

for the carnage from a *Body Politic* paste-up or a GATE mailing, and consequently of being swept into the garbage can."

With the departure of Dayman to Ottawa just after the move to Carlton Street, Jackson had taken charge of the collection. A member of the *Body Politic* collective since early 1972, he too found his limited time stretched between the demands of the Archives, the newspaper and his ever-diminishing personal life.

Despite this, he accomplished a lot. In March 1975 he sent out another letter to gay organizations, but this time, as well as requesting material and offering exchanges of periodicals, he sought advice and assistance from gay people experienced in library and archival work. He prepared applications for grants from the Canada Council to pay for help in organizing the collection and to begin research projects based on it. Invariably, these requests were turned down; the money needed for file folders, cabinets and stationery had to come from *The Body Politic*, or people's pockets.

After discussions with those around him, Jackson decided to drop the words "Liberation Movement" from the collection's title, leaving it simply the Canadian Gay Archives. The change was strategic, he said, "in order to attract cooperation and donations from those made uneasy by the movement, and perhaps a little opportunistic, in order to appear more innocuous to possible liberal sources of money."

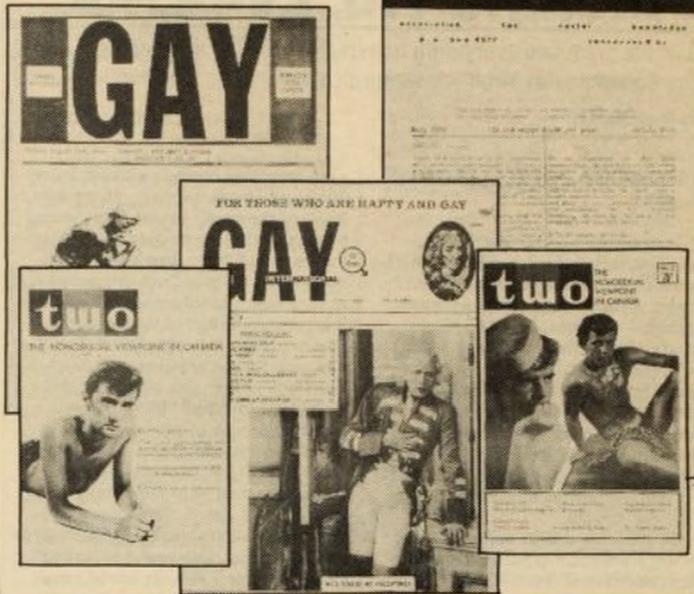
But the move also indicated a genuine broadening of the Archives' scope. In a brochure he prepared for the 1975 national conference in Ottawa, Jackson noted that the collection was intended to include not only books, periodicals and the papers of gay organizations, but also interviews and oral histories, photographs, videotapes and films, clippings from the mass media, court records, and the unpublished works of gay artists and writers. Clearly, it was the lives of lesbians and gay men in Canada, and not

Before Blueboy

The Archives has only partial holdings of some of Canada's early gay magazines and newsletters. Most of these have come through donations from private collections and through diligent browsing in second-hand stores.

Both *Gay* (later *Gay International*) and *Two* were published in Toronto in the mid-Sixties. Each contained informative features, some discreet "beefcake" photography (much of it produced by local studios) and a few smatterings of gossip focusing on the city's few gay clubs and bars.

The Association for Social Knowledge (ASK) in Vancouver was founded early in 1964 and began publishing its *ASK Newsletter* shortly thereafter. As its name indicates, the organization concentrated on public education and counselling. Douglas Sanders, an early key member, visited the Canadian Gay Archives in March 1979 and plans to provide a history of ASK in the near future.



just their "political" organizations, that the Archives hoped to document.

Even as the name was being laundered, though, the true political nature of the collection was becoming more clear. "Typically such repositories of historical records have been seen as neutral, passive receptacles," Jackson reflected in his GAU address that November. "In the case of a gay archives or library, this simply is not true. Given the nature of social attitudes toward homosexuality, such a centre of information is and will remain a threat to a society organized like ours." The introduction to the 1975 flyer put it even more clearly: *A conspiracy of silence has robbed gay people of their history. A sense of continuity, which derives from the knowledge of a heritage, is*

essential for the building of self-confidence in a community. It is a necessary tool in the struggle for social change."

Forging that tool was still a bigger job than one person could accomplish alone. Fortunately, Ed Jackson's calls for help were being answered. Late in the fall of 1975, a new group began to meet regularly in the cramped Carlton Street storefront. It included a professional archivist and a librarian, two students from the Faculty of Library Science at the University of Toronto, people who worked at the University library and members of the newly-formed Canadian chapter of the Gay Academic Union. The Archives was now an official part of Pink Triangle Press, a corporate umbrella set up to give both the collection and *The Body Politic* a legal existence. On paper, this new entity "owned"

both; in fact each continued to operate independently, much as before. Following the lead of those who produced the newspaper, the Archives group set itself up as a collective and began to consider how it would cope with the material it now had on its hands — already more than twice the amount Ed Jackson had taken on just 18 months before.

The first question they tackled was whether or not the collection should even remain in the same office as a high-profile gay rights organization and a already controversial homosexual tabloid. Even at the best of times, the 70-odd square feet of street-level plate glass that stood between this whole operation and an often hostile world didn't inspire peace of mind. In a year-and-a-half nothing had happened save the occasional, odiferous encroachments of a few local drunks. But still...

The Provincial Archives of Ontario sent a representative to look over the files and soon offered to take whatever the collective might choose to give. Worries over security would be relieved, the mind-numbing work of cataloguing would be taken off their hands, and researchers using the collection would get professional help. It seemed a tempting offer.

For a while. What gave pause was the notion of turning over the raw material of gay history to an institution which, while ostensibly "sympathetic" then, might not always be so. The collective was reassured that a public archives would never dream of destroying mater-

ial entrusted to it. Maybe so, but the governments that owned them had not always been so scrupulous. Magnus Hirschfeld had donated his 20,000 volumes to the Prussian State government. They were burned, nonetheless. Even barring such drastic possibilities, there were other visions to consider: documents made inaccessible by well-meaning but ill-informed cataloguers; restrictions put on "sensitive" (to whom) material; interested gay people turned away at the door by the intimidating criteria of "serious" research. There were many ways — some innocent, some not — for the "conspiracy of silence" to close around that cabinet of papers on Carlton Street. The collection stayed in the office, finally no more secure than the lives of the people who worked on it there, but at least still in their hands.

The collective's organizational skills quickly became apparent — at least on paper. A formal statement of purpose was hammered out in December, stating basic aims and elaborating on them in a list of seven specific objectives regarding arrangement of the collection, acquisitions, preparation of reference aids and bibliographies, information to the public about the Archives and the soliciting of volunteers.

It didn't last. As before, enthusiasm waned in the face of the painstaking work that was required to keep the collection together. And again, the demands of the present crowded in: the phone kept ringing, people kept coming through the door, jobs pressed. History sat in the corner, silent. In May 1976 the Archives was moved, along with *The Body Politic*, to a larger space on the top floor of a downtown warehouse. For the next four months it remained almost untouched.

Salvation came in the form of a man who looked, fittingly, like a young Moses. James Fraser had never heard of the Canadian Gay Archives (or of *The Body Politic*) before he picked up a promotional flyer at the fourth national gay conference in Toronto that September. Trained at the New Brunswick Provincial Archives and newly employed at the Archives of the City of Toronto, he was eager to apply his skills to a gay collection. He joined what was left of the collective in October and instantly attacked

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Getting caught: 1810

Court records are among the few official documents in which gay people appear before the 20th century. In the past few years, researchers have discovered a number of cases reflecting attitudes towards homosexuality in 19th-century Canada. Much of this material had been copied and included in the Canadian Gay Archives collection.

The case of George Markland was brought to light by Robert Burns, an historian doing research for the Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Markland, who had been Inspector General for Upper Canada and an important member of the ruling Family Compact, had resigned his position in 1838 and disappeared into obscurity. The story behind his resignation remained a mystery until 1976, when Burns found more than 100 pages of testimony at the Public Archives of Canada detailing an inquiry which had preceded the departure. It became clear that Markland had been forced to resign after discovery of his relations with a number of young men in Toronto. Burns presented a detailed account in the December 1976/January 1977 issue of *The Body Politic*.

Researcher Paul Romney discovered a similar case while poring through back files of the *Toronto Mirror*. On December 11, 1840, the paper reported the police court arraignment of Richard Yeo, a dance master who, it was alleged, had "seized a soldier around the waist and took the most horrible, indecent liberties." Unluckier than the well-placed Markland, Yeo was sentenced to a year in prison — twice the penalty imposed

at the same time upon a man who had burned his wife to death.

Research is continuing on two other 19th-century figures. One, Alexander Wood, a prominent Toronto merchant, was involved in a scandal that led to his departure to Scotland in 1810. He returned to have the whole affair dragged through the courts in 1823. (Coincidentally, both Alexander and Wood Streets, in one of Toronto's gayest neighbourhoods, are named for him.) The other, the Reverend Thomas Franchon, was president of Assumption College until 1859, when he was forced to leave Sandwich (now Windsor), Ontario after it was learned that he had had sexual relations with some of his male students. His eventual fate is unknown, but investigations continue.

A page from the testimony of George Markland, signed by him and dated 30 March, 1838.

James 30 March 1838
 I do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the original as it appears in the original in order that it may be put into the hands of the public.
 Yours truly
 George Markland