

#4972 John Ball Legacy (JBL) Collection Files Project Final Project Summary

We confirm the completion of the deliverables in regards to the John Ball Collections Files Project (formally referred to as the John Ball Fonds) and Canadian General Electric (CGE), Peterborough.

The **physical volume** of the collection was estimated at **6 1/2 linear feet**. It arrived in two large rubber tubs and a bag. The records were in binders, duo tangs, file folders, envelopes and loose. This has been consolidated into the form of **eight records boxes**.

The John Ball Collection consists of: correspondence/letters, memos, reports, journal articles, newspaper articles and clippings, hand written notes, WSIB claims, forms, material safety data sheets, medical records, medical reports, case notes, personal notes, workplace notes, accident reports, grievance reports, payroll records, health and safety (H&S) notes, H&S minutes, H&S agendas, meeting minutes, Union(s) letters, Union(s) minutes, journal articles, diagrams, maps, floor plans, micro fiche, inventory records, fire records, brochures, fact sheets, training materials, personnel forms, employee lists, affidavits, pamphlets, newsletters, bulletins, email correspondence, magazines and books.

We confirm this to be a **personal archival collection**. It is always desirable to keep records in their original order or arrangement; however, this is not possible with the JBL Collection. Records have been viewed or extracted over time. As we could not recreate the original order, it was recommended, where possible, that we **categorize (group) documents** into a **hybrid arrangement**. Once “grouped” into this hybrid arrangement the records were **categorized to box level**.

The **re-housing, sorting, and box level inventory** of the project were the key deliverables to ensure that the physical Collection continues to remain in good condition (no further deterioration). This involved a process of removing the documents from old binders, removing paper clips, staples, etc., and placing records in new file folders, preparing them for sort and box level inventory.

A **fonds level description** was completed. The consensus was that it would be best to complete the physical order with box level description. This would make it much easier for a researcher to access and use the records in a meaningful way.

The review of materials in any archival collection should determine the **provenance and archival value** of the records; the **type** of materials; **legal ownership, access** to and the **right to retain** the records; and the **uniqueness** of the records.

The fonds level description outlines the **archival value** and **uniqueness** of the Collection. John Ball created this collection of records in the course of his personal activities for social justice. John was a longtime employee of CGE, and a member of various internal and external Health and Safety, and Labour related Committees. John collected hundreds of records in regards to CGE, factory and industry, products, working areas, working conditions, materials and substances, health and safety, training, union activities, etc.

John was also provided WSIB Claims information from fellow workers, who were or had been employed with CGE. John was a member of several external Labour Committees and these records are retained in the Collection. All of the records were drawn together by John into an **artificial collection** for **specific purposes** (purposes known to John). This is deemed “personal activities” because the creation of the records was completed on personal time.

Local records experts were consulted as part of this records review, and we acknowledge the **archival importance** of the collection, which offers extensive information about Health and Safety in an industrial factory setting, the work environment itself, and many social-political aspects of the history of work and industry in Canada in the 20th Century.

Legal ownership, access and related responsibilities should next be considered in regards to the Collection. The high level inventory of the Collection reveals that many records within the collection are highly confidential, sensitive, and subject to various Personal Privacy and Health Privacy Laws. Discussion with records experts focused on the need to **seek legal counsel** on the content of the Collection.

Although the project originally considered **digitization** of the Collection, records experts advised against digitization. Digitization must ensure that the **integrity of the record** remains intact. There must be a **specific process** followed to ensure the scan is completed properly, considering the **metadata**: title, author, subject, keywords, tags, the quality, format of the scan, etc. There is risk involved in digitization of the Collection. The majority of the Collection would need to be **redacted** in some way. Redaction of a record requires a special set of skills and experience. There are many **privacy issues** to be addressed. Also, it is an inefficient expenditure of resources to digitize records which may never be released when the original physical record is safe from deterioration.

The **provenance** of the Collection is clear, John personally created an extensive record history of the CGE Peterborough plant from a front line worker perspective. The span of records is vast covering over 50 years within the workplace. These records are **unique** and have **archival value**. Important research work may be undertaken using the Collection in its physical form with the **proper restricted access** in place. It is recommended that any **legal questions** regarding the Collection be clarified prior to offering restricted research access.

In terms of future work, additional sub-level sorting may be completed from the box level inventory, by an individual with records expertise. For example, the records may be further delineated into subgroup, series, subseries, and file level.

In closing, perhaps the JBL Group may now consider entering into discussions with one of the local archives (Trent Archives, Peterborough Museum, or Trent Valley Archives) to discuss the **possible permanent housing of the Collection**. This would ensure that the Collection **remains safe** in a proper records environment, while providing the **appropriate restricted access** to researchers. Additionally, a formal accession of the Collection would mean that it remains **permanently intact and preserved for the future**.