

# Council of Nova Scotia Archives Cooperative Acquisition Strategy

Approved at CNSA Annual General Meeting, May 24, 2001

## STRATEGY BACKGROUNDER

### 1.0 STRATEGY STATEMENT

### 2.0 STRATEGY OBJECTIVE

### 3.0 APPLICATION

### 4.0 GUIDELINES

### 5.0 ACQUISITION CRITERIA

### 6.0 GLOSSARY

### 7.0 APPENDICES

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## STRATEGY BACKGROUNDER

The Canadian Council of Archives has for a number of years promoted the development of acquisition strategies at both the national and the provincial levels. Although most major archival institutions have well-developed acquisition policies, and sometimes acquisition strategies, in place, little progress has been made in the area of developing a provincial model. The Executive of the Council of Nova Scotia Archives decided to undertake the development of such a strategy late in 1999 and struck a committee for that purpose. The committee consists of Ernest Dick (CNSA President), Anita Price (Past President of the CNSA and the CNSA's current representative on the Board of Trustees of Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management), Johanna Smith (CNSA Education, Outreach and Network Archivist), W. Brian Speirs (Provincial Archivist), Margaret Campbell (Manager, Archival Holdings Management, NSARM), and Peter Crowell (CNSA Vice-President), who agreed to chair the committee. During Johanna Smith's leave of absence, Christine Lovelace (CNSA EONA Archivist) has been part of the committee.

There were activities within the Nova Scotia archival community which made this a timely undertaking. Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) had, since 1998, been conducting a reappraisal of government archives falling outside the Government Records Act. The scope of this undertaking included school registers and municipal government records. Most of these records were returned to their creators or to appropriate archival repositories in the areas concerned. NSARM had also in late 1997 changed its acquisition policy with regard to archival records from the private sector. While its primary mandate in this area had always been to acquire archival materials which were provincial in scope, it had also acquired significant local archival materials. NSARM now focuses its private-sector acquisition on the records of creators whose activities or interests are provincial in scope. It refers potential donors of archival materials which are local or regional in scope to an appropriate local or regional repository.

The Executive felt the CNSA had an important role to play in coordinating the rationalization of archival holdings by CNSA institutional members. The Executive further felt that the best means of achieving this was through the development of a cooperative acquisition strategy, which would provide a framework for the dispersal of deaccessioned archival records among CNSA institutional members. More importantly, it would provide a framework for the cooperative acquisition of archival materials by institutional members, thereby enhancing Nova Scotia's archival system.

It was generally agreed upon by all members of the committee that the overall purpose of any Cooperative Acquisition Strategy would be to "ensure and promote the cooperative acquisition and preservation of Nova Scotia's archival heritage at the local, regional and provincial levels." The CNSA Acquisition Strategy Committee met three times. The committee deemed it appropriate that the draft set out specifically the acquisition responsibilities of NSARM, while those of other institutional members were articulated in general. This has been done in recognition of the role NSARM plays within the archival community in Nova Scotia. The current Acquisition Policies of all of the CNSA Institutional Members form an appendix to the draft Strategy.

A draft of the Cooperative Acquisition Strategy was distributed to all of our Institutional Members in advance of our 2000 Annual General Meeting, where a motion for its approval was put forward. At the request of one or two members, who wished their boards to have longer to consider the document, the Strategy was tabled, to be brought forward for a vote at the 2001 Annual General Meeting of the CNSA. Since that time every CNSA Institutional Member has been contacted either in person, by email, telephone or letter by the Chair of the Acquisition Strategy Committee. Their responses and input have been invaluable in making additional revisions to the draft. The Cooperative Acquisition Strategy presented here is a result of all of this work. Like all CNSA documents it will always be subject to timely revision.

The key to understanding the Strategy is the distinction between scope and significance. Scope refers to the predominant geographic focus of activity or interest of the records creator. The Strategy does not address the creator's local, regional or provincial significance. Significance refers to the creator's local, regional or provincial (or national) status. For example, the Helen Creighton fonds (NSARM) is provincial both in scope and significance. On the other hand, the Simeon Perkins fonds (Queens County Museum) is local in scope but provincial or national in significance. The Winthrop Bell fonds (NSARM) is also local in scope but provincial in significance.

"Today's information explosion is resulting in greater quantities of documentary information, while the resources needed to manage information efficiently are declining rapidly. Thus a planned, systematic method for acquiring archival records is essential to the survival and success of all archival repositories" -- Richard Valpy, Preface, Building a National Acquisition Strategy (Canadian Council of Archives, 1995). The CNSA sees this Cooperative Acquisition Strategy as a building block in the development of an even stronger archival community in Nova Scotia. It is the objective of the CNSA to continue in an energetic way to improve archival standards throughout Nova Scotia, through

education and through the development of initiatives, such as this strategy, which we believe will be beneficial to the entire community.

The CNSA's membership reviewed and approved this document at the Annual General Meeting of May 24, 2001.

## **1.0 STRATEGY STATEMENT**

CNSA institutional members will acquire archival materials on a cooperative basis according to the Guidelines set out in 4.0 and the Acquisition Criteria set out in 5.0.

## **2.0 STRATEGY OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this strategy is to ensure and promote the cooperative acquisition and preservation of Nova Scotia's archival heritage at the local, regional and provincial levels.

## **3.0 APPLICATION**

3.1 This strategy applies to all acquisitions of archival materials, regardless of medium, by CNSA institutional members.

3.2 This strategy also applies to the reappraisal and deaccessioning of archival materials by CNSA institutional members.

3.3 In this Strategy "scope" means the predominant geographic focus of activity or interest of the creator of the records.

## **4.0 GUIDELINES**

4.1 In general, CNSA institutional members acquire archival materials from their sponsoring body and/or Nova Scotian individuals, families, and corporate bodies.

4.2 In general, CNSA institutional members will acquire archival materials which are local or regional in scope, pertaining to their locality, or which pertain to their thematic acquisition mandate, which may be local, regional, or provincial in scope. In general, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) will acquire archival materials which are provincial in scope.

4.3 CNSA institutional members will normally, where material falls outside their sphere of acquisition as set out 5.0, refer the prospective donor(s) to the most appropriate repository.

4.4 If a CNSA institutional member is offered the records of a corporate body which maintains or has designated another archives as its repository, the institutional member will refer the prospective donor(s) to the designated repository.

4.5 If a CNSA institutional member is offered the records of an individual or family whose records are known to be at another repository, the institutional member will so advise the prospective donor(s).

4.6 CNSA institutional members developing or revising their acquisition policies should do so in accordance with this Cooperative Acquisition Strategy and in recognition of the Archival Acquisition Policies of other institutional members.

4.7 CNSA institutional members reappraising and deaccessioning archival materials should do so in accordance with this Cooperative Acquisition Strategy and in recognition of the Archival Acquisition Policies of other institutional members.

4.8 CNSA institutional members acquiring, reappraising and deaccessioning archival materials should take into consideration donor's wishes in relation to them, as well as any legal requirements which may apply.

4.9 CNSA institutional members in the same location or region or with the same thematic acquisition mandate are encouraged to develop cooperative acquisition strategies.

The CNSA Executive will provide a forum to discuss any issues which may arise in relation to the application of the Strategy.

## **5.0 ACQUISITION CRITERIA**

### **5.1 In general, CNSA institutional members acquire archival materials from:**

Their sponsoring body and its predecessor body/ies.

Organizations and individuals associated with the sponsoring body:

Municipal governments.

School boards and schools.

Corporate bodies which are local or regional in scope or whose records fall within thematic acquisition mandates, which may be local, regional or provincial in scope.

Nova Scotian individuals and families whose activities are local or regional in

scope or whose records fall within thematic acquisition mandates, which may be local, regional or provincial in scope.

## **5.2 In general, NSARM acquires archival materials from:**

All agencies, boards, commissions and departments of the Government of Nova Scotia and their predecessor and/or successor bodies.

Provincial Crown corporations.

Any former agency, board, commission, or department of the Government of Nova Scotia which has been privatized.

Corporate bodies which are provincial in scope.

Individual Nova Scotians whose activities are provincial or national in scope.

Nova Scotian families whose activities are provincial in scope.

## **6.0 GLOSSARY**

Corporate body. An organization or association of persons that is identified by a particular name and that acts, or may act, as an entity. Typical examples of corporate bodies are societies, institutions, business firms, nonprofit enterprises, governments, government agencies, religious bodies, local churches, and conferences.

## **7.0 APPENDICES**

Archival Acquisition Policies of CNSA institutional members.

For information on archival holdings of CNSA institutional members, see ArchWay, Nova Scotia's Database of Archival Descriptions.