Step-by-Step Storage Reorganization for Small Museums
CCI’s Mission

CCI’s mission:
CCI advances and promotes the conservation of Canada’s heritage collections through its expertise in conservation science, treatment and preventive conservation. CCI works with heritage institutions and professionals to ensure these heritage collections are preserved and accessible to Canadians now and in the future.

CCI offers:
- Expert services
- Training and professional development opportunities
- Conservation resources, including online and print publications and tools

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  www.cci-icc.gc.ca
International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, Rome

- Intergovernmental organization
- Created by UNESCO in 1956
- 134 Member States
- USA: 1971 || Canada: 1978
Storage planning
Storage Reorganization

COMPLETE CHAOS

CREATING ORDER WITHIN THE SAME SPACE
Storage: 90%
Display: 10%
Canada, 2010

93% storage full in 10 years
37% storage inadequate

Canadian Art Museum Directors’ Organization
Organisation des Directeurs des Musées d’Art du Canada

COLLECTIONS SURVEY
2008/2009
(43 museums)
USA, 2011

Smithsonian Institution
Office of the Inspector General

In Brief

Collections Stewardship of the National Collections at the National Museum of American History - Inventory Controls Report Number A-10-03-1, February 8, 2011

Why We Did This Audit

This is the first of two reports covering stewardship of the national collections at the National Museum of American History (NMAH) and one in our series covering collections at the Smithsonian. Our overall audit objectives were to determine whether (1) physical security is adequate to safeguard the collections, (2) inventory controls are in place and working adequately to ensure that the collections are properly accounted for, and (3) collections are properly preserved.

What We Found

We found that inventory control measures are not in place or are inadequate.

We found that NMAH could strengthen inventory control practices to improve stewardship and broaden access to the collections. Based on our limited audit work, we estimate that about 10 percent of the 2,214 objects in our sample and at least 16 percent of the 2,214 objects in our sample were missing.

NMAH’s policies. NMAH also did not maintain complete inventory records, and those records often contained inaccurate information. NMAH’s electronic inventory records accounted for only about half (46 percent) of its accessioned objects. NMAH does not have an accurate count of its collections.
Les collections de musées en pleine désertification. « plus de 50 000 pièces sont aujourd’hui manquantes »

L’affaire avait fait grand bruit à l’époque : à l’été 2006, plus de deux cents pièces de la collection avaient disparu, suivi d’un vol d’une valeur de plusieurs millions de dollars, quelques jours plus tard, aux Archives nationales de... Devant l’ampleur des disparitions, le vice-premier ministre de l’époque, un certain Dmitri Medvedev, avait lancé un vaste programme de recensement des collections des trois mille six cents musées publics de la Fédération.

Ce travail colossal devrait être terminé d’ici à la fin de l’année, mais déjà 80 % des collections ont été recensées, selon le ministère de l’intérieur. Surprise : « Plus de cinquante mille pièces...
Overcrowding: biggest obstacle to opening storage to the public
USA, 2005

“it is troubling that only 11% of institutions have adequate storage facilities for all their collections”

- Heritage Health Index
Collections in storage at risk
International Museum Storage Survey 2011

1490 museums
136 countries

- Europe
- North America
- Asia Pacific
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Arab States
- Africa
Collections in storage at risk
International Museum Storage Survey 2011

Worldwide (1490)

50% Overcrowded storage units
40% Lack of management support
30% Unclear who is responsible
25% No location system

USA (383)
- Overcrowded storage units: 48%
- Lack of management support: 38%
- Unclear who is responsible: 21%
- No location system: 22%

CAN (86)
- Overcrowded storage units: 53%
- Lack of management support: 38%
- Unclear who is responsible: 21%
- No location system: 22%
66% Not enough space
The following problems were identified by survey respondents as “major” or “drastic”:

2 in 3 museums
- Lack of space

1 in 2 museums
- Lack of storage units
- Overcrowded storage units

2 in 5 museums
- Lack of management support for storage-related activities
- Lack of trained staff
- Large backlog of objects to be accessioned
- Storage units not adapted to the types of objects

1 in 3 museums
- Unrealistic responsibilities of storage
- Unrealistic procedures for storage management
- Lack of regular cleaning
- Building in a poor state of repair

1 in 4 museums
- No object movement register
- No accession register (or not up to date)
- No location codes for storage units or assets
- No main catalogue (paper or computerized)
- Objects directly on the floor

1 in 5 museums
- Unsecured doors and windows
- Recorded damage due to flooding, earthquakes, hurricanes or fires
- Large amounts of non-collection items in storage (rubbish, exhibition panels, packing materials, display showcases, personal effects of staff, etc.)
- Many objects stored outside designated storage areas (hallways, offices, etc.)
- Active pest infestation

1 in 10 museums
- Object theft

1400 responses
130 countries
3 months

Survey dates: June-September 2011
Selection criteria: anyone who works within a museum was invited to answer the survey. Invitations were sent through ICCROM and UNESCO networks and by personal contact to ICOM National Committee chairs. The survey was also publicized on the websites of national and international conservation or museum-related associations.

Note: This survey provides a snapshot of the situation in 1400 museums worldwide. As a little over 25% of the replies came from North America, these results were analyzed individually and compared to the rest of the world. There was found to be no significant difference in the numbers. This confirms that the results shown here represent the situation of the museums surveyed in all countries.

Access the survey summary:
Preventive Conservation of Endangered Museum Collections in Developing Countries

2007-2011

DOCUMENTATION

STORAGE
Practical guide

School of African Heritage (ÉPA), Benin

Step-by-step methodology

15 professionals
15 countries
Collection size

1970s

Now
Why storage reorganization?

Some facts
The progressive abandonment of museum storage is not only an issue affecting developing countries. All countries face the same problems:

- In the United States, the 2005 Heritage Health Index showed that only 11% of institutions had adequate storage facilities; moreover, a 2011 report by the Inspector General said 10% of inventoried items at the National Museum of American History are expected to be missing.

- In Russia, as reported in 2008 by the French newspaper Le Monde, the inventory control of a large national museum revealed 50,000 missing objects.

- In Canada, a 2010 Collection Survey by the Canadian Art Museum Directors’ Conference showed that 37.2% of storage facilities were inadequate and that 93% of storage areas would be full within 10 years.

- In Wales, the 2007 report Spotlight on Museums revealed that 67% of museum storage areas were already full, or would be within 5 years.

- In the UK, the 2008 University College London led research Collections for People showed that overcrowding was believed to be the biggest deterrent to opening up storage to the public.

And the list goes on...
Join the RE-ORG community, it's free!

The Storage Reorganization Methodology was developed for professionals who want to improve access to and conservation of museum collections. This step-by-step tool is designed to help you assess your situation, identify your needs, and make meaningful improvements to storage.

By registering, you'll be able to keep track of the process in your very own Progress Log and you'll have immediate access to all forms and guidelines developed to assist you in this process. Don't miss out! Create your account in one easy step today!

Username

Password

I forgot my password
I forgot my username

ACCESS MY RE-ORG ACCOUNT

Or, join the community by creating your account

First Name *

Surname

Username *

e-mail *
Gain the support of key decision makers

Advice/remarks

- It might be useful to map stakeholders that may have influence on, or interest in, the project.
- You must involve decision makers throughout the process, keep them informed of progress and convince them of the importance of reorganization for the museum and its potential benefits for the public.
- Remember that storage reorganization can cause strong reactions:
  - Space is always a sensitive issue. Modifications to anyone’s work environment may cause some to protest (openly or by blocking progress).
  - Inventory controls can reveal that considerable portions of the collection are missing. This can be an embarrassment to decision makers and sometimes, it may even jeopardize the progress of the reorganization.

The final product(s) of this task will be used for:

1.4

Team members involved in this task

S. Lambert

Duration

2 hrs

When you’ve done this task, save it

DONE
How to proceed

1. Consider each of the five essential elements of the basic documentation system, using the results from section C of the Self-evaluation (1,2):
   - Accession register;
   - Accession number (for individual objects);

See what members of the RE-ORG community have to say:

"Museum storage is considered as the “materialized memory” of our history, so we better keep it in good order to make available for use - and accessible to future generations. This methodology helps."
Marina Grosser-Sternscheg, University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria

"I am particularly grateful for the possibility of using this methodology as a didactic tool, and teaching present and future professionals a meaningful tool for the key segments of collections management."
Alessandra Nikolic, Central Institute for Conservation, Belgrade, Serbia

"Using this step-by-step methodology is not only easy and efficient, but also fun and friendly, I believe this tool can solve many recurring problems in the area of collections management."
Msload Momenzadeh, Independent Preventive Conservator, London, UK

Before and After: Zambia

Before and After: The Netherlands

Before and After: Zimbabwe

My toolkit

Navigate this phase
- Phase 2 Diagram

Forms
- Documentation System Evaluation
- Documentation Spot-check 1 - Location Codes

Exercises
- Location numbering systems - 1

Online references
- Documentation practical guide (ICCROM-UNESCO)
- Museum handbook Part I

Examples
- Storage occupancy plan
- Storage occupancy plan n.2

Non-collection items in storage /
1125 registered users (2015)
# Self-Evaluation Tool for Museum Storage

http://re-org.info/en/download/243/34/16

## 43 Questions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANAGEMENT (M)</th>
<th>BUILDING &amp; SPACE (B)</th>
<th>COLLECTION (C)</th>
<th>FURNITURE &amp; SMALL EQUIPMENT (F)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.1 SOMEONE IS OFFICIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR EACH ASPECT OF STORAGE</td>
<td>B.1 THE BUILDING IS LOCATED IN AN AREA WITHIN THE MUSEUM</td>
<td>C.1 THERE IS AN ACCESSION REGISTER AND IT RE</td>
<td>F.1 NO OBJECT IS PLACED DIRECTLY ON THE GROUND</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Yes, and his/her duties are written down in the job description</td>
<td>6 The building is not at risk of flooding</td>
<td>each object’s accession number and date</td>
<td>6 There are no objects placed directly on the ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Yes, but there is no job description</td>
<td>4 The building is at low risk of flooding</td>
<td>4 An accession register exists and it is on record</td>
<td>4 A few objects are placed directly on the ground, for specific reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 No</td>
<td>2 The building is at risk of flooding</td>
<td>2 An accession register exists and it is on record</td>
<td>2 Most of the objects are placed directly on the ground, without justification</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.2 SUFFICIENT STAFF HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO THE ROLE</td>
<td>B.2 THE BUILDING PROVIDES ADEQUATE PROTECTION AGAINST RAIN AND EXTERNAL WEATHER EXTREMES</td>
<td>C.2 EACH OBJECT HAS A UNIQUE ACCESSION NUMBER</td>
<td>F.2 MOST STORAGE UNITS CAN ACCOMMODATE THE GROWING COLLECTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yes</td>
<td>6 Yes, the building is in excellent condition</td>
<td>6 Yes, this is the case for all the objects</td>
<td>6 For the next five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 No</td>
<td>4 The building has minor flaws</td>
<td>4 For the next ten years</td>
<td>4 The storage units are already full</td>
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<tr>
<td>0 No</td>
<td>2 The building is in overall good condition</td>
<td>2 For less than half the objects</td>
<td>2 The storage units are overcrowded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.3 STAFF HAVE BEEN ADEQUATELY INSTRUCTED AND TRAINED TO CARRY OUT ALL STORAGE-RELATED ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>B.3 DOORS AND WINDOWS ARE SECURE DESTRUCT</td>
<td>C.3 THE DOCUMENTATION FOR EACH OBJECT INCLUDES</td>
<td>F.3 THE DIMENSIONS OF THE STORAGE UNITS ARE ADAPTED TO THE DIMENSIONS OF THE OBJECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yes</td>
<td>3 All doors and windows are secure</td>
<td>6 Yes, the documentation includes the date</td>
<td>3 Yes, for all the storage units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 No</td>
<td>1 Some doors and/or some windows are secure</td>
<td>4 For more than half of the objects</td>
<td>2 For most of the storage units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.4 WRITTEN PROCEDURES FOR STORAGE ACTIVITIES ARE AVAILABLE, CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE, VISITOR ACCESS</td>
<td>0 None of the doors or windows are secure</td>
<td>2 For less than half the objects</td>
<td>0 The dimensions of the storage units are not adapted to the dimensions of the objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.5 ACCESS TO STORAGE AREAS IS RESTRICTED AND MONITORED</td>
<td>STORAGE AREAS AND THE BUILDING</td>
<td>C.4 THE DOCUMENTATION FOR EACH OBJECT INCLUDES</td>
<td>F.4 THE STORAGE FURNITURE HAS EITHER BEEN TREATED FOR PEST RESISTANCE OR IT IS MADE WITH PEST-RESISTANT MATERIALS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yes</td>
<td>B.4 THE STORAGE AREAS ARE ALL SITUATED IN ONE BUILDING</td>
<td>3 Yes, each object’s documentation includes</td>
<td>3 Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Entrance is not monitored but it is restricted</td>
<td>6 Yes, the storage areas are all in the same</td>
<td>3 Yes, the documentation includes the date</td>
<td>1 Most storage units are pest proofed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Entrance is not monitored and not restricted</td>
<td>4 The storage areas are dispersed throughout</td>
<td>4 For more than half of the objects</td>
<td>0 No, most of the storage units are vulnerable to pests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.5 SPECIFIC CARTS, TRAYS, LADDERS HAVE BEEN SPECIFICALLY ASSIGNED TO EACH STORAGE AREA</td>
<td>2 For less than half of the objects</td>
<td>2 For less than half of the objects</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Yes, each equipment is always present in each storage area</td>
<td>0 No, for none of the objects</td>
<td>0 No, for none of the objects</td>
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<td>1 Some equipment exists in the museum, but none has been specifically assigned to the storage areas</td>
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<td>0 No, there is no such equipment</td>
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<td>M.1 Someone is officially responsible for each storage area</td>
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<td>6 Yes and his/her duties are written down in the job description</td>
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<td>2 Yes, but there is no job description</td>
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<td>M.2 Sufficient staff have been allocated to the storage areas</td>
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<td>3 Yes</td>
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<td>M.3 Staff have been adequately instructed and are trained to carry out all storage-related activities</td>
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<td>3 Yes</td>
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<td>M.4 Written procedures for storage activities (e.g. object retrieval, object movement, cleaning and maintenance, visitor access) exist and are known by all staff</td>
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<td>3 Yes, there are procedures for all of these activities</td>
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<td>2 There are procedures for most of these activities</td>
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<td>1 For less than half</td>
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<td>0 No, there are no written procedures for these activities</td>
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<td>M.5 Access to storage areas is restricted and monitored</td>
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<td>3 Entrance to storage is monitored</td>
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<td>1 Entrance is not monitored but it is restricted to museum staff</td>
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<td>0 Entrance is not monitored and not restricted to staff</td>
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### Congratulations! Now, Rate Your Storage

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<td>YOUR COLLECTION IS AT SERIOUS RISK</td>
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**Museum:**

**Assessor’s Name:**

**Date of Assessment:**
47 institutions across Canada, 2013-14

Management

Building & space

Collection

Furniture & Small Equipment
Phase 1: Getting started
Phase 2: Condition Report
Phase 3: Action plan
Phase 4: Implementation
Key Criteria for Good Storage

1. One trained member of staff is in charge
2. Key policies and procedures exist and are applied
3. The building and storage area offer adequate protection for the collection
4. The storage area has dedicated support spaces (office, workroom, non-collection storage)
5. The storage area contains only objects that are accessioned
6. No object is placed directly on the floor
7. Every object has been assigned a specific location in storage
8. Every object can be physically located within three minutes
9. Every object can be retrieved without moving more than two other objects
10. Every object is in stable condition, ready to be used for the museum’s activities
Before
Before
<table>
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<td>SMALL IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED</td>
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<td>YOUR COLLECTION IS AT SERIOUS RISK</td>
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Phase 2

Condition Report

[Images of people reviewing and organizing items in what appears to be a storeroom or warehouse setting.]
Before

- Collection on the ground
- Wooden crates (masks)
- Non-collection and materials to discard
Condition report summary

Management
• Unclear responsibilities
• Unclear procedures
• Lack of training (handling)

Building & Space
• Undefined functional spaces

Collection
• All objects on the ground
• Many non-collection items
• No location system

Furniture & Small Equip.
• No storage furniture
Phase 3  Action plan
To tackle later…

Define functional spaces
A) Collections storage
B) Loading unloading
C) Exhibition prep area
D) Research

Storage fullness: 50%

Create location system

Bring collection back in storage
Kick all non-collection items out!

Recycle and reuse storage furniture
Phase 4
Implementation

Collection of baskets
Before
Collection of baskets After
Collection of 63 shadow puppets Before
Collection of 63 shadow puppets

During
Collection of 63 shadow puppets
Collection of 63 shadow puppets
Collection of 63 shadow puppets
Collection of 63 shadow puppets
Collection of 63 shadow puppets

During
Collection of 63 shadow puppets
Collection of 63 shadow puppets
Collection of 14 metal objects  Before
Collection of 14 metal objects
Collection of 14 metal objects
Collection of 14 metal objects

After
After Collection of 14 metal objects
Collection of 18 rolled textiles

Before
... and 13 manuscripts
Rolled textiles and manuscripts
Collection of 29 hand puppets

Before
Collection of 29 hand puppets
Collection of 29 hand puppets
Collection of 277 masks
Collection of 277 masks
Collection of 277 masks

During
Collection of 277 masks
Collection of 277 masks During
Collection of 277 masks
Collection of 277 masks
Collection of 277 masks
Collection of 277 masks
8 large and fragile objects

Before
8 large and fragile objects

After
End of the 4th day!
Collection storage
Loading & unloading
Exhibition preparation
Research
- Motivated team of 10 people
- 4 days’ work
- Cost: $400
Key Criteria for Good Storage

1. One trained member of staff is in charge
2. Key policies and procedures exist and are applied
3. The building and storage area offer adequate protection for the collection
4. The storage area has dedicated support spaces (office, workroom, non-collection storage)
5. The storage area contains only objects that are accessioned
6. No object is placed directly on the floor
7. Every object has been assigned a specific location in storage
8. Every object can be located within three minutes
9. Every object can be physically retrieved without moving more than two other objects
10. Every object is in stable condition, ready to be used for the museum’s activities
In 4 days
Resolution 22.2

Long-term program for capacity building for storage reorganization based on RE-ORG materials

All countries invited to join hands with ICCROM to develop this program
133 countries contacted

61 replied

38 interested

2014-2015

CANADA (Ontario)
Canadian Conservation Institute

SOUTHEAST EUROPE
Central Institute for Conservation in Belgrade
RE-ORG INTERNATIONAL 2015-2016

CANADA (Atlantic)
Canadian Conservation Institute

BELGIUM & LUXEMBOURG
The Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage

CHINA
State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH)
Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage (CACH)

INDIA
Alwar Museum, Rajasthan

NEW CALEDONIA
Centre Culturel Tjibaou
Year 1 (2015-16) Partnership

Develop training resources
RE-ORG: Canada (Ontario)

This group is reserved to the participants of the Canadian RE-ORG training program, organized by the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) and the Ontario Museums Association (OMA).

Welcome Simon Lambert

Who’s Online

Groups

What's new in RE-ORG: Canada (Ontario), Simon?

Simon Lambert uploaded the file: 3-day workshop pictures to RE-ORG: Canada (Ontario) 2 weeks, 1 day ago

You can download the original powerpoint with the image files here: http://bit.ly/1P08hgl/
Learning objectives

- Implement a storage reorganization project from start to finish
- Advise other museums on how to plan a storage reorganization project
- Organize a public outreach activity to showcase the benefits of well-organized storage areas to the community
- Organize a dissemination activity for other professionals in their network
Participants

1. Lambton Heritage Museum
2. Timmins Museum
3. Collingwood Museum
4. West Parry Sound District Museum
5. Clarington Museums
6. Norfolk Arts Centre at Lynnwood Ntl. Hist. Site
Timeline

Oct. 2014

- Getting started
- 1/2 day

Oct. 2015

- Condition Report
- 4 months
- 4-day workshop
- Action plan
- Implementation
- 6 months
Timeline


4 days

4-day workshop

RE-ORG Canada (Ontario)
Brant Museum & Archives

[Image of a building and shelves with boxes]
Ontario Adventures in storage reorganization

61 delegates (Ontario, Alberta)
6 guest speakers

One-day conference
March 27th 2015

Anticipated results - October 2015

- Visible improvements in 7 museums
- Plan developed for 6 smaller museums
- Provincial storage advisory network
- 6 public outreach activities
- 6 professional dissemination activities
Want to know more?

RE-ORG International: collections@iccrom.org

RE-ORG Canada: cci-icc.services@pch.gc.ca

RE-ORG website: www.re-org.info
Webinar

“Your Storage RE-ORG Project – Planning For It and Funding It”

**Date:** Tuesday, August 25, 2015

**Time:** 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (E.S.T.)

**Register:** [https://members.museumsontario.ca/](https://members.museumsontario.ca/)
Simon Lambert
Preservation Development advisor

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