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**The Politics of Ethnic Heritage Preservation in Canada:
The case of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario**

Dominique Daniel

This article examines the constitution of the collections of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario between 1976 and 1982 in the context of the Canadian policy of multiculturalism. Set up as an independent nonprofit organization to document the history of ethnocultural communities in Ontario, the Society was funded with public money. The article gives an overview of the Society and considers how competition with other cultural heritage organizations and relationship with ethnic donors affected its collecting strategies. While the Society's mission was scholarly, the politicization of multiculturalism influenced its collecting process in significant ways. This case study illustrates the importance of understanding contextual factors when assessing the scope, content and limitations of library, archive or museum collections.¹

In 1976 Professor Robert Harney and a group of academics, librarians and Ontario government officials set up the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO), a library, archive and research center dedicated to the preservation of materials pertaining to Ontario's "immigrant and polyethnic history."² Through the late 1970s and early 1980s, the MHSO would administer the largest effort to document immigration and ethnic history that Canada had ever seen. Although scholarly and cultural in nature, it operated in a highly charged political context. At the time, the federal and Ontario governments were both encouraging the development of immigrant and ethnic history through the new policies of multiculturalism and robust financial support for cultural creation, both induced by a vigorous nation-building agenda. The MHSO was clearly the product of Ontario's policies: created with public money, it operated on a government mandate although it was an autonomous non-profit organization. When Harney, a professor of history at the University of Toronto, became its first director, he experienced firsthand the tensions caused by the political implications of the MHSO's scholarly mission. While he expressed pride in his organization's historic achievements, he also bitterly called ethnic history the "handmaiden of

multiculturalism”³ – namely, an instrument of the Canadian State. On many occasions, he warned that the constitution of the historical record should not be left to bureaucrats or politicians.⁴

Was Harney right? Without a doubt, the political context heightened the stakes of the MHSO’s mission. Because of the policies of multiculturalism, governmental agencies, cultural heritage institutions, ethnic organizations, and the broader Canadian public were involved in what Harney saw as “heritage mongering” – competition over the shaping of national, local and individual historical narratives.⁵ For ethnic minorities, the benefits were potentially substantial: financial support for cultural activities, political and social recognition, and an equal place in Canadian history. Thus, by attempting to amass the largest collections on Canada’s ethnic and immigrant history to date, the MHSO became entangled in the nation’s broader effort to redefine itself through multiculturalism, to reshape its confused and conflicted collective memory and that of the ethnic communities within it. This article will consider different ways in which the policies and politics of the time influenced the MHSO’s activities and resulting collections. The case of the MHSO is interesting because it addresses broader questions about the role of archives and libraries in the shaping of history and collective memory. It seeks to illustrate the socially constructed nature of collections and the role of what Terry Cook calls “knowledge filters” inherent in the collecting activities of all cultural heritage institutions.⁶

The origin and evolution of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario

The MHSO stemmed from the convergence of distinct political and academic forces that were at work in Canada. First, Canada’s cultural nationalism climaxed in the 1960s and 1970s. Caught between its British colonial past and the growing political, economic and cultural influence of the United States, Canada was trying to forge its own identity. Growing ethnic diversity defied Anglo-Canadian supremacy, and Quebec separatism and aboriginal activism tested the mettle of the federation. Faced with such challenges to national unity the federal government adopted cultural policies to strengthen the country’s social fabric and standing abroad.⁷ In 1968 a new Arts and Cultural Policy was set up to “give the artist and researcher the means to enrich Canada’s cultural heritage,” give Canadians access to “our cultural resources” and thereby “forge national unity.”⁸ For Canadians, culture – broadly understood as including the arts, mass media, museums and historic preservation, libraries, as well as academic research – could have a significant

social, economic and political impact that would benefit the nation. Federal but also provincial governments distributed substantial funds on behalf of cultural creation, management and preservation. In Ontario, the first provincial lottery game, Wintario, was set up in 1975 to help fund cultural projects.

A second determining trend was the growth of ethnic minorities after World War II. In 1971, more than one in four Canadians were of neither English nor French origins.⁹ While Canada had experienced significant immigration waves in the first decades of the century, millions of newcomers were now choosing Canada.¹⁰ At the same time "white ethnics," the descendants of the earlier European immigrants, were developing political clout and demanding social recognition. In 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau announced a policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework." Advocating equal rights for all, Trudeau affirmed the federal government's commitment to helping cultural groups preserve and share their cultures. Academic institutions and ethnic organizations could apply for grants, managed by a new Multiculturalism Directorate within the Department of the Secretary of State. Existing federal cultural agencies participated in the policy, including the National Museum of Canada, the National Library, and the Public Archives of Canada (PAC), which set up a National Ethnic Archives.¹¹ The goal of the policy of multiculturalism, like that of cultural policy in general, was to strengthen national unity and identity.

The new measures provided a stimulus to ethnic and migration studies in Canada, which flourished in the late 1970s, spurred by new academic interest in social history and inspired by American scholarship.¹² This provided the third, and decisive, factor that accounts for the creation of the MHSO. A 1977 issue of the newly created *Canadian Ethnic Studies* journal advocated the development of ethno-cultural history from the bottom up, "that shows people as they really are."¹³ Scholarly articles and monographs shed new light on heretofore neglected aspects of Canada's social history, while amateur historians published histories of their own ethnic communities. Meanwhile, the federal government commissioned a series of ethnic histories entitled *Generations*.¹⁴

With the highest percentage of immigrant and ethnic residents in the country, the province of Ontario followed the federal government. On May 4, 1977 the provincial government issued a policy statement on multiculturalism, with three objectives: equality, access to government services, and cultural retention. The latter was given highest priority. To implement the policy a Multiculturalism Development Branch was set up under the leadership of the new Minister of Culture, Robert Welch.¹⁵ Like their federal counterparts, Ontario officials intended to stimulate research in ethnic history, but soon realized that reliable data was missing on ethnic populations in the province. A

1972 project to sponsor the publication of cultural histories detailing the contributions of ethnic groups in Ontario had already made glaring the absence of sources for the histories of many groups.¹⁶ Robert Harney and Harold Troper, both history professors at the University of Toronto, warned the government in 1975 that before any historical research could be conducted “a concerted effort to gather more materials is the most important initial step to producing any useful work on immigration and ethnicity in the province.”¹⁷ Their report stressed the richness of ethnic sources in Ontario, for which mainstream libraries and archives seemed to have no interest. They underlined the urgency of gathering materials documenting immigration and ethnic history, especially that of early 20th century immigration, as those were in danger of destruction and first generation immigrants were passing away.¹⁸ The Advisory Council on Multiculturalism, newly set up by the government to support the new policies, backed these findings and recommended the creation of a research center devoted to immigrant and ethnic history.¹⁹

Working with academics, librarians and archivists, government officials put together the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, an independent non-profit organization commissioned for five years and supported by Ontario lottery funds totaling three million dollars placed in trust.²⁰ Robert Harney, then a prominent historian of Italian Canadians, played a leading role in its creation. The articles of incorporation define the mission of the MHSO as cultural and scholarly, but its political *raison d’être* is also manifest:

“To promote and advance studies into the history of all ethnocultural groups within the Province of Ontario

To collect material – archival, print and oral – related to the history of these groups

To arrange for the safekeeping and accessibility of all such material collected or identified in the field

To encourage the publication of primary sources and scholarly research on ethnocultural groups in the province

To publicize the important contribution by all communities to the cultural growth and development of Ontario.”²¹

The last objective clearly reflects the policy-makers’ broader agenda. As the term “contribution” suggests, the project was designed to simultaneously celebrate the specific cultures and identities of the “other” Canadians and ensure their integration into the fabric of the country. Underlying the notion of

“contribution” was an essentialist conception of ethnicity which Canadian historian Bruno Ramirez has identified as central to the multicultural paradigm.²² In this view, ethnic characteristics were fixed cultural traits acquired by birth or upbringing, which immigrants brought with them to Canada. Some traits disappeared but others survived and those remnants contributed to the common cultural heritage even as the newcomers became Canadians. Ethnicity was seen as a cultural phenomenon that could be studied by scholars and managed by policies. To ensure the harmony of the resulting mosaic, education was essential, hence the need to “publicize” ethnic contributions. Better knowledge of Canada’s ethnic groups, it was believed, would promote tolerance and understanding among the general public. It would foster a sense of belonging and strengthen the provincial and national collective identity.

This unverified assumption in the benefits of education, which in Ontario inspired most early multicultural initiatives, found an echo at the MHSO.²³ Its first annual report states that “the Society was born as an effort to upgrade resources on ethnic groups in our libraries and archives and thus to strengthen the intellectual underpinnings of multiculturalism as a civic value.”²⁴ In his official history of the MHSO, Director Robert Harney reaffirmed the belief in the power of cultural and academic work to shape social behavior: “We believed that creating a well-catalogued archival and library collection of ethnocultural material, open to both the general public and scholars, was one of the first steps toward a province which recognized the variety of its rich heritage and the importance of preserving the sorts of historical records which help free people from ignorance of one another and dangerous dependence on stereotypes.”²⁵ In other words, libraries and archives could have an educating role, and education could change mentalities and facilitate social inclusion through shared understanding. Yet outside the realm of official history Harney wrote more critically of the connection between the policy of multiculturalism and academic work in ethnic studies. The policy-makers’ interest in ethnic history turned his dream of thriving ethnic studies in Canada into a reality, but at the same time it created a potential threat to the integrity and quality of the MHSO’s future academic achievements.²⁶

During its first five years, the MHSO devoted most of its resources to identifying and collecting documentary evidence in the province of Ontario. At the end of its five-year mandate, it had gathered exceptionally large and diverse collections documenting Ontario’s ethnic and immigrant history. There were over 382 linear feet of archival collections in hard copy, and 544 additional linear feet in microfilm format. The photograph collection counted some 17,000 originals and almost as many copies, and the library possessed hundreds of books. The Society also gathered nearly 4,800 tapes of oral histories.²⁷

At the same time, it took its educating mission seriously. It began to publish bibliographies and created a magazine, *Polyphony*, dedicated to immigration and ethnic history for popular audiences.²⁸ It also organized conferences and exhibits, destined both for scholars and the general public. The 1980-1981 annual report boasted the success of the Society's travelling exhibits and their educational importance for all Canadians.²⁹ The conferences were also presented in the language of education and social improvement: the results were "heightened community participation and a sense among all those who attend that Ontario is a polity which understands the meaning of being multi-ethnic."³⁰ Harney supported the educational mission of the Society and service to ethnic communities, but he thought that the collecting effort should have highest priority since the availability of sources was the necessary precondition for any serious historical study. However, because educational projects brought about more visible and immediate results than preservation, he feared that the Society's focus would have to prematurely shift in favor of education, or even publicity. In a 1979 position paper he submitted to the MSHO Board of Directors, Harney urged Board members to consider alternative funding sources without delay or they would "have to move away from the response to urgent need in historical research and preservation in order to meet more superficial political criteria in our wrapping up operations."³¹

Indeed, some Board members expressed concern that they might be *perceived* by lawmakers as not fulfilling their mandate because educational activities were neglected.³² They were convinced that if the Society had "a high profile and a favourable public image" it would be able "to make a better argument for its continuation."³³ The Ontario government confirmed this view. In 1981, the Minister of Culture and Recreation wrote to Harney that beyond the initial five-year commission his Ministry's support of the MHSO would depend on the kind of "services [it] might be prepared to render to various Ontario ministries,... ethnocultural communities and the general public."³⁴ Responding to these demands, the Society devoted more and more financial and human resources to public events.³⁵ Expenses for publications, conferences and exhibits went from 4 percent of total expenses in 1976 to 15 percent in 1980.³⁶ In 1981, an education officer was hired. By 1987, collection development was relegated to fourth place in the objectives of the Society, with publications and outreach taking priority.³⁷

All in all, academics consider the Society's scholarly achievements as substantial. In addition to its outstanding library and archival collections, its publications and public activities were well-received by scholars as well as the broader public. For Howard Palmer, one of the most prominent historians of Canadian immigration, the MHSO did "an admirable job spanning scholarly and

community concerns, and political imperatives did not compromise their work."³⁸ Yet its director and intellectual leader, Robert Harney, remained unsatisfied. As the rest of the article will show, he was deeply affected by the "heritage mongering" unleashed by the policy of multiculturalism. In addition, no matter how successful, the Society's future depended on the evolution of this policy and the volatile political context. This left the Society in a vulnerable position. By the time the initial grant ran out in 1982, the provincial government had other priorities than preserving and sharing the cultural heritage of its peoples. The educational power of cultural heritage projects lost its appeal and was replaced by school programs and curriculum reform. Between 1982 and 1985, the MHSO lived from hand to mouth as the government supplied only year-to-year grants, arguing fiscal constraint.³⁹ The provincial government started providing the MHSO with operating funds on an annual basis in 1985, but not enough to continue collecting materials on a large scale.⁴⁰

Even during the initial five-year period of abundance, the Society's director and board were aware that the MHSO was "feast[ing] in the face of certain famine," and this awareness deeply affected their operations.⁴¹ Some activities were thwarted by the prospect: the library that Harney had planned could only partially develop, for lack of a guaranteed future. Long-term plans were crushed, like that for a Society membership.⁴² Worse, some collecting projects remained unfinished, such as the large collection of the Ukrainian War Veterans' Association, which sat unprocessed at the seat of the Ukrainian National Federation.⁴³ Visits from scholars from Hong Kong and Finland who were to work on collections at the Society were put on hold indefinitely.⁴⁴ Between 1982 and 1985, with continuing uncertainty about its long term prospects, the Society kept making plans for the future while considerably reducing its operations in view of a possible shutdown. For example, the Society closed one of its two offices at the Archives of Ontario, reduced its grants for partner research institutions, and severely limited the collecting of new materials.⁴⁵ The days of financial bonanza were permanently over.

Heritage politics: negotiating the MHSO's jurisdiction

In 1976 the MHSO joined a cultural scene in which mainstream and community archives, historical societies, libraries and museums could all hope to get a share of public money and to play a role in the writing of Canada's multicultural history. In the early phase of multiculturalism, the government of Ontario offered significant funding for cultural projects, through the Wintario lottery and other grant programs.⁴⁶ Furthermore the new ethnic politics, cultural policies and academic interests of the 1970s all stimulated a fresh examination

of Canada's past that challenged traditional conceptions of heritage and library collections and placed long neglected parts of the population in the spotlight. This context, which encouraged competition among cultural heritage institutions, was bound to affect the MHSO's project.

Endowed with colossal funding, the Society was a new player to be reckoned with. A 1980 survey of archives sponsored by the Canada Council found that fully half had budgets of less than \$20,000, and 80 percent had less than \$75,000.⁴⁷ These small budgets forced most archives to spend under 10 percent of their budget on acquisitions while Canadian libraries typically spent 25 to 30 percent.⁴⁸ By contrast the MHSO could devote over 75 percent of its funds to collection development.⁴⁹ As a result, other institutions eyed the Society with envy. A review of the MHSO's first annual report in *Archivaria*, the journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists, commended the objectives of the Society but raised the question: "But why was a new body needed? Was it because the existing archives lack the energy and flexibility to carry out such a programme? Was it that their capabilities are unknown? Was it that they were outdone by the appeal of a new bureaucracy? Perhaps it was simply that they lack the three million dollars that endows the Multicultural History Society's efforts."⁵⁰

It was not just the MHSO's money that aroused antagonism. The innovative objectives of the Society's collecting activities challenged established practices in the heritage sector. The first annual report recognized "the concern and occasional hostility of those who represent more traditional provenances and collecting jurisdictions."⁵¹ Such feelings also transpired in the proceedings of the Ethnic Archives Workshop which professionals from around Canada attended in Toronto in 1983. Harney, who was one of the participants, later recalled that public archivists were skeptical of his Society's interest in ethnic materials.⁵² For the history professor, mainstream heritage institutions were hopelessly out of touch with the demographic and academic reality: "the majority who guard the entrances or sit in the directing offices of the nation's libraries, universities and archives is either ignorant of the policy's import for learning and collecting or object to it as faddish."⁵³ They criticized Harney's challenging idea of using "the principal [sic] of ethnicity as an organizing principle for our collection of materials."⁵⁴ Thus, the *Archivaria* review of the MHSO's first annual report denounced it as "no more than a subject approach" and warned: "It sets a precedent for the creation of similar collecting societies to promote commercial, labour, religious and other kinds of history. And it precludes the capacity of our government archives with their 'total' collecting mandates and our religious, business and association archives to provide a

rational acquisition strategy that will preserve all records which should be preserved."⁵⁵

For Harney, however, ethnicity was far more than a collection theme; it was a new form of provenance that "cut across traditional boundaries."⁵⁶ That is to say, it provided the broader context that could best account for the creation and life of certain cultural records. This view challenged the traditional archival conception of provenance, defined at the level of individual or corporate records creators. Harney blamed archivists and librarians for not recognizing ethnicity as a determinant of social organization and individual identity and urged them to consider ethnic communities as collective records creators.⁵⁷ He also wanted to break down institutional barriers between libraries, archives and museums, so that the different types of cultural materials produced within the context of a specific ethnic network would be kept together and preserved as one collection emanating organically from that context. As a historian, he believed in the use of all source types for the study of ethnic and immigrant communities, and he condemned information professionals for artificially separating them. Thus he criticized archivists for selecting institutional papers only and discarding "the books and pamphlets, even the translations of Somerset Maugham or Lenin into Ukrainian, Finnish or Yiddish, or the library cards in them" that could well have more importance to future ethnic historians. He advocated integrating archival, library and museum activities into research institutes devoted to the study of ethnicity and migration.⁵⁸

To accomplish its original mission, the Society used equally innovative methods. To locate materials of interest, the MHSO hired hundreds of field researchers – up to 350 at the height of the Society's field activities in 1980.⁵⁹ Generally chosen for their close ties to the ethnic communities and their language fluency, field researchers were charged with establishing contacts with key members in the communities, even joining and volunteering for ethnic organizations, identifying potential donors and scouting the communities for materials of interest.⁶⁰ There was a "from the bottom up" approach, as they went out in the field without any pre-defined selection criteria, and actively looked for resources from *within* a community. MHSO staff explicitly affirmed the importance of "ordinary people" and not just "notables,"⁶¹ and therefore their openness to all types of sources. A massive oral histories project was started shortly after the MHSO's inception to preserve "the memory culture of seventy ethnic and immigration groups."⁶² As Harney put it, the MHSO was "committed to a *dynamic* process of collecting material while it can still be found" and its work was "urgent" and "community-based."⁶³

These efforts were to a large extent successful. The MHSO's "from the bottom up" work resulted in large diversified collections of books, archival

records, ephemera, tapes, images, artifacts, and more, all documenting specific ethnic communities and their members, anchored in local contexts. Through the collection development choices they made, the Society pushed the boundaries of ethnicity further than the policy of multiculturalism defined them, including aboriginal groups, francophone and Scottish or Welsh Canadians. There was, however, one important limitation to the project: the collecting scope was restrained by the geographic boundaries imposed by the government's mandate.

The MHSO's jurisdiction included all of Ontario, but stopped there. These political boundaries, in many ways, did not make much academic sense. Harney was convinced that ethnic and immigrant history could best be studied in either a local or transnational framework, not a national or even a provincial one. With regards to the local framework, the province-wide mandate forced the Society to bring under the same roof materials documenting such diverse experiences as those of the isolated mining and lumber towns of the north, the cultural life of the urban elite, and the working-class neighborhoods of Toronto. Because of the sheer size of the province, local communities that gave documents to the Toronto-based MHSO found themselves separated from their cultural heritage. For this reason Harney favored decentralization and "the diffusion of library resources and archival collections" and claimed that cultural institutions should serve the local communities whose past they preserved and studied.⁶⁴ Consequently research institutes in ethnic and immigration studies – conceived broadly with "archivists, librarians and museologists and advisors to the academics" – should be "spaced wisely throughout the nation."⁶⁵ Thus, whenever possible the MHSO worked with local libraries or other organizations to ensure that they would hold copies of the materials local residents had donated to the Society.

With regards to the transnational framework, the MHSO's mandate prevented it from looking beyond the borders of Canada, although immigrant and ethnic groups in Ontario had connections with the "old country" and other immigrant settlements in the United States. In 1984 Harney observed that recent historical scholarship assumed the "essentially local, or old country and diaspora-wide nature of the cognitive maps held by immigrants and ethnics." He denounced the negative impact that an artificially imposed national or provincial framework would have on ethnic history writing.⁶⁶ Consequently the Society was constantly faced with tough decisions about the "Ontario content" of potential acquisitions. It firmly refused material relating to the country of emigration. For example, a letter to the Estonian Central Council warned that the MHSO's Research Committee wanted Estonian Canadian material only: "While the Committee understands the importance of the old world heritage to an ethnic group, our mandate does require us to try to distinguish between the

two and to collect only the former.”⁶⁷ Yet much of the material reflected their owners’ transnational lives, making it difficult to isolate “Ontario only” items. The Estonian Central Council answered that “Ontario is well-defined, but ‘Estonian Canadian experience in Ontario’ is not... Meaningful cultural experience cannot be defined by political boundaries in such free mobility.”⁶⁸ The immigrants’ connections to their homeland did not end with residence in Canada.

It was equally difficult to isolate Ontario materials from other North American ones. As Harney knew, immigrants to North American cities “blithely refused to take seriously North American national boundaries” and maintained “active chains of kinship” across the border.⁶⁹ For example the Estonian Central Council was involved in Estonian festivals that took place in the United States.⁷⁰ Similar problems arose with the records of the Serbian National Federation of the United States and Canada, headquartered in Pittsburgh,⁷¹ and with a Latvian newspaper published in New York: “*Laiks*... includes as much information pertaining to Ontario (especially Toronto) as it does to the United States.”⁷² Harney criticized Canadian politicians for ignoring the transnational character of ethnicity: it was “either unattractive or frightening” in Canada because of the prevailing nationalistic, anti-American agenda.⁷³ Nevertheless, the Society had to respect its mandate. The decision to include or exclude materials was made on a case by case basis, with much frustration. In a report, the field researcher for the Estonian Central Council noted that

“[T]he archival materials... relates directly to the life of Canadians of Estonian origin, their day to day life in Canada in the past 35 years, as opposed to their life in the ‘Old Country’... Some parts of their community life here is reflected also in other parts of the world, namely in the United States, Sweden, West Germany, United Kingdom, etc., and in their land of origin, in Estonia. Therefore the referenced material do include some items... that have their origin in these parts of the world, but such items also reflect the ethnocultural life of Canada.”⁷⁴

The Society accepted the Estonian material. But the papers of a Serbian Canadian leader ended up at the association’s headquarters in Pittsburgh, and the Latvian New York paper remained out of bounds.

Such jurisdictional problems were compounded by the rivalry that developed between the MHSO and other institutions. Harney specifically blamed the Canadian government for making the problem of competition worse in Canada than in the United States:

“In Canada the problem is more immediate because of the stronger tradition of state intervention in culture and because so much government money has been committed so rapidly to the effort. Many institutions... have come to believe that their funding future depends on well-publicized successes in the venture, on pleasing parliamentarians of various ethnic backgrounds by their responsiveness to the demands of the new policy.”⁷⁵

The 1980 report sponsored by the Canada Council agreed that competition was a problem, but put the blame on the low budgets most institutions suffered.⁷⁶ In fact the political context and budgetary constraints may simply have intensified a competition that was inevitable due to overlapping jurisdictions and ill-defined collection themes.

The main rival of the MHSO were federal institutions and private libraries and archives set up by well-established ethnic organizations, such as the Canadian Jewish Archives (CJA). The MHSO's objective of documenting ethnic diversity across various communities in Ontario clashed with the philosophy of the CJA and other community archives, for which the records documenting their histories were best kept and used within their own ethnic community. Such institutions favored mono-ethnic collections at the service of the ethnic community, regardless of location. This would facilitate access for community members while ensuring that the community would keep physical and intellectual control over the historical record, and therefore control over the production of historical narratives.⁷⁷ The MHSO's project was also at odds with the work of the National Ethnic Archives at the Public Archives of Canada. While he praised the National Library for its work on foreign language periodicals, which well complemented his Society's own project, Harney was suspicious of the PAC's strategy. Based in Ottawa, the capital of Canada and the second city in Ontario, the PAC had as much claim to Ontario materials as the MHSO. Its mandate was to collect documents “of national significance,” which for Harney amounted to a license to conduct “piracy and seizure of booty... in the name of the Queen.”⁷⁸ Many ethnic organizations, like fraternal societies, had national scope but local branches in Ontario, causing jurisdictional confusion.

The competition for ethnic materials between community, provincial, and federal institutions occasionally forced the MHSO to adjust its collecting strategies. For example the PAC and the MHSO both coveted the collections of the Finnish Canadian Historical Society and battled for several years while the leaders of that society debated the future of their holdings.⁷⁹ Eventually Ed Laine, coordinator for the National Ethnic Archives, practically begged the Finnish organization to accept his offer.⁸⁰ Dissensions over this issue were so

heated within the Finnish organization that Leonard Sillanpaa, a researcher for the MHSO, feared the organization might split.⁸¹ In this case as well as in others, the MHSO's solution was to keep originals for themselves and offer microfilm copies to all interested parties. At other times, the MHSO itself accepted to get copies only for the sake of compromise. For example, faced with serious competition with the Canadian Jewish Archives for Jewish materials in Toronto, the MHSO worked out an agreement by which it accepted to give the CJA priority as a depository, but obtained copies of all materials.⁸² All in all, the institutional and political frameworks the MHSO had to work with, which privileged the national and provincial dimensions, were at odds with the predominantly local and transnational nature of ethnic communities, which Harney wished to document. The history of the MHSO collections is therefore one of negotiations, adjustments and compromises. It reflects the political constraints created by the government mandate and the presence of competing institutions.

Ethnic politics: toward "equality of heritage"?⁸³

The MSHO also had to adapt their collecting strategies to the complex, sometimes confusing ethnic politics they encountered, namely the political issues emanating from the ethnocultural groups themselves. Harney once observed that "seeking academic respectability while placating ethnic sensibility works much like the committee trying to build a horse and ending up with a camel."⁸⁴ Such ethnic sensibilities were shaped by "old country" politics as well as new tensions over federal and provincial programs created under the policy of multiculturalism. The MHSO could not ignore ethnic politics, as they provided the framework within which ethnic communities made their decisions about the future of their historical records.

Each individual or organization approached by the MHSO faced the same choices: to leave their past unrecorded, to do the recording on their own, or to "mainstream" it by transferring their treasures to a public institution. Such a choice clearly had political implications. While some welcomed the MHSO's offer to take in, preserve, and organize access to their books, papers, photographs or other documents, many more had to be convinced of its benefits.⁸⁵ Some ethnic communities had a deeply entrenched mistrust of government, especially those that had long been discriminated against like Blacks and Chinese. A spokesman for the historical committee of a Black Masonic Lodge in Hamilton expressed deep suspicion of "outside" agencies due to "previous unfavorable experience."⁸⁶ Communities that had set up their own libraries, archives or historical societies also lacked enthusiasm. In 1977 the

Ukrainian Canadian Council criticized the government's interest in ethnic preservation, fearing that the new programs would displace community churches, centers, and other ethnic organizations, therefore weakening the very cultures they were trying to help.⁸⁷ They, like the Finnish and Jewish Canadians, had the resources to ensure the preservation of their past.

There were, however, strong incentives to accept the offer of the MHSO or other mainstream institutions. To have their records placed in public archives, their books in libraries and artifacts in museums meant that such ethnic materials were valuable in the eyes of the province and the country, and that the past they documented would take its place in Canadian history. Being accepted by the MHSO, the most important cultural heritage initiative in the province, implied symbolic recognition as a "legitimate" member of Ontario's multicultural history. This potentially had great significance for groups like the First Nations, who had been kept apart of mainstream society and history textbooks. But it was also important to most other ethnic groups, whose cultural heritage had long been neglected by mainstream institutions. In its negotiations with potential donors, the MHSO always emphasized the prestige such recognition would confer.⁸⁸

Yet a greater incentive for ethnic organizations and individuals could be the fear of what would happen if they did *not* accept to transfer their materials. They would not get to tell *their* side of the story, and history might always treat them unfairly, especially if rival organizations did contribute their materials. If one group managed to secure a place in the national or provincial libraries or archives, another was sure to interpret it as undue preference and potential distortion of "true" history. Thus Polish Canadians resented the interest shown by libraries in Ukrainian Canadians' book and manuscript collections; "red" (Socialist) Finns expressed unhappiness at the attention "white" (Conservative) Finns were getting, and vice-versa.⁸⁹ The MHSO's seeming preference for the white Finns' history in Thunder Bay prompted the release of a vitriolic pamphlet by members of the red Finnish Organization of Canada denouncing the "lies and misrepresentations" such an appropriation of history allegedly entailed.⁹⁰ Marginalized groups were the most reactive to perceived slight. Reacting to a rejection of his research proposal, the President of an aboriginal organization wrote ironically that "Perhaps it was presumptuous of me to feel that our native people could be considered an ethnocultural group. We have no story to tell of our immigrant experience because our people believe that our people before us originated right here."⁹¹ Although Harney repeated that aboriginal peoples would have their full place in the MHSO collections, dealing with First Nations organizations required diplomacy to prevent constructive criticism from being interpreted as rejection.⁹² These cases illustrate the

difficulty experienced by MHSO researchers to identify ethnocultural groupings in Canadian society. The policy of multiculturalism encouraged the formation or consolidation of clear-cut ethnic identities that would support formal ethnic organizations eligible for public funding. Aware of the stakes of the new policy, individuals from ethnocultural minorities struggled to respond to the MHSO's demands in ways that would best promote their economic and political interests. At the same time, even people from what was traditionally considered the dominant society, like French, Welsh and Scottish Canadians, were "ethnicized" when the MHSO included them in its collections, and therefore became facets of the official Canadian mosaic.

Concerns for "equal" representation may have been the greatest challenge faced by the MHSO in its effort to build collections. The Society tried to retain the appearance of neutrality, but it was hard to avoid being seen as "taking sides" as their efforts targeted a specific ethnic group. The first annual report of the MHSO admitted that "a combination of both opportunities and urgencies may have led some areas or elements within them to have received, apparently, more initial attention than others." But it asserted that this was a temporary imbalance that would eventually be resolved.⁹³ Harney wrote to a colleague that "as far as possible we try to equalize costs among various ethnic groups."⁹⁴ In the field too, MHSO staff tried to maintain a neutral stance. A researcher in Thunder Bay suggested that to avoid over-representation of Finns, projects in favor of the local Ukrainian and Italian populations should be started.⁹⁵ Harney was also aware that older, more established and better organized groups had a better chance of navigating the bureaucracy to obtain grants on their own, and that special attention to smaller, newer or otherwise less visible groups would be necessary.⁹⁶ But with up to 350 researchers active throughout the province, coordination of the collecting project to avoid gaps and overlaps proved difficult. Faced with the challenge of determining what constituted adequate representation of a community in its collections, the MHSO considered factors such as the community's demographic weight, its historical significance, and the availability of other collections documenting the community.

At the same time, the concern for fair representation could be turned into an argument to convince a donor to submit her collections to the MHSO. Writing to the History Committee of the Finnish Organization of Canada, Harney encouraged the leftist group to do their part in building a complete view of the past: "I would like you to keep in mind that...Wintario has heavily funded other Finnish materials which may not be as *representative* as the work you are doing, and that I would very much like to see the Society involved in helping you bring a true history of the Finnish Organization of Canada to the attention of the English-speaking public."⁹⁷ A MHSO researcher used a similar

appeal before the Dutch Vice Consul for Emigration, stressing that the history of the Dutch in North America had been limited to the Calvinist element, and that the story of Dutch Catholics also needed to be told so that "future generations of Dutch Canadian Catholics may also find strength in their heritage."⁹⁸ Eventually the MHSO would manage to cover most of Ontario's older ethnic communities and even begin to address recent immigrants like Vietnamese refugees.⁹⁹ At the end of the initial grant, field research was cut back and staff strove to "fill in the gaps."¹⁰⁰ However, some communities refused to participate, like Belgian organizations in Toronto.¹⁰¹ Above all, the choices made when defining the scope of collection development turned the MHSO into a shaper, and not just a collector, of Ontario's ethnocultural past. By causing potential donors to examine their own ethnicity, the Society could not but influence the process of construction of the very ethnic identities it was trying to pin down.

The concern for the development of representative collections forced the MHSO to ponder not only *whose* stories would be told, but also *what* would be told. Even when ethnic organizations were eager to see their past preserved and histories published they wanted a role in defining what aspects would be emphasized or pushed aside, and what perspective would be cast on past events. In fact, some groups had already written their own histories, either to preserve the stories of the first generations before they passed away, to transmit their cultures, to get Canadians to recognize their contributions to the nation's history, or even to build political clout. The research was often carried out by amateur historians of the same ethnic background. The first attempts generally resulted in overly positive and simple stories. Thus the first publications by and about Ukrainian Canadians tended to be "descriptive or filiopietistic accounts highlighting the accomplishments of selected individuals or groups within the community or advancing particular religious or ideological concerns."¹⁰² Ukrainian Canadians were the most successful at amassing historical publications,¹⁰³ but many other ethnic communities also wanted their contributions to Canadian history to be recognized.¹⁰⁴ Thus MHSO emissaries occasionally encountered amateur ethnic historians who were using the very materials they had come to collect. This could lead to delays in acquisition or outright refusals.¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, the goals of amateur ethnic historians did not coincide with those of the MHSO. The Society's main objective was to make possible research on the history of immigrant and ethnic groups in Canada, but also to bring as full a light as possible on such history. Ethnic historians, on the other hand, were often interested in showing the positive contributions of their group to Canadian history. In his writings Harney made quite clear his disdain for filiopietism and what he ironically called "explorerism" – the attempt by ethnic

Canadians to demonstrate that they had participated in the exploration and founding of Canada, alongside the French and British.¹⁰⁶ He also denounced ethnic lobbyists' attempts to present a group as homogeneous for political gain:

“...the concept of community is often a pious hope or political necessity for both the provincial government and the ‘ethnic leaders’ involved. While this may not be an evil in and of itself, it does mean that there are in every so-called community dissident subcommunities, ‘time-factions’, religious minorities, and quiet nonpolitical people who object to the self-styled leaders as conduits for relations with the other parts of society... care should be taken to reach the real people and those who may be the guardians of the most useful historical material.”¹⁰⁷

In the eyes of many ethnic organizations, therefore, MHSO researchers appeared as muckrakers. They disregarded self-proclaimed leaders to focus on ordinary people's lives. They could dig up unsavory events of the past, expose old feuds and current dissensions, or threaten to reveal confidential information. As the main field researcher among Polish Canadians observed, “There are too many participants still alive who wish to remain anonymous, too many politicians and various ringleaders whose interest of self-preservation demands that a solid lid of silence be put and maintained as long as possible.”¹⁰⁸ An elderly Polish Canadian couple who was being interviewed asserted that questions on their “views on the Jewish problem in pre-war Poland” were “inappropriate.”¹⁰⁹ For Finnish Canadians in Thunder Bay, it was labor union activities; for Chinese immigrants, the legal circumstances of their arrival in Canada.¹¹⁰ Thus, many ethnic communities faced a dilemma: a desire to see their histories taken seriously in Canada, and an equally strong desire to keep unwanted aspects hidden.

The MHSO staff resorted to all kinds of strategies to break this dilemma in their favor. The use of a field researcher from the same community could be effective. It helped gain the confidence of members and ease the potential sense of loss and alienation resulting from the transfer of collections to “strangers.” This accounts for the Society's success in acquiring scrapbooks, photographs, and other personal memento. If necessary the MHSO also offered to leave original materials in the hands of their owners, but asked for microfilm copies. In the last resort, they allowed access restrictions to preserve the donor's intellectual control over the materials. In a typical letter the assistant to the MHSO Research Coordinator wrongly depicted access restrictions as commonplace to a Czech organization: “[i]t is a fairly common occurrence that papers donated to an archives subject [sic] to certain restrictions. This is

especially frequent when they relate to either personally confidential or politically difficult situations..."¹¹¹ A donor could therefore require that written permission be obtained from them by all future users of their collections, or that access be barred for a number of years. Even the finding aids and catalogs, which were provided in the original language could arguably help the ethnic community "preserve but also ...*keep control* of the materials relating to their heritage,"¹¹² since it in effect limited access to speakers of the language.

Conclusion

Retrospectively, the MHSO's work looks like "throwing up sandbags against a flood,"¹¹³ because new immigrants kept coming to Ontario. After the mid-1980s, collecting slowed down considerably for lack of funding. New trends were becoming fashionable in the cultural heritage world: the 1980 report on Canadian archives noted that ethnocultural archives were out, and broadcast radio archives were in.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, in the 1980s the policy of multiculturalism shifted away from cultural preservation and toward the fight against discrimination and for economic and political equality, designed for the new "visible minorities." Multiculturalism itself came under attack as Canadians debated whether they should embrace "pluralism of origin" – the preservation of past ethnic heritage – or "pluralism of destination"¹¹⁵ – the encouragement of ethnic traits, foreign languages and customs as permanent features of future Canadian society. Since the 1980s, ambiguity about the meaning of multiculturalism has led to frequent policy shifts. The MHSO has survived thanks to grant funding and volunteer work, greatly reducing its staff and activities. Although a large portion of the archival collections were given to the Archives of Ontario, the MHSO library and archives still holds significant materials today, including all the publications it produced. The oral histories are now part of a new Oral History Museum run by the MHSO. The emphasis is squarely on public outreach with little scholarly research or active collecting.¹¹⁶

Throughout his career Harney deplored the confusion between multiculturalism as a demographic reality, an ethos, and a policy, and its deleterious impact on scholarly research and public education.¹¹⁷ He denounced "the search for roots, and the confusing of roots (heritage) with history," a mistake that government bodies and possibly academics made because this strategy has its "special charm," leading to funding and easy government and community approval.¹¹⁸ This article has shown that the politics of multicultural heritage affected the MHSO both in its management and the substance of its activities. Although the Society did not receive orders from the provincial government, awareness of financial dependence and competition with other

institutions caused its leaders to boost their public image through acquisitions and public events. The "bottom-up" approach allowed staff to harvest materials with an open mind, but ethnic politics sometimes forced them to accept copies rather than originals, to impose access restrictions or, more importantly, to leave aside sensitive materials. MHSO leaders pushed back the limits of ethnicity but had to confine collections to Ontario's political boundaries. Ramirez argues that the essentialist conception of ethnicity that inspired the original policy of multiculturalism deeply affected the development of ethnic studies in Canada.¹¹⁹ As Ontario officials launched programs to promote the study of ethnic groups in the province, they took the existence and definition of such ethnic groups for granted. Their predetermined conception of ethnicity contrasted with what the MHSO's researchers encountered in the field – a complex and ambiguous picture of shifting ethnic boundaries and identities, in part produced by those governmental programs.

As we assess the MHSO's work, we should keep in mind that there are "no innocent deposits," as Richard Cox put it.¹²⁰ In fact, all four stages of the production of historical knowledge, as defined by Trouillot, are deeply influenced by their political and cultural contexts. Archives and libraries are not neutral collectors of the world's knowledge; rather, they are the products of complex sets of contextual factors. They are not mere custodians but active participants in their societies' efforts to preserve and transmit their cultural heritage. During the building of a cultural repository and the process of historical meaning-making, individual and group identities as well as collective memory may be negotiated, challenged and redefined. In the case of the MHSO, the establishment of its collections and its scholarly and educational initiatives were influenced by, and in turn influenced, the complex political dynamics of the constitution and reconstitution of ethnic identities and their relationship to the provincial and national identity. The decisions it made shaped the extent and content of its collections, but also its limits or silences.¹²¹ Thus, the MHSO's mission to collect Ontario's multicultural heritage probably oriented it toward individuals and institutions that clearly displayed cultural differences and away from those that more readily assimilated into mainstream society. Its treatment of cultural diversity as a given of Canadian society and its concern for fair representation of all cultures may well have skewed its activities.

While it is not possible to point out such gaps and biases with certainty, precisely because what was not saved was never included in the making of Canadian history, there is a clear need for cultural heritage institutions to document their collection development policies and activities, and for historians to study them. Had the MHSO produced summaries of the decisions it made and their implementation, users of its holdings would have a clearer sense of its

“knowledge filters” – namely its assumptions, interpretations and limitations – and consequently what historical narratives they made possible. From a general standpoint, while many historians consider objectivity in history as a “noble dream”¹²² and call for more awareness and study of the interpretative biases inherent in their profession, most have underestimated or ignored the biases that shape the very materials they are working with.¹²³ As this article makes clear, more research is needed about these filters and biases so as to better understand the socially constructed nature of historical production, from the making of sources to the creation of historical narratives.¹²⁴

¹ A shorter version of this article was presented at the Library History Round Table’s Research Forum held at the 2010 American Library Association Annual Meeting.

² Robert Harney, “A History of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario,” *Polyphony: The Bulletin of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario* 9, no. 1 (1987): 1.

³ Howard Palmer, “Recent Studies in Canadian Immigration and Ethnic History: the 1970s and the 1980s,” in *From “Melting Pot” to Multiculturalism: the Evolution of Ethnic Relations in the United States and Canada*, ed. Valeria Gennaro Lerda (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1990), 78.

⁴ Robert Harney, “Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada: Problems of Bibliographic Control and Preservation,” *Ethnic Forum: Journal of Ethnic Studies and Ethnic Bibliography* 2 (Fall 1982): 26.

⁵ Robert Harney, “Entwined Fortunes: Multiculturalism and Ethnic Studies in Canada,” *Siirtolaisuus-Migration* 3 (1984): 88.

⁶ Terry Cook, “The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (2009): 512.

⁷ For a full account of these developments see Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

⁸ From a government document quoted in *Ibid.*, 195.

⁹ J. M. Bumsted, *Canada’s Diverse Peoples: a Reference Sourcebook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 253.

¹⁰ For the most thorough treatment of immigration to Canada see Ninette Kelley and M. J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: a History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

¹¹ For more information on the implementation of the 1971 policy of multiculturalism, see Jean Burnet, “Myths and Multiculturalism,” *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue canadienne de l’éducation* 4, no. 4 (1979): 43-58.

¹² Gregory S. Kealey, “The Writing of Social History in English Canada, 1970-1984,” *Social History* 10, no. 3 (October 1985): 347-365; Howard Palmer, “Canadian Immigration and Ethnic History in the 1970s and 1980s,” *International Migration Review* 15, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 471-501; Bruno Ramirez, “Les rapports entre les études ethniques et le multiculturalisme au Canada: vers de nouvelles perspectives,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, no. 3 (Spring 1991): 171-181.

¹³ Robert Harney, “Frozen Wastes: The State of Italian Canadian Studies,” in *Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity. Proceedings of the Symposium held at Casa Italiana*,

Columbia University, May 21-23, 1976, Center for Migration Series (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1977), 4, 7.

¹⁴ Kealey, "The Writing of Social History in English Canada," 358-359.

¹⁵ Memorandum from the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, "Policy Proposal," November 4, 1976, folder "Briefing Notes, Deputy Minister D. Silcox," box 26, Multiculturalism Policy Development Records (RG 74-42), barcode B367709, Archives of Ontario (AO); Memorandum from Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, Ontario Multicultural Policy Project Unit, October 8, 1986, folder "Briefing Notes, Deputy Minister D. Silcox," box 26, Multiculturalism Policy Development Records (RG 74-42), barcode B367709, AO; Minutes of the Advisory Council on Multiculturalism, February 13, 1976, folder "Committees 1975-76, Cultural Contributions," Administrative records of the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship (RG 74-28), container M1, AO.

¹⁶ Memorandum, "Recommendation Concerning the Cultural Histories Project," May 15, 1972, folder "Cultural Histories Booklet," Advisory Services Records of the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship (RG 74-22), container 1, AO.

¹⁷ Robert Harney and Harold Troper, "Assessment of a Multicultural History Project: Preliminary Questions," (unpublished report, n.d., Robert F. Harney Papers, MHSO): 19.

¹⁸ Harney and Troper, "Assessment of a Multicultural History Project."

¹⁹ Minutes of the Advisory Council on Multiculturalism, August 22, 1975, folder "Committees 1975-76, Cultural Contributions," Administrative records of the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship (RG 74-28), container M1, AO.

²⁰ Harney, "A History of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario," 3; Lillian Petroff, "The Multicultural History Society of Ontario: 1976-2003," (unpublished report, n.d., Vertical file, MHSO): 3.

²¹ MHSO papers of incorporation, in Multicultural History Society of Ontario, *Multicultural History Society of Ontario Annual Report, 1976-1977* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1977), MHSO collection, MHSO (thereafter *MHSO Report*). Lillian Petroff, who worked for the MHSO from its inception, believes that the Minister of Culture was supportive of high-quality scholarly research (Lillian Petroff, in telephone interview with the author, March 17, 2010).

²² Ramirez, "Les rapports entre les études ethniques et le multiculturalisme," 174.

²³ Memorandum, "Support for Multicultural Heritage Activities," February 23, 1987, folder "Ministries, Initiatives: Implementation and Follow-up," box 26, Multiculturalism Policy Development Records (RG 74-42), barcode B367709, AO.

²⁴ *MHSO Report, 1976-1977.*

²⁵ Harney, "A History of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario," 1.

²⁶ See especially Harney, "Entwined Fortunes"; Harney, "Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada."

²⁷ Numbers found in the appendix to *MHSO Report, 1980-1981*, folder "Multicultural History Society, 1981," Archivist of Ontario's administrative, correspondence and subject files (RG 17-1), barcode B269545, AO.

²⁸ Harney, "A History of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario," 12.

²⁹ *MHSO Report, 1980-1981.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

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- ³¹ Harney to Board of Directors, March 28, 1979. MHSO collection, MHSO.
- ³² Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 30, 1981, folder "Multicultural History Society, 1981," Archivist of Ontario's administrative, correspondence and subject files (RG 17-1), container B430071, Archives of Ontario.
- ³³ Petroff, "The Multicultural History Society of Ontario: 1976-2003," 4. See also Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 26, 1980, folder "Multicultural History Society, 1980," Archivist of Ontario's administrative, correspondence and subject files (RG 17-1), container B430071, AO. A board member mused that "a little public relations may be necessary."
- ³⁴ Minister of Culture and Recreation, to Harney, November 19, 1981, folder "Multicultural History Society, 1981," Archivist of Ontario's administrative, correspondence and subject files (RG 17-1), container B430071, AO.
- ³⁵ *MHSO Report*, 1980-1981.
- ³⁶ Numbers computed from the MHSO's annual reports for the period.
- ³⁷ Harney, "A history of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario," 14.
- ³⁸ Palmer, "Recent Studies in Canadian Immigration and Ethnic History," 79.
- ³⁹ Minister to Harney, AO.
- ⁴⁰ Elizabeth Price, "The Multicultural History Society of Ontario," (unpublished brochure, April 1993, Vertical file, MHSO); *MHSO Report*, 1985-1986.
- ⁴¹ Robert Harney, "Position Paper on Future Activities and Funding of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario" (unpublished, 1979), 6, MHSO collection, MHSO.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 10.
- ⁴³ Ukrainian National Federation of Canada to Groenberg, April 12, 1982, folder "Ukrainian National Federation," box "Research Project," MHSO; Harney to Wintario Non Capital Project Grant Office, March 7, 1983, folder "Ukrainian National Federation," box "Research Project," MHSO.
- ⁴⁴ Harney to Israel, February 15, 1980, folder "Israel, Milton," box "Record of Researchers, L-Z," MHSO.
- ⁴⁵ Petroff, "The Multicultural History Society of Ontario: 1976-2003." See also Harney to Hill, August 9, 1981, folder "Daniel G. Hill and Associates," box "Record of Researchers, A-K," MHSO.
- ⁴⁶ In 1980 a survey sponsored by Canada Council found that grant programs for cultural activities and provincial lottery funds were reaching significantly more archives in Ontario than other provinces. Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, *Canadian Archives: Report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada* (Ottawa: The Council, 1980), 46.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ Harney, "Position Paper," 4.
- ⁵⁰ Marion Beyea, "Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Annual Report, 1976/77," *Archivaria*, no. 5 (Winter -1978 1977): 219.
- ⁵¹ *MHSO Report*, 1976-1977.
- ⁵² Harney to Program Officer, Ethnic Histories Program, Multiculturalism Sector, Secretary of State, July 30, 1985, MHSO collection, MHSO.
- ⁵³ Harney, "Entwined Fortunes," 69.

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- ⁵⁴ *MHSO Report, 1976-1977.*
- ⁵⁵ Beyea, "Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Annual Report," 218-219.
- ⁵⁶ *MHSO Report, 1976-1977.*
- ⁵⁷ Harney, "Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada," 27.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.
- ⁵⁹ See the organizational chart in *MHSO Report, 1980-1981.*
- ⁶⁰ The researchers' reports, found in the files of the MHSO Records of Researchers, illustrate this approach. See for example the report by Corinne Egier for October-December, 1977 (folder "Egier, Corinne," box "Record of Researchers, A-K," MHSO) or Marion Kunstler's report for the period ending January 15, 1978 (folder "Kunstler, Marion," box "Record of Researchers, A-K"). In her report, Kunstler writes that "to build confidence and rapport" she "attended birthday parties... helped with sorting and lugging books... and performed such diverse tasks as bringing one subject to the ophthalmologist."
- ⁶¹ Harney to De Marinis, June 20, 1977, folder "Ottawa Jewish Historical Society," box "Research Project," MHSO.
- ⁶² *MHSO Report, 1980-1981.*
- ⁶³ Harney to Savard, April 5, 1978, folder "Centre de Recherche en Civilisation Canadienne Française," box "Research Project," MHSO. *Italics mine.*
- ⁶⁴ Harney, "Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada," 26.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.
- ⁶⁶ Harney, "Entwined Fortunes," 89.
- ⁶⁷ Harney to Aruja, November 30, 1977, folder "Aruja, Endel," box "Record of Researchers, A-K", MHSO.
- ⁶⁸ Aruja to Harney, December 11, 1977, folder "Aruja, Endel," box "Record of Researchers, A-K", MHSO.
- ⁶⁹ Harney, "Frozen Wastes," 119.
- ⁷⁰ Aruja to Harney.
- ⁷¹ Memorandum by Janet Carrington, "Meeting with Olga Markovich," August 2, 1978, folder "Serbian," box "Research Project," MHSO.
- ⁷² Carmela Patrias, "Report for May-August," 1977, folder "Patrias, Carmela," box "Record of Researchers, L-Z", MHSO.
- ⁷³ Harney, "Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada," 119.
- ⁷⁴ Treasurer of the Estonian Central Council in Canada to Rachwal, Secretary of MHSO, April 1, 1977, folder "Estonian Central Council," box "Research Project", MHSO.
- ⁷⁵ Harney, "Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada," 23-24.
- ⁷⁶ Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, *Canadian Archives*, 64.
- ⁷⁷ Many ethnic-run archives and historical societies were created in the 1960s and 1970s, even as mainstream institutions and the Canadian government were becoming interested in ethnic history. See Lisa Singer, "The Value of Community-based Ethnic Archives: a Resource in Development" (M.A. Department of History, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1997), 38, 60, <http://hdl.handle.net/1993/1018>.
- ⁷⁸ Harney, "Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada," 25.

⁷⁹ A memo to the MHSO presents a timeline of the FCHS's dealings with the PAC and the MHSO between 1976 and 1979. It deplores the divisions that exist within the FCHS itself over the future recipients of their records (Memorandum to Groenberg, n.d., folder "Finnish Canadian Historical Society, Sudbury," box, "Research Project," MSHO.)

⁸⁰ Laine to President of the Finnish Canadian Historical Society, July 28, 1978, folder "Correspondence and official documents, 1971-1978," Finnish Canadian Historical Society records, Multicultural History Society of Ontario fonds (F 1405), AO.

⁸¹ Memorandum, n.d..

⁸² Memorandum by the MHSO Jewish Studies Committee, "Cooperative projects with the Canadian Jewish Archives," March 30, 1978, folder "Egier, Corinne," box "Record of Researchers, A-K," MHSO. An old lady in possession of important documents for the history of Ukrainian Canadians refused to donate them to the PAC, but accepted that the MHSO retain copies (Zoriana Sokolsky, "Report for the last three months of 1978," February 16, 1979, folder "Sokolsky, Zoriana," box "Record of Researchers, L-Z", MHSO).

⁸³ *MHSO Report*, 1980-1981. The phrase is taken from part 1.

⁸⁴ Harney and Troper, "Assessment of a Multicultural History Project," 7.

⁸⁵ Singer confirms that "there is division between Canadian ethnic communities over the degree to which the community should accept public sector or outside support." (Singer, "The Value of Community-based Ethnic Archives," 58).

⁸⁶ "Black Masonic Order notes," handwritten draft, n.d., folder "Blacks," box "Research Project," MHSO.

⁸⁷ Harney, "Entwined Fortunes," 76.

⁸⁸ For example in a letter to the Estonian Central Council in Canada the MHSO secretary stressed that the Council's donation would spur Estonian studies in Canada and increase awareness of Estonian immigrants' contributions (Treasurer of the Estonian Central Council in Canada, to Rachwal, April 28, 1977, folder "Estonian Central Council in Canada," box "Research Project," MHSO).

⁸⁹ Harney to Tolvanen, December 1, 1980, folder "Finnish, general," box "Research Project," MHSO; Memorandum to Harney and Groenberg, August 1, 1978, folder "Lake Superior Oral History Project," box "Research Project," MHSO.

⁹⁰ "All people should accept the truth and reject lies and misrepresentations," (unpublished pamphlet, n.d., folder "Finnish Organization of Canada," box "Research Project," MHSO).

⁹¹ Mitchell to Harney, February 25, 1977, folder "North American Indian Travelling College," box "Research Project," MHSO.

⁹² Harney to Mitchell, March 7, 1977, folder "North American Indian Travelling College," box "Research Project," MHSO.

⁹³ *MHSO Report*, 1976-1977.

⁹⁴ Harney to Gervais, May 11, 1979, folder "Centre de Recherches en Civilisation Canadienne Française," box "Research Project," MHSO.

⁹⁵ Tolvanen to Harney, January 16, 1981, folder "Finnish, general," box "Research Project," MHSO.

⁹⁶ Singer, "The Value of Community-based Ethnic Archives," 58.

⁹⁷ Harney to Eklund, December 21, 1978, folder "Finnish Organization of Canada," box "Research Project," MHSO. Italics mine.

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- ⁹⁸ Boekelman to Rypkema, August 23, 1978, folder "Boekelman, Marinus," box "Record of Researchers, A-K," MHSO.
- ⁹⁹ Memorandum, "Research in the Toronto Vietnamese community," May 30, 1980, folder "Ngo, Hahn," box "Record of Researchers, L-Z," MHSO.
- ¹⁰⁰ Groenberg to Hsieh, March 11, 1981, folder "Hsieh, Alice," box "Record of Researchers, A-K," MHSO. See also Harney to Savard, 1983, folder "Centre de Recherches en Civilisation Canadienne Française," box "Research Project," MHSO.
- ¹⁰¹ Harney to President, Belgo-Canadian Association, November 1, 1977, folder "Belgian," box "Research Project," MHSO; Memorandum on Belgian organizations, June 20, 1978, folder "Belgian," box "Research Project," MHSO.
- ¹⁰² Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk, "Editors' Introduction," in *Canada's Ukrainians: Negotiating an Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), xix.
- ¹⁰³ Jean Burnet, "Comment: English-Canadian Ethnic Historical Societies [with Response]," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 13, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 70; Julie Lalonde, "The Roots of Multiculturalism: Ukrainian-Canadian Involvement in the Multiculturalism Discussion of the 1960s as an Example of the Position of the 'Third Force'," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 38, no. 1 (2006): 50.
- ¹⁰⁴ Franca Iacovetta, *The Writing of English Canadian Immigrant History* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1997), 3; Palmer, "Canadian Immigration and Ethnic History," 472. German Canadians were a notable exception, owing to two world wars and a desire for assimilation (Lalonde, "The Roots of Multiculturalism," 61, note 43).
- ¹⁰⁵ For example the President of the Polish National Union, the most important Polish Canadian organization, was writing a book using the records of his organization when the MHSO field researcher met with him, and expressed his reluctance to part with them (Roman Bielski, "Progress report for the period July-August-September 1982," folder "Bielski, Roman," box "Record of Researchers, A-K," MHSO).
- ¹⁰⁶ Harney defined explorerism as the "anxiety to have your career in the land coincide with or intersect the great events and eras of the nation." (Harney, "Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada," 19-20).
- ¹⁰⁷ Harney and Troper, "Assessment of a Multicultural History Project," 20.
- ¹⁰⁸ Roman Bielski, "Final report", January 1, 1983, folder "Bielski, Roman," box "Record of Researchers, A-K," MHSO.
- ¹⁰⁹ Bielski to Harney, July 8, 1980, folder "Bielski, Roman," box "Record of Researchers, A-K," MHSO.
- ¹¹⁰ Memorandum, August 1, 1978; Lee to the HSO, January 17, 1978, folder "Lee, Chang," box "Record of Researchers, L-Z," MHSO.
- ¹¹¹ Carrington to President of the Czechoslovak Association of Czechs, Slovaks, and Sub-Carpatho Reuthenians, November 24, 1977, folder "Czech," box "Research Project," MHSO. For another example see Groenberg to Vapaa Sena, October 27, 1981, folder "Finnish, general," box "Research Project," MHSO.
- ¹¹² Memorandum by MHSO, "Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Objectives, rationale and funding," n.d., folder "Ukrainian National Federation," box "Research Project," MHSO. Italics mine.
- ¹¹³ Harney, "Position Paper," 3.

¹¹⁴ Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, *Canadian Archives*, 64.

¹¹⁵ Robert Harney, "'So Great a Heritage as Ours': Immigration and the Survival of the Canadian Polity," *Daedalus* 117, no. 4 (October 1, 1988): 85.

¹¹⁶ MHSO, "Multicultural History Society of Ontario - Research," *MHSO - Multicultural History Society of Ontario*, n.d., <http://www.mhso.ca/research.html>; Archives of Ontario, "Multicultural Historical Society of Ontario fonds," *Archives of Ontario*, n.d., http://ao.minisisinc.com/scripts/mwimain.dll/33/DESCRIPTION_WEB_INT/REFD/F~201405?JUMP; MHSO, "The Oral History Museum," *The Oral History Museum*, n.d., <http://www.ohmuseum.ca/>.

¹¹⁷ Harney, "Entwined Fortunes," 70.

¹¹⁸ Robert Harney, "A talk before the delegates attending the Conference of the Canadian Jewish Historical Society in Saskatoon," (unpublished paper, June 1979, Robert F. Harney Papers, MHSO).

¹¹⁹ Ramirez, "Les rapports entre les études ethniques et le multiculturalisme."

¹²⁰ Richard J. Cox, *No Innocent Deposits: Forming Archives by Rethinking Appraisal* (Lanham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003).

¹²¹ Scholars in many disciplines have written on silences in archives since the 1990s. See for example Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, and Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance."

¹²² Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹²³ Cook, "The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country," 512.

¹²⁴ Malone argues for such new approaches to library history in a multicultural framework (Cheryl Knott Malone, "Toward a Multicultural American Public Library History," *Libraries and Culture* 35, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 82-83).