formation of the Council (later Confederation) of Canadian Unions (CCU). From 1970, Parent held several union offices and was active in the struggle for women’s rights.

The fonds documents the research and writing by Ontario-based writer Margot Trevelyan of an unpublished biography of Parent in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The records include interviews with Parent and with people who worked with and knew Parent. Other records include drafts and revisions of chapters, interview transcripts, research notes, and correspondence.

Union Fonds: Newly Available

The following union fonds are new additions to the LAC labour collection.

Brotherhood of Railway Carmen fonds (R16184), 1901–83: 1.2 m of textual records, 2 photographs

The Brotherhood of Railway Carmen (BRC) represented workers in the railway industry involved in the maintenance, inspection and repair of railway cars including carpenters, upholsterers, pattern makers, cabinetmakers, and others. Canadian lodges were formed soon after the union was established in the United States in 1890. In 1984, the Canadian Division of the BRC gained independence from the US-based parent. In 1990, the BRC merged into the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW).

The fonds documents labour relations, collective bargaining, government policy, and conferences and conventions of the Canadian Division of the BRC.

3. Robichaud v. Canada (Treasury Board), [1987] 2 SCR 84.

Canadian Paperworkers Union fonds (R9077), 1904–90: 33 m of textual records, 63 photographs, 23 audio recordings, 1 videocassette

The Canadian Paperworkers Union (CPU) was formed in 1974 when the Canadian region of the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) separated to form a Canadian national union. In 1987, the CPU had 57,000 members and 274 local unions across Canada. In November 1992, the CPU merged with the Communications and Electrical Workers of Canada (CWC) and the Energy and Chemical Workers Union (ECWU) to form the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP). In 2013, the CEP merged with the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) to form Unifor.

The fonds documents collective bargaining, conferences, publications, local unions, communications with members, communications with the pulp and paper industry, and the establishment of the CPU.

Canadian Union of Educational Workers fonds (R9911), 1975–94: 1.65 m of textual records, 153 photographs

The Canadian Union of Educational Workers (CUEW) represented over 6,000 teaching assistants, research assistants, markers, lab demonstrators, and sessional lecturers at various Canadian universities. The CUEW had its origins in 1973 when a small number of graduate assistants at Victoria University (Toronto) organized to form Local 1 of the Graduate Assistants' Association. From 1975 to 1980, multiple locals were organized. The union's name was changed to reflect the change in members and representation. The union was concerned with the effects on the membership of provincial and national legislation and politics. In 1994, the CUEW signed a merger agreement with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

The fonds documents the CUEW National Executive Board, national conventions, political lobbying, union administration, CUEW local unions, and other efforts on behalf of educational workers in Canada and advocacy for the labour movement.

Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada fonds (R16007), 1948, 1957–2013: 16.7 m of textual records, 40 photographs, 67 videocassettes, 1 button, 1 map

The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP) was established in 1992 following the merger of the Energy and Chemical Workers Union (ECWU), the Communications Workers of Canada (CWC), and the Canadian Paperworkers Union (CPU). In 1994, the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET) merged into the CEP. In 2013, the CEP merged with the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) to form Unifor.

The fonds documents labour relations with employers, collective agreements, publications, meetings of the executive, and the establishment and operation of the CEP. The fonds also includes legacy records of the unions that merged to form the CEP: the ECWU, the CWC, the CPU, and NABET.

National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians fonds (R16087), 1951–94: 6.45 m of textual records

The National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET) entered Canada in 1951 and was certified by the Canada Labour Relations Board in 1953. NABET negotiated its first agreement with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and later organized workers at private broadcasters, video companies, and

educational broadcasters. In the 1970s, the Canadian locals received greater autonomy from the US-based parent. NABET was unusual in that the Canadian wing was a substantial percentage of the international. In 1994, the Canadian locals of NABET merged into the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP).

The fonds documents the establishment and operation of NABET in Canada and particularly the union's representation of CBC employees through collective bargaining, conciliation hearings, working conditions, technological change, operation of the locals, and other labour relations issues.

United Food and Commercial Workers International Union fonds (R15805), 1954–97:
9.8 m of textual records, 9 photographs, 5 buttons and pins, 1 sticker

The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) was established in 1979 when the Canadian Food and Allied Workers (CFAW) merged with the Retail Clerks International Union (RCIU).

The fonds documents the establishment, collective bargaining, union locals, conferences, publications, communications, and other areas of the UFCW. The fonds also includes records of UFCW predecessor unions.

Newly Available Records Added to Established Fonds

The labour union fonds mentioned below have seen sizable additions of newly processed records made available to researchers and the public in the past few years. (These fonds have been available to the public for many years; this section only discusses the documents made available in recent years.)

Canadian Auto Workers fonds / National Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada fonds (R3341 / MG28-I119), 1939–2014:
111 m of textual records, 2,468 photographs, 1 film reel, 2 architectural drawings, 8 buttons, 2 vests, 1 print

The United Auto Workers (UAW) first established itself in Canada in 1936. The Canadian UAW's membership grew significantly during World War II, as major firms and smaller plants were organized. Immediately after the war, the Canadian UAW was one of the leaders in the postwar drive to obtain union security (such as the dues check-off and union shop) and major wage increases. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Canadian UAW found itself increasingly at odds with the Detroit-based international union; in 1985, the Canadian section broke away and re-established itself as the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW, officially known as the National Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada). From the mid-1980s, the CAW expanded significantly through a series of mergers. In 2013, the CAW merged with the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP) to form Unifor.

The newly available records consist of over 130 volumes (more than 25 metres) of textual records that document the Canadian UAW Council (meeting minutes, reports), company files (labour relations, working conditions, collective bargaining, labour action), CAW national office (subject files), education, publications, and collective agreements.

Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers fonds (R2833 / MG28-1215), 1907–94: 26.08 m of textual records, 1 microfilm reel, 2 drawings, 3 photographs, 2 buttons, 2 maps, 2 charters, 1 armband

The forerunner of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers (CBRT&GW), the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees (CBRE), was formed in 1908; the union adopted the name CBRT&GW in 1958. The CBRE was established by a small group of non-operating workers on the Intercolonial Railway. As the railway expanded into central and western Canada, the union moved its national office from Halifax to Ottawa. In the following years, the union broadened its jurisdiction to include workers in a variety of other transportation and transportation-related industries: bus, tram, truck, and taxi drivers, canal workers, Great Lakes shipping workers, and hotel employees of Canadian National and Canadian Pacific. However, non-operating employees of Canadian National remained the majority of its membership. In 1994, the CBRT&GW merged into the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW).

The newly available records consist of 40 volumes (8 metres) of textual records that document convention proceedings, meetings of the national executive board, correspondence with other labour organizations, subject files (including merger discussions with other unions), and negotiation files.

Canadian Food and Allied Workers fonds (R4343), 1919–85: 25.8 m of textual records, 346 photographs, 1 plan, 1 microfiche, 2 bumper stickers

The roots of the Canadian Food and Allied Workers (CFAW) began in 1939 when the Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC) of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) began organizing workers in Canada. The Canadian Committee established new locals in large meat-processing firms in Toronto and Vancouver. In 1943, the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) was formed, and in 1946–47 it established company-wide collective bargaining with Swift Canadian, Burns, and Canada Packers. In 1968, the union and its strongest rival, the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen (AMCBW, AFL-CIO), merged: the US section was called the AMCBW, while the Canadian section became the CFAW. In 1979, the AMCBW and the CFAW merged with the Retail Clerks International Union (RCIU) to form the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).

The newly available records consist of 70 volumes (14 metres) of textual records that document employers (labour relations, collective bargaining, labour actions), the national office (organizing, press releases, correspondence of executive staff), provincial, regional, and industrial councils, union locals, and collective agreements.