



The Canadian Commission for UNESCO reveals the first inscriptions to the Canada Memory of the World Register

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The [Canadian Commission for UNESCO](#) announced today at a press conference held at the [Royal BC Museum](#) six new inscriptions to the Canada Memory of the World Register. The event, intended for media and partners of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and the Royal BC Museum, featured a presentation from collections holders such as the Royal BC Museum, [Library and Archives Canada](#), [National Film Board of Canada](#) and [Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec](#) (BAnQ).

One of the highlights of the event was an interpretation of sacred songs that were part of the Ida Halpern collection, submitted by the Royal BC Museum to the Canada Memory of the World Register. The Canoe Paddle Song and the Farewell Song, originally sung by Peter Webster, were interpreted again today by his great-grandson, Guy Louie, accompanied by his mother Pamela Webster and his uncle Hudson Webster.

The purpose of the [Memory of the World Program](#), created by UNESCO in 1992, is to facilitate the preservation of documentary heritage and ensure access to it. The international register and national registers objective is to raise awareness about the importance of documentary heritage as the “memory” of humanity. The [Canadian Advisory Committee for Memory of the World](#) review applications and make recommendation for both the International Register and the Canada Memory of the World Register.

In creating the Canada Memory of the World Register in May 2017, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO wanted it to be the reflection of the immense diversity of the documentary heritage that is significant to Canada whose roots extend from the initial settling of the land by Indigenous Peoples up to the present time.

New inscriptions to the Canada Memory of the World Register include:

- **The Ida Halpern Fonds**, Royal British Columbia Museum
Dr. Ida Halpern captured an unprecedented number of sound recordings of leading elders in predominantly Kwakwaka'wakw, but also Nuu-chah-nulth, Tlingit, Haida, and Coast Salish communities. Many of the elders Dr. Halpern recorded were willing to offer songs because they recognized the generational decline in the common usage of their Indigenous culture and the impending loss of cultural practices if not recorded.

- **The Vancouver Island Treaties**, Royal British Columbia Museum
Although primarily intended to ensure that title was extinguished to enable settlement by newcomers, the agreements safeguarded rights held by the First Nations communities, including the right to fish, hunt, and cultivate land.
- **Canadian Pacific Railway Company Fonds**, Canadian Railroad Historical Association, [Exporail](#)
The collection documents the management and administration of an international company that played a major role in many key aspects of society, including transportation, telecommunication, culture, corporate art, immigration, colonization, agriculture, tourism, engineering, natural-resource development, insurance, trucking, warfare, aviation, and real estate.
- **Witnesses of Founding Cultures: Early Books in Aboriginal Languages (1556-1900)**, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec
The books are among the earliest works to describe the vocabulary and grammar of various Indigenous peoples. They document the linguistic heritage of the First Peoples who inhabited present-day Québec in the Iroquoian languages (including Mohawk and Huron-Wyandot), Algonquian languages (including Algonquin, Abenaki, Cree, Innu/Montagnais and Mi'kmaq) and Inuktitut.
- **Images of Quebec City and the surrounding area (1860 to 1965): Photo archives of the J. E. Livernois Ltée fonds**, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec
These images document bygone days, along with people, places and buildings that have long disappeared or changed. In the early 20th century, Livernois photographers travelled to remote regions, such as Saguenay and Gaspé, to capture scenes of daily life rarely seen at the time.
- **The Scrapbooks Debates**, [Library of Parliament](#)
In the years following Confederation, neither of Canada's two Parliamentary chambers kept official records of debates. While both chambers recorded session minutes and decisions in journals from 1867 onward, the only source of debate transcriptions was the Parliamentary Press Gallery. These scrapbooks are a unique compilation of political discussions, and the best available representation of proceedings, discussions, and indeed the intentions of legislators.

The Canada Memory of the World Register also includes Canada's seven inscriptions of outstanding universal value to the International Memory of the World Register:

- Marshall McLuhan: The Archives of the Future (Library and Archives Canada and [University of Toronto](#) - inscribed in 2017)
- Mixed Traces and Memories of the Continents - The Sound of the French people of America ([Cinémathèque québécoise](#) - inscribed in 2017)
- Philosophical Nachlass of Ludwig Wittgenstein (Joint application with Austria, Netherlands and the United Kingdom - [McMaster University](#) - inscribed in 2017)

- The discovery of insulin and its worldwide impact (University of Toronto - inscribed in 2013)
- Neighbours, animated, directed and produced by Norman McLaren in 1952 (National Film Board of Canada - inscribed in 2009)
- The [Hudson's Bay Company archival records](#) (Archives Manitoba - inscribed in 2007)
- Quebec Seminary Collection, 1623-1800 (17th-19th centuries) - [Les Musées de la civilisation](#), Québec, inscribed in 2007)

- 30 -

About the Canadian Commission for UNESCO

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO serves as a bridge between Canadians and the vital work of UNESCO—the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. By promoting UNESCO values, priorities and programs in Canada and by bringing the voices of Canadian experts to the international stage, the Commission contributes to a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future that leaves no one behind.

About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores the province's human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), we are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

Contact information

Angèle Cyr
Senior Advisor, Public Affairs
Canadian Commission for
UNESCO angele.cyr@ccunesco.ca

Royal BC Museum Media Inquiries
250-387-5051
news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca