

The Arquives, Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives.



"AIDS and the Law: Problems with the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1983 - A Physician's Perspective"

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions42658>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Textual records
Date Range: 1990
Part Of: AIDS Action Now! fonds
Fonds Number: F0003
Series Number: 5
File Number: F0003-05-029
Physical Description: Textual records

Scope and Content:

The file contains Philip Berger's paper "AIDS and the Law: Problems with the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1983 - A Physician's Perspective" presented at the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice Conference.

Storage Location: Box 12
Access Restrictions: Open
Description Level: File
Accession Number: 1993-006//10(25)



Certificates, Memberships and Passports

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions27288>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Textual records
Date Range: 1916- 1992
Part Of: William Atkinson fonds
Fonds Number: F0025
Series Number: 01
File Number: F0025-01-001
Physical Description: Textual Records

Scope and Content:

copy of birth certificate, Certificate of discharge, certificate of lifeboating, certificate of master of foreign going steamships, copy of certificate of Canadian citizenship, certificate of postwar credit, passports, memberships, The Canadian Naval Corvette Trust Certificate

Storage Location: Box 1
Access Restrictions: Open
Description Level: File



Clippings, research, resources

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions22767>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Textual records
Date Range: 1895 [copied 19-] -1998
Part Of: James Egan fonds
Fonds Number: F0110
Series Number: 3
Physical Description: Textual records

Scope and Content:

This series consists of clippings of the articles Egan wrote for a variety of newspapers and magazines, as well as the clippings he used to put these pieces together. There are other newsclippings related to every aspect of his LGBTQ2+ and environmental activism, legal journals and cases, various issues of the periodical ONE Institute Quarterly, and academic papers.

Access Restrictions: The collection is open to researchers, with the exception of publishing personal identification numbers found in F0110-01-001, F0110-01-002, F0110-01-025. Pseudonyms must be used when publishing material from F0110-02-003.

Description Level: Series
Accession Number: 1988-006, 1996-130, 1998-126, 1999-014, 1999-024, 2012-122



James Egan fonds

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions22048>

Collection:	Archives
Material Type:	Textual records Graphic material
Date Range:	1865 [copied ca. 197-?]-2000
Part Of:	James Egan fonds
Creator:	James Egan
Fonds Number:	F0110
Physical Description:	110cm of textual records 188 black and white photographs [varying sizes] 251 colour photographs [varying sizes] 1 audio cassettes [missing at the time of arrangement and description]
Physical Condition:	F0110-01-002, F0110-01-025 have been marked for conservation. The clippings are extremely fragile and should also be handled with care.

History /

Biographical:

For a complete biographical sketch see *Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence: My Life as a Canadian Gay Activist* by Jim Egan ed. Don McLeod, where this summary draws from. Additionally, *Jim Egan: Canada's pioneer gay activist*, writings of Jim Egan compiled and introduced by Robert Champagne

James Leo Egan was born in Toronto September 14, 1921 on St. George Street to Nellie (Josephine) Engle and James Egan, completing the family was Charles Egan, who was 14 months younger than James and also gay. Egan did not complete high school, instead worked on family farms around Peterborough. His army application was rejected in 1939 due to a corneal scar from a piece of glass he got in a car crash, and his choice to not have it removed by doctors which would have made him eligible. Instead he worked as a technician in the Department of Zoology at the University of Toronto. Other zoology and medicine assistant jobs followed. In 1943 Egan joined the Merchant Navy as a seaman, a stint that lasted until 1947.

Egan met John "Jack" Nesbit in the summer of 1948, around this time Egan came out to his mother (his father died when he was thirteen). She had no issue with his sexuality, treating Nesbit as another son. Egan moved into Nesbit's apartment at 164 Cumberland Street within weeks of meeting. While living there Nesbit took a hairstyling course, and then managed his own business. Egan was offered a job from someone he had met at U of T to assist with a biological specimens business. The couple moved to Oak Ridges (Richmond Hill), into the house that came with this job.

Between 1949 and 1951 Egan wrote letters to *Coronet*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Esquire*, *Parents' Magazine*, *Redbook*, *Time* and others protesting their homophobic language. These letters were not published. Egan's first published letter in the mainstream press argued that Kinsey was bringing sex into the modern age (*The Globe and Mail*, May 16, 1950). He was first published in the tabloids in *Flash* in May 1950, then in October 1950 another letter appeared in *True News Times*, and then in December 1950 Egan's article "I am a Homosexual" was published in *Sir!* under his pseudonym, Leo Engle.

In November 1951 Egan reached out to the *True News Times* (TNT) suggesting an article series concerning homosexuality. "Aspects of Homosexuality" was published from November 19, 1951, for seven weeks. In 1952 after writing for TNT Egan took a hiatus, writing little.

In May 1951, *Justice Weekly* published several letters by J.L.E.. Egan then proposed a series similar to TNT, writing "Homosexual Concepts" between December 1953 and February 1954. Another untitled series of 15 columns followed until June 1954.

From 1954-1959 Egan was on hiatus from his activist work, suffering the effects of inhaling formaldehyde from specimen preservation. The couple sold their house in Oak Ridges and moved to a working 200 acre farm in Northwestern Ontario, near Chesley in 1954. To supplement earnings Egan started embalming cats for an American company, while Nesbit managed a hair salon in Chesley. Egan's mother lived with them on the farm.

By mid-1956 they were not making money with the farm and Jack was unhappy. They moved to Beamsville and rented a store that used to be a pet shop, which they reinvigorated. They also started a seed supply business, and continued their specimen and embalming business. They dubbed it "The Nature Shop" and were known as "The Nature Boys" by locals.

They moved back to Toronto in 1964 and rented 1052A Bloor Street West. Early in the year Nesbit and Egan's relationship ended when Nesbit gave Egan an ultimatum, either Egan give up gay activism or their relationship. Nesbit did not like the level of notoriety associated with activism and had a different view of activism altogether. During this period Egan was often arguing on the phone with local newspaper editors, and people were calling looking for a crisis line. They could not resolve Nesbit's ultimatum so Egan moved into a one room apartment near Spadina and College, starting another specimen business.

In the first half of 1964 Egan was unhappily separated, disenchanted with being an activist, the lack of community support and their passive attitude towards gay liberation. Nesbit was also unhappy, his sister was angry at him for ending the relationship after 15 years and wanted the couple to get back together.

In May 1964 Egan reconciled with Nesbit committing to end his activism. Nesbit wanted to leave Toronto believing Egan would return to it if they did not. They decided on British Columbia. In June they drove across Canada with their three chihuahuas, settling in Duncan and establishing the Jamack Biological Supply Company. They specialized in marine specimens, and their business thrived. Egan became involved in the environmental movement, joining the Society for the Prevention of Environmental Collapse (SPEC), becoming vice-president of the Cowichan Valley branch.

They moved to Thetis Island on Telegraph Harbour in 1968, where they built a lab and continued their business. In 1972 due to health issues and the manual labour required for their work, they gave it up and retired to Chemainus British Columbia. Egan engaged in environmental work and Nesbit with his gardens.

In 1974 they moved to Meriville, and built a two-thousand square foot stackwall house out of driftwood. Nesbit volunteered on the phone lines at Crossroads Crisis Centre and later was a marriage counsellor. Egan was a freelance carpenter and continued his environmental activism. In 1980 Egan became a member of Save Our Straits Committee, a group blocking a local sewage plant from pumping untreated sewage into the Strait of Georgia. The BC Ministry of the Environment granted a permit for this plant, but the Committee eventually convinced the Ministry to treat the sewage and the permit was overturned. Egan's environmental work made him a celebrity and in 1981 he was elected as regional director for Electoral Area B of the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona, making him the first gay man living in an openly gay relationship to be elected to public office in Canada. He was re-elected twice but decided not to stand for re-election in 1993 at age seventy-two.

In May 1985 the couple moved to Courtenay where they met members of the LGBTQ+ community. They had had no significant contact with the LGBTQ+ community from 1964-1985. Egan kept his promise to Nesbit, disengaging in gay activism for 25 years, with the exception of some letters in 1973 to the Daily Colonist (Victoria). By 1985 Nesbit's attitude to gay liberation had changed, and they started the Comox Valley branch of the Island Gay Society, holding monthly drop-ins at their house for eleven years. Egan was also involved in the North Island AIDS Coalition and was president in 1994.

When Nesbit was denied spousal pension benefits in 1987, their path towards their Supreme Court challenge began. They used the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to challenge the discrimination against pension benefits for same-sex couples under the Old Age Security Act. Their challenge was the first involving same-sex rights heard by the Supreme Court under the Charter with the goal to fight institutional discrimination and homophobia.

They wanted to force a high court to interpret section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and prohibit discrimination due to sexual orientation, giving homosexual couples the legal right to be recognized as “spouse” and therefore be protected from discrimination in all areas of federal legislation. Additionally, arguing that the definition of “spouse” in the Old Age Security Act was unconstitutional, and discriminatory towards gender and sexual orientation, contrary to section 15(1) of the Charter. The couple hired David Vickers of Vickers and Palmer who applied for their case to be sponsored by the Court Challenges Program which was funded by the federal government to support litigation costs in test cases based in equality rights under the Charter. They received funding and brought an action in the Trial Division of the Federal Court of Canada in December 1988.

The case was heard on May 28-29, 1991. On December 2, 1991 Justice Martin dismissed the action, ruling that even though “the Old Age Security Act did not define same-sex partners as spouses, it did not discriminate on the basis of gender or sexual orientation. Martin stated that same-sex couples “did not fall within the meaning of the word ‘spouse’ any more than heterosexual couples who live together and do not publicly represent themselves as man and wife, such as brother and sister, brother and brother, sister and sister, two relatives, two friends, or parent and child.” Martin concluded that Egan and Nesbit were not the sort of couple Parliament had in mind when the Act was passed in 1975, that “...the relationship is a different one than a spousal relationship and that the parties to such relationship cannot expect to share the benefits accorded to those in spousal relationship, not because of their sexual orientation, but because their relationship is not a spousal one.” (McLeod, 100-101).

Egan and Nesbit appealed this ruling in August 1992 with their new lawyer Joseph Arvay of Arvay, Finlay and Associates, who agreed to represent them pro bono when The Court Challenges Program was cancelled by the Mulroney government. They lost again in April 1993 when the Federal Court of Appeal upheld the judgement 2-1 that there had been no discrimination due to sexual orientation.

In 1992 they appealed to the Supreme Court with the re-instated Court Challenges Program, and were heard in November 1994. On May 25, 1995 the appeal was dismissed in a 5-4 decision. “Despite the court agreeing 5-4 that the current spousal definition was discriminatory, which was the first time the Supreme Court ruled that the failure of federal legislation to recognize same-sex relationships [was] discriminatory” (McLeod, 102). All nine justices also stated that “sexual orientation” must be classed in the Charter as discriminatory, to match existing grounds such as race, gender, and religion. However, the “Court also ruled 5-4 that the discrimination was justified under section 1 of the Charter. Four justices ruled that section 15 does not extend to same-sex relationships.” (102)

The aftermath of the ruling was captured in David Adkin’s documentary “Jim Loves Jack: The James Egan Story.” Nesbit suffered three stress-induced angina attacks. Despite the disappointment there was a positive outcome. EGALE noted the ruling meant that sexual orientation qualified as discrimination under the law, subjecting all Canadian statutes where same-sex relationships are classed as inferior to be subject to challenge.

In 1995 and 1996 their story was told by the media across the country. Jim was given a national human rights award by the Lambda Foundation for Excellence, and the couple were grand marshals at Toronto and Vancouver Pride in 1995. In September of 1997 for his community service Egan was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship, the highest award given by Rotary International.

The couple celebrated their 50th anniversary in August 1998.

Egan gave interviews and attended conferences until near the end of his life. Egan died on March 9th, 2000 of lung cancer at age 78 in Courtenay and Nesbit three months later on June 23rd four days before his 73rd birthday.

Scope and Content:

The James Egan fonds contains records relating to his life and activism work from the early 50s to his memorial service in 2000. John Nesbit is also featured in subtle yet evident ways. There are newspaper clippings, correspondence with newspaper editors, other activists, academics, and other LGBTQ+ individuals, as well as serials, drafted articles for newspaper and tabloid publication, and various iterations of his court case with his partner John Nesbit. There are records of Egan's environmental activism and of the time he spent in the Merchant Navy. There are photos relating to both Nesbit and Egan, their families, childhoods, and lives together. Poetry, fiction, a dream journal, cards, diaries and other such material recording Egan's personal life and his life with Nesbit dot the fonds.

Storage Location: /01-05 : C.02.03.01
/06-07 : C.02.03.02
/08 : C.01.02.01
/09 : Photos S.02.01

Related Material: Challenging the conspiracy of silence : my life as a Canadian gay activist
by Jim Egan
compiled and edited by Donald W. McLeod 2.21 EGA MCL 1998

The homosexual in America : a subjective approach Cory, Donald
Webster [pseud.], Sagarin, Edward Sagarin, Albert Ellis RAR 5:2:019
(1999-024)

Son of Oscar Wilde by Vyvyan Holland (1993-165)

Selected poems of Oscar Wilde including The ballad of Reading Gaol by
Oscar Wilde RAR 1:1:022 (1999-024)

The Unrecorded life of Oscar Wilde by Rupert Croft-Cooke 2.21 WIL CRO
1972 (1991-162)

Game of fools : a play of those fools, by those fools, and for those fools,
who stubbornly refuse to perish from this earth RAR 5:3:004 (2007-108)

Lyrics by Lord Alfred Douglas RAR 2:1:002 (1993-165)

Sonnets by Lord Alfred Douglas RAR 2:1:003 (1993-165)

Oscar Wilde : his life and confessions, in two volumes [with] Memories of
Oscar Wilde by Bernard Shaw RAR 2:4:015 and RAR 2:4:016 (1993-
165)

Bibliography of Oscar Wilde by Stuart Mason RAR 2:2:001 (1993-165)

Oscar Wilde : three times tried by [the staff of Ferrestone Press] RAR
2:4:014 (1993-165)

Oscar Wilde and the yellow nineties by Frances Winwar RAR 2:4:007
(1993-165)

Poems by Oscar Wilde RAR 1:2:020

Corydon : [four Socratic dialogues] RAR 2:1:016

Essays, criticisms and reviews by Oscar Wilde RAR 3:4:012 (1993-165)

The happy prince and other tales by Oscar Wilde RAR 1:2:003 (1999-027)

The soul of man under socialism by Oscar Wilde RAR 2:1:017 (1999-024)

Sex habits of American men : a symposium on the Kinsey Report RAR 3:1:062 (1999-024)

Egan et al. v. Canada : decision of the Supreme Court of Canada M2000-145 (1995-244)

Jim Egan: Canada's pioneer gay activist. writings of Jim Egan compiled and introduced by Robert Champagne M2003-008 (2003-047 and 2017-033)

ONE Confidential (LGBTQ Serials)

1959: 5(1)

1960: 8(5) *

1961: 6(7, 10)

1962: 7(1-2, 4, 7-12)

1963: 8(1-11)

1964: 9(1-12) *

1965: 10(1-11)

1966: 11(1-12)

1967: 12(1-9, 11)

1 audio cassettes [missing at the time of arrangement and description].

Egan's account of preparing his records for transfer to the archives.

Access Restrictions:	The collection is open to researchers, with the exception of publishing personal identification numbers found in F0110-01-001, F0110-01-002, F0110-01-025. Pseudonyms must be used when publishing material from F0110-02-003.
Conservation:	F0110-01-002, F0110-01-025 have been marked for conservation. Records have been removed from binders, staples and non-archival paper clips have been removed.
Description Level:	Fonds
Accession Number:	1988-006, 1996-130, 1998-126, 1999-014, 1999-024, 2004-122



Personal Life

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions27015>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Textual records
Date Range: 1916- 1983
Part Of: William Atkinson fonds
Fonds Number: F0025
Series Number: 01
Language: English
Physical Description: 22cm of textual records
Extent: 0.22
Scope and Content:

The series is composed of records from William Atkinson's personal life. The records document Atkinson's early life and education in England, his immigration to Canada, his social activities during the Second World War, and his life in Montreal following his forced retirement from the Royal Canadian Navy in 1959. It is composed of certificates, short biographies, academic and employment portfolios, financial records, daybooks, a serialized feature of Atkinson in the Montreal's West End Journal, invitations and memberships to various clubs.

Description Level: Series



Richard Fung fonds

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions35411>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Moving image
Graphic material
Textual records
Date Range: 1901–2017, predominant
1986–2006
Part Of: Richard Fung fonds
Fonds Number: F0134
Physical Description: 210 video cassettes (124 VHS, 2 S VHS-C, 7 U-matic, 15 U-matic S, 1 Betacam, 19 BetacamSP, 39 MiniDV, 3 Hi8)
28 optical discs (4 DVD, 21 DVD-R, 2 audio CD, 1 CD-R)
10 audio cassettes (5 compact cassette, 4 DAT, 1 DTRS)
51 photographs (45 colour polaroids, 6 black and white prints 20 x 25 cm)
15 slides (15 black and white 35 mm)
9.5 cm of textual records
Physical Condition: Overall in good physical condition. Tapes are playable, but a few show signs of magnetic and physical deterioration. Photographs display physical deterioration.

History /

Biographical:

Richard Fung is an artist and writer born in Trinidad and based in Toronto. He holds a diploma from the Ontario College of Art, a degree in Cinema Studies, and an MEd in Sociology and Cultural Studies, both from the University of Toronto. He is a Professor in the Faculty of Art at OCAD University, teaching courses in Integrated Media and Art and Social Change. His work comprises challenging videos on subjects ranging from the role of the Asian male in gay pornography to colonialism, immigration, racism, homophobia, AIDS, justice in Israel/Palestine, and his own family history. His single-channel and installation works, which include *My Mother's Place* (1990), *Sea in the Blood* (2000), *Jehad in Motion* (2007), *Dal Puri Diaspora* (2012), and *Re:Orientations* (2016), have been widely screened and collected internationally, and have been broadcast in Canada, the United States, and Trinidad and Tobago. Richard's essays have been published in many journals and anthologies, and he is the co-author with Monika Kin Gagnon of *13: Conversations on Art and Cultural Race Politics* (2002), later updated and translated into French. He was a Rockefeller Fellow at New York University and has received the Bell Canada Award for Outstanding Achievement in Video Art and the Toronto Arts Award for Media Art. In 2015, he received the Kessler Award from CLAGS: Center for LGBTQ Studies at the City University of New York for "a substantive body of work that has had a significant influence on the field of LGBTQ Studies."

Scope and Content:

Fonds consists of 15 boxes containing raw material and finished works by Richard Fung, as well as works by other artists and filmmakers collected by Fung over the years in various video formats. The fonds also contains amateur footage of events attended by Fung, recordings of television broadcasts taken by the artist, production files (including photographs and detailed documentation created during production), correspondence, funding applications, conference programmes, and poetry.

Contains series:

- 1- Orientations
- 2- Chinese Characters
- 3- The Way to My Father's Village
- 4- Fighting Chance
- 5- My Mother's Place
- 6- Steam Clean
- 7- Out of the Blue
- 8- Dirty Laundry
- 9- School Fag
- 10- Sea in the Blood
- 11- Islands
- 12- Uncomfortable
- 13- Landscapes
- 14- Other works by Fung
- 15- Works by others collected by Fung

Access Restrictions: The fonds is open to researchers.

Conservation: Tapes have been kept in original packaging, placed in upright position, and grouped by media type when possible in acid-free boxes. Paper files and photographs have been removed from binders and placed in acid-free folders. Paperclips and staples have been removed. Slides have been kept in the original archival sleeve and placed in an acid-free folder.

Arrangement: The fonds has been arranged by work, i.e., materials related to a particular work have been intellectually grouped together in a single series. Additionally, raw materials pertaining to a particular work have been arranged in chronological order of production when possible. Physical arrangement has prioritized grouping similar media together while considering storage limitations.

Description Level: Fonds

Accession Number: 1996-126, 2007-149, 2019-086



Sidney Hugh Godolphin Osborne fonds

<https://collections.archives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions27052>

Collection: Archives

Material Type: Textual records

Date Range: 1911-1913

Part Of: Sidney Hugh Godolphin Osborne fonds
Creator: Sidney Hugh Godolphin Osborne
Fonds Number: F0095
Reference Code: F0095
Physical Description: 1 volume of textual records
Extent: 0.01
Physical Condition: The volume is in fragile condition due to its loose and brittle pages. There are scorch marks on the leather cover, and the spine of the volume is missing.

History /
Biographical:

Sidney Hugh Godolphin Osborne (1887-1958) was born in London, England on December 28, 1887, the son of Sidney Francis Godolphin Osborne and Margaret Dulcibella (Hammersley) Osborne. Sidney's brother was Francis D'Arcy Godolphin Osborne, 12th Duke of Leeds, KCMG. Sidney lived openly with men with whom he was romantically involved. Perhaps due to this, he was persuaded to immigrate to Canada as a young man (year unknown). His estate was located outside Niagara Falls, Ontario. Sidney travelled frequently to the United States. He was killed in a car accident on the Queen Elizabeth Expressway on October 9, 1958. The name(s) of his companion(s) have not survived, though the donor's mother knew the last one well.

Scope and Content:

Fonds consists of a single volume diary kept by Sidney Hugh Godolphin Osborne while living in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. The first entry is dated January 18, 1911, and the last entry is made on Dec. 2, 1912.

The journal details Osborne's travels and social activities within Canada as well as in the United States. Osborne tipped in images from the magazines of the day to illustrate some of his diary entries.

Notes:

F0095 Sidney Hugh Godolphin Osborne fonds, 2015-083, The ArQuives, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Storage Location: ED office
Name Access: Osborne, Sidney Hugh Godolphin
Places: Niagara Falls
Access Restrictions: There are no restrictions on the content of the fonds. However, access to the original volume is restricted for conservation reasons. A digitized version of the volume is available for research.
Copyright: Researchers wishing to publish materials must obtain permission in writing from the The ArQuives as the physical owner.
Conservation: The volume was assessed and treated by conservators at the Toronto Public Library in preparation for an onsite exhibition at the Toronto Reference Library in 2017.
Description Level: Fonds
Accession Number: 2015-083

William Atkinson fonds

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions27013>



Collection: Archives
Material Type: Textual records
Graphic material
Object
Date Range: 1916-1999
Part Of: William Atkinson fonds
Fonds Number: F0025
Language: English
Physical Description: 95 cm of textual records
675 photographs: b&w and col. ; 36 x 27 cm or smaller
126 photographs: b&w and col. negatives ; 20 x 25 cm or smaller
6 flags: 14.5 x 21 cm or smaller
1 armband: 36.5 x 11.5cm
1 plaque: 18 x 23 x 0.5cm
1 drawing
Extent: 0.95
Physical Condition: Good
History /
Biographical:

William Atkinson was born on February 26th, 1916 to William and Margaret Ethel Atkinson in Newcastle-on-Tyne, England. At the age of 14 Atkinson left school and took a job as an office-boy. At the age of 16, Atkinson joined the merchant service as an apprentice with F. Carrick & Co LTD of the Medensleigh Steamship Company. He was at sea for 4 years, during this time he completed his second mates foreign going certificate.

In October 1938, Atkinson began his service with the Royal Naval Reserve as a sub lieutenant. In 1942, Atkinson was appointed to commission and command the HMS "Manitoulin" which was being built in Ontario. He stayed in Canada for a year serving with the Royal Canadian Navy, until he was recalled to England for another command. While residing in Canada, he completed his Masters Foreign Going Certificate. In 1944, Atkinson applied for a transfer to the Royal Canadian Navy Reserve, which was rejected on the basis that he was not a Canadian citizen. In 1945, he was promoted to the rank of acting Lieutenant Commander with the Royal Navy. In 1946, Atkinson made a second request to transfer to the Royal Canadian Navy Reserve, which was once again denied. It was recommended to him to reapply once he had officially immigrated to Canada. In 1947, Atkinson retired from the Royal Naval Reserve with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

Atkinson immigrated to Canada in 1948 with hopes of joining the active list of the Royal Canadian Navy. He arrived in Montreal and presented himself before the Royal Canadian Navy authorities, but due to the decline of naval jobs during the postwar period, he was added to the retired list of the HMCS "York". During this time, Atkinson was forced to seek out employment alternatives. Atkinson found job as a Night Manager of Childs Restaurant, located on 238 Yonge Street, Toronto. He supplemented his income by writing short stories for magazines, and delivered a 3 part broadcast entitled the "Emigrant's Report" for the BBC Toronto Office. In March 1950, Atkinson left Childs Restaurant for the position of Resident Manager at the Glen Gordon Manor Inn in Blenheim, Ontario.

In 1951, Atkinson requested to be transferred to the RCNR's active list through an application for a short service appointment. He was granted the role of Area Recruiting and Public Relations Officer for Western Ontario on the HMCS "Hunter". This appointment was followed by a similar role in British Columbia on the HMCS "Discovery". From 1954 to 1955, Atkinson completed the Junior Officer's Technical and Leadership Course on the HMCS Stadacona, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He was later appointed as First Lieutenant Commander of the HMCS "Quebec". In 1956, Atkinson was dispatched to Vietnam and served as a Naval Advisor to the

In 1958, Atkinson returned to Canada, where he served as a Staff Officer in Ottawa. At this time, the Navy and the RCMP had begun its targeting of gay officers and recruits. After being subjected to RCMP and Canadian Naval Intelligence interrogations over the span of 10 months, Atkinson was given the option to be fired or to resign “voluntarily”. Atkinson submitted his resignation and was “Honourably Discharged” with the position of Lieutenant Commander in November 21, 1959. Atkinson would have qualified for a full pension on August 1, 1961, if he had been allowed to complete his ten years of service.

Following his forced resignation from the Royal Canadian Navy, Atkinson returned to the hospitality business. He managed a number of golf clubs in Quebec and Ontario. These clubs included the Kanawaki Golf Course, the York Downs Country Club, the Islington Golf Club, and the Brampton Golf Club. From 1961 to 1965, Atkinson owned a coin laundry service company called the “Coin Wash Limited”, located at 730 Charlevoix Street, Montreal. Atkinson spent a short period of time working at the Southern Palms Hotel located in Barbados from 1969 to 1970. He supplemented his income with acting and modelling which lasted until the 1990s, and was featured in commercials and shows, from a Bell Telephone Commercial, La Femme d’Aujourd’hui, Night Heat, and the Littlest Hobo.

Atkinson served as the President of the Sprucewood Court Condos located in Agincourt, Ontario, where he resided for over 15 years. In 1988, Atkinson moved to 19 Maple Street, Ajax, Ontario, where he lived until his death on January 17th, 2000.

Throughout his life, Atkinson had an interest in writing. From 1939 to 1946, he was enrolled in the London School of Journalism’s Short Stories’ Writer’s Program, which conducted its courses via correspondence. Atkinson submitted a number of works of fiction and non-fiction to various publications. This included a piece that was submitted to The Reader’s Digest and The Body Politic, that dealt with his interrogation and forced resignation from the Royal Canadian Navy.

In 1991, Atkinson made a request for his military personnel records from the National Archives of Canada under the Privacy Act. This search yielded a number files relating to his service, performance, medical, and dental records. However, the search did not result in any records from the RCMP or Canadian Naval Intelligence interrogations that pertained to his sexuality, which he was subjected to for 10 months.

Scope and Content:

The fonds consists of records that pertain to the life and career of William Atkinson. It documents Atkinson’s early life and work in England prior to his enlistment with the Royal Navy at the outbreak of the Second World War. It contains records from his immigration to Canada, as well records relating to his work in the restaurant and hospitality business upon his arrival. The fonds is also composed of records from his time with the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) through the 1950s, and contains some material related to his forced retirement from the RCN on the basis of his sexual orientation. The fonds includes records from his return to the hospitality business, along with material from Atkinson’s writing and work in the entertainment business. The fonds is composed of correspondence, services records, certificates, photographs, press clippings, and short stories.

Storage Location: 1, 2: C.05.03.01
3, 4: C.05.03.02
5, 6, 7: C.05.03.05
8: S.03.01
9: S.02.07
10: S.02.07
M.C.6.1XXX

Access Restrictions: The fonds is open to researchers

Conservation: Binders and paper clips were removed from records. Records that were previously rolled have been flattened.

Arrangement: Contains series:
1-Personal Life
2- Naval Career
3-Civilian Career
4-Writing
5-Correspondence
6-Photographs

Description Level: Fonds

Accession Number: 1995-196, 1998-078, 1999-086