

Creation of the Canada Memory of the World Register

June 15, 2017

Ottawa (ON) - The Canada Memory of the World Register, which will highlight documentary heritage of profound Canadian significance, has been created. The announcement was made today by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO), in collaboration with Library and Archives Canada and the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. (BAnQ)

The purpose of the Memory of the World Programme, created by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 1992, is to facilitate the preservation of documentary heritage and ensure access to it. The Programme is known for both its International Register and a number of national registers that raise awareness about the importance of documentary heritage as the “memory” of humanity. To be listed in a Memory of the World Register, documentary heritage must meet several criteria such as world significance, to be considered for the International Memory of the World Register, and Canadian significance, for the Canada Memory of the World Register.

The Canada Memory of the World Register will reflect the diversity of Canada’s documentary heritage – linguistic, cultural, geographic, spiritual, political, economic, scientific and artistic, as well as that related to personal and community identity. Entries in the Canada Register will include documents of all kinds (written, films, photographs, audio recordings and so on) that bear witness to some of the defining moments in our history that have affected the country as a whole, its Indigenous Peoples, its regions, its communities and its individuals. This heritage may be a single item just as well as a collection held by public or private bodies or by individuals.

The creation of the Canada Memory of the World Register coincides with the first call for nominations of items to be listed in the Register as well as the formal inclusion of four pieces of Canadian documentary heritage in the UNESCO International Memory of the World Register. These are the *Quebec Seminary Collection, 1623-1800* (Musée de la civilisation du Québec); the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives (Archives of Manitoba); Norman McLaren’s short film *Neighbours* (NFB); and materials relating to the discovery of insulin and its subsequent worldwide impact (University of Toronto).

“The Canadian Commission for UNESCO is delighted to announce the creation of the Canada Memory of the World Register. It is essential to make our documentary heritage better known because it reflects key episodes in the history of all our peoples,” says CCUNESCO President Christina Cameron.

Two other documentary heritage proposals are currently being considered by UNESCO for inclusion in the International Memory of the World Register: *Marshall McLuhan: the Archives of the Future* (Library and Archives Canada and the University of Toronto) and *Traces et Mémoires métissées des continents : le Son des Français d’Amérique* (Cinémathèque québécoise). These will also be added to the Canada Memory of the World Register.

Chantal Fortier, Chair of the Canadian Advisory Committee for Memory of the World, a committee set up by CCUNESCO to evaluate proposals for either register, adds:

“We truly hope that the Register will be open and inclusive, as well as an accurate reflection of the immense diversity of the documentary heritage that is significant to Canada. The Committee is very keen to reach a wide spectrum of groups and institutions that preserve and promote this significant heritage, whose roots extend from the initial settling of the land by Indigenous Peoples up to the present time.”

Guy Berthiaume, the Librarian and Archivist of Canada, is thrilled about the creation of the Canada Register: “What a wonderful initiative for the 150th anniversary of Confederation! Just when Canadians are reflecting on the meaning of their national identity, the Register will be tremendously useful in helping us to get to know ourselves better!”

Geneviève Pichet, Acting Chief Executive Officer of BAnQ, adds: “It’s truly an honour for BAnQ to be working on the Canadian Advisory Committee for the Memory of the World program. As for the Register, it is sure to help make our documentary heritage more visible and promote our culture at home and abroad.”

To apply for a piece of documentary heritage to be included in the Canada Register, individuals, groups or institutions are first invited to submit a letter of intent to CCUNESCO **by September 30, 2017**. The Canadian Advisory Committee for Memory of the World will then evaluate the letters of intent and ask the chosen applicants to prepare a detailed submission **by February 28, 2018**. Entries in the Canada Memory of the World Register will be announced **in spring 2018** at the latest.

The Canada Register will be accessible online and regularly updated.

The members of the Canadian Advisory Committee for Memory of the World are: Chantal Fortier (Chair), Camille L. Callison (Vice-Chair), Lorraine O’Donnell, Yves Frenette, Derek Cooke and two *ex officio* members: the Librarian and Archivist of Canada and the Chief Executive Officer of the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec.

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The Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO) 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.