

**University of Toronto Archives and
Records Management Services**



**James Acland Personal Records
B2001-0044**

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

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B2001-0044

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biographical Note.....2

Scope and Content.....3

Series 1 Biographical File.....4

Series 2 Essays, Talks and Scripts4

Series 3 Publications4

Series 4 Conservation Work5

Series 5 Course materials and note books5

Series 6 Resource Cards5

Series 7 Maritime Photographs.....6

Series 8 Photographs of European Trip 1964.....6

Series 9 Vault Photographs7

Series 10 Photos of Historic Sites8

Series 11 Slides9

Series 12 Negatives 10

Biographical Note

James Acland was born in Toronto in 1917. After attending Ecoles des Beaux Arts and McGill University in Montreal, he graduated from Syracuse University New York with a B.A. in Architecture in 1942. During World War II, he worked on factory designs and from 1942-1945 was with Canadian Army Photo Intelligence. After obtaining an M.A. in Philosophy from Harvard University in 1952, he returned to the study and teaching of architecture and held positions at the University of Utah and the University of British Columbia. In 1956, he returned to his hometown to become associate professor and later professor at the University of Toronto's, School of Architecture.

Both his research and teaching focused on the history of architecture. Much of his research related to land use and how it affects architecture, the development of complex towns in the medieval period and early European building traditions. His study in these areas resulted in several articles and culminated in his book Medieval Structure: The Gothic Vault, University of Toronto Press, 1972. The subjects he taught related directly to his interest on the history of architecture and included courses such as the History of Medieval Architecture, Renaissance Architecture, European Tradition of Framed Building, Mediterranean Tradition of Mass and Shell Building, Medieval Structures, to list a few.

Starting in 1962, Acland popularized his ideas on the history of architecture by appearing in two CBC television series Man in a Landscape and Wall and Window. In these shows, and many to follow, he was the speaker, actively developed the script and provided photographs, and drawings. Through the 1960s, he continued to be involved in television programming and educational films.

Acland's interest in the history of architecture led him to become an advocate of architectural and heritage conservation. In the 1960s, he was active in the Stop the Spadina Committee and, as chair of the Friends of Old City Hall, he was instrumental in saving Toronto's Old City Hall (now the City Court House) from demolition. From 1969-1971, he was president of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario and organized a computer inventory of historic buildings through the National Historic Sites Service. Many of his articles related to his conservation work. His work with Eric Arthur on maritime architecture most certainly did – Building by the Sea, University of Toronto Press, 1962. James Acland died on June 22, 1976. He was still teaching in the School of Architecture and was writing a history of house and street.

Scope and Content

195- 1976 1.05 m textual records with architectural drawings found throughout
 1.8 m graphic records

This accession documents to a limited degree James Acland's research, teaching and publications. It is limited because very little of his textual records survived, although there is a good number of notebooks that were mostly likely used for lectures. Records relating to his architectural conservation work especially relating to saving Old City Hall are held at the City of Toronto Archives.

This accession does however give a good representation of Acland's photographic work that formed the basis of his research and publications. There are extensive photographs and negatives relating to The Gothic Vault as well as Building by the Sea. There is a large collection of photographs taken on a trip to Europe in 1964. These would have most certainly been used for research and teaching. All the images in this collection are well identified in terms of their location and site. However, few give specific dates. It is assumed that most of the images were taken through the 1960s and some in the early 1970s.

Sometime after his death, a collection of 25,000 slides was donated to the University of Toronto and was distributed among 15 departments. A catalogue of these slides was prepared by the Centre for Medieval Studies and published in 1984: Catalogue of the James Acland Slide Collection. Only a few slides were donated with this accession and it is possible they are duplicates of what is found in the larger collection.

Access: Open

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

James Acland Personal Records

B2001-0044

Series 1 Biographical File

ca. 1976 1 file textual

This series is one file containing a copy of his birth certificate, a C.V., a Fellowship Leave Application, a publication list, and a biography written around 1976. Documents give a good overview of his career and achievements.

Box /001 (01)

Series 2 Essays, Talks and Scripts

1962 – 1975 0.1 m textual ; architectural drawings

This series contains draft manuscripts, outlines and related correspondence of talks given by Acland such as “The Medieval House” (1974), and Architecture and “The Arrogant Towers” (1967). Also there are scripts and related correspondence for CBC programs in which Acland was involved including Explorations, Man in a Landscape and A Sense of Place. Some files include slide lists and original drawings.

Box /001 (02) – (18)

Series 3 Publications

1962 – 1972 0.57 m textual

This series documents two books and one article. The first publication is Building by the Sea, limited edition photographic study of Maritimes architecture with foreword by E.R. Arthur and plates by J.H. Acland published by University of Toronto Press 1962. One large file contains the outline, notes and a photocopy of an early draft. Soon after the two authors published “The Maritimes” in the Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, July 1963. A copy is found in this series. Photographs relating to these two publications can be found in Series 7.

The third publication is Medieval Structure: the Gothic Vault (1972). This work was a culmination of all his research on middle ages architecture. Included is the original publication agreement, some original drawings, and long narrow tabs with rough sketches of the illustration that were being considered for the book. These were most likely used to organize and select the illustrations. A copy of the book has been kept with the papers. For photographs related to this publication see Series 8, 9 and 12.

Box /001 (19) – (22) and /005 for illustrated markers.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

James Acland Personal Records

B2001-0044

Series 4 Conservation Work

197- 0.05 textual

To a limited degree, the two files making up this series document Acland's involvement in the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings. Included are some inventory forms completed by students in the 1970s, and an article about the project written by Acland and published in Ontario History, Sept. 1971. Photographs most directly related to his conservation work in the Toronto area are found in Series 10.

Box /001 (23) – (24)

Series 5 Course materials and note books

196- 197- 0.2 m + 1 file textual; architectural drawings

This series contains one file of course materials such as outlines, reading lists, lecture schedules for courses Acland taught at various institutions. Courses for the University of Toronto School of Architecture include 2.23 The European Tradition of Framed Building, 2.24 Mediterranean Tradition, 2.26 The House, 2.27 Residential Patterns 222 and 322 History of Architecture.

Acland's notebooks, which he most certainly used for lectures, document the subject matter of the courses and the way in which Acland organized his lectures. There are eight in total, illustrated with his original sketches.

Course material is found at /001 (25) ; Notebooks are boxed separately in Box /002

Series 6 Resource Cards

196- 197- 0.13 m textual ; graphic ; architectural drawings

This is a series of index cards that are colour coded and grouped by country. Most cards contain architectural drawings copied from books but some are hand drawn by Acland. There are also postcards showing buildings and some notes. These were most likely used to organize his research and supplement his lecture notes found in the notebooks.

Box /003 and /004

Series 7 Maritime Photographs

ca. 1962 graphic

These photographs of maritime architecture in Canada, include external and internal views of government buildings, historical sites, streetscapes, industrial buildings, churches and old homes. These were most likely taken around 1962 and were used for several publications including Building by the Sea and The Maritimes. Cities most widely represented in this series include Quebec City, St John N.B, St. Andrews N.B., Dorchester N.B., Fredericton N.B., Charlottetown P.E.I, Halifax N.S., Lunenburg N.S., St. Johns Nfld., Petty Harbour Nfld..

This series consists of b&w proofs and larger b&w and colour prints. Proofs are arranged by their original number order and are identified by town and building. Larger prints have been grouped by their geographic location of province and town.

| | |
|-------|---|
| /001P | 444 photographs: b&w ; 2 1/4" x 3 1/4" or smaller 1 transparency: colour ; 4x5 |
| /002P | 156 photographs: b&w ; 8x10 or smaller 65 photographs: colour ; 8x10 |

Series 8 Photographs of European Trip 1964

1964 graphic

These photographs were taken by Acland during a trip to Europe in 1964 and document the architecture and landscape of various cities. These images would have been used for research and to illustrate several published works including a series of articles entitled "Building and Land:..." in Canadian Architect starting in 1968. Interior photographs of cathedrals and churches would have also formed the basis for his research on vaults, some of which were reproduced in his 1972 book Medieval Structure : The Gothic Vault.

Countries documented in this series include: Central European countries such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary; England; France; Greece; the Islamic Middle East such as Turkey, Iran and Egypt; Italy, Portugal, Spain and Yugoslavia. There are also photographs of Nigeria taken by a photographer Grant Wanzel. These are included here because they were originally filed with the European photographs.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

James Acland Personal Records

B2001-0044

Series 8 (con'td) Photographs of European Trip 1964

Arrangement:

- /001P 32 photographs: b&w ; 4" x 4"
 368 photographs : b&w ; 2 1/4" x 3 1/4"
/003P 41 photographs : b&w ; 5"x7" or smaller
 186 photographs: b&w ; 8"x10"
/001P 14 negatives: b&w ; 4x5 or smaller

Series 9 Vault Photographs

196- - 1972 graphic

These images are those selected mainly for printing in Acland's book, Medieval Structure : the Gothic Vault. University of Toronto Press, 1972. Some may not have actually made it into the final printing. They show architectural features of various structures throughout Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Originally these were probably taken around the same time as European photographs described in Series 8 – possibly during the same trip since many of the places are common to both series of prints.

This series contains the following arrangement:

- /004P 247 photoprints: b&w ; 8x10 or smaller
 4 photoprints: colour ; 8x10 or smaller
 Mainly 8x10s these prints were identified as "European Arches". Most are identified by location and have therefore been sorted alphabetically by place name. Except for a small number, Acland was the photographer. Some are numbered and mostly likely correspond to their use in the book but the correlation is unclear since the illustrations in the book are not numbered.
- /004P 31 photoprints: b&w ; 8x10
 These prints were originally arranged by chapter and this arrangement has been kept. Notations made by Acland on the back often note the page number.
- /005P- 197 negatives: b&w ; 8x10
- /007P These are enlarged negatives likely used for printing. Each is individually foldered since adhesive from the tape used to border their edges has made them tacky. Originally, all would have been sorted by chapter but this arrangement was lost. Whatever arrangement existed was maintained and where possible folders are annotated with the page number. The original folder has also been kept since it lists all images found in that chapter. Negatives not matched to their chapters are filed in Box /007. It is possible that some of these may not have been used in the book.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

James Acland Personal Records

B2001-0044

Series 9 (cont'd) Vault Photographs

/001P 57 negatives : b&w ; 4x3.5 or smaller
29 negatives : colour ; 21/4" x 21/4"

These are mostly original negatives of vaults many of which Acland identified. Some appear to copy negatives. There is no particular arrangement although original groupings were maintained.

Series 10 Photos of Historic Sites

ca. 196- - 197- graphic ; textual

This series contains mainly photographs of historical buildings and streets in Toronto but there are also images of Montreal, San Francisco, Quebec City and other locations in the United States. Most were probably taken or collected by Acland and relate to his involvement in the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings and the Royal Canadian Institute of Architecture Committee on Preservation of Historic Buildings.

Also included in this series are Toronto streetscapes taken by A. J.H. Richardson for the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings as well as photos originating from the Toronto Historical Board (photographer unknown). It is possible Acland was collecting these at the time of his death in 1976 to write a history of the house and street.

Arrangement:

- /008P Appox. 200 Contact Prints
31 photographs: b&w ; 8x10
43 photographs: b&w ; 3x5 or smaller
Photographs of Toronto take by Acland and sorted by building
- /008P 16 photographs: b&w ; 8x10 or smaller with accompanying textual records
Photographs collected for Historical Inventory (RAIC).
- /008P 52 photographs: b&w ; 8x10 or smaller
Photographs of other locations: Ontario, Montreal, Quebec City, U.S.A., San Francisco
- /008P 35 photographs: b&w ; 8x10
Toronto Historical Board Photos (photographer unknown)
- /009P 54 photographs: b&w ; 3x5
Photographs of architectural feature such as doors, windows, gables of houses in Toronto – photographer is unknown but is presumed to be Acland

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

James Acland Personal Records

B2001-0044

Series 10 (cont'd) Photos of Historic Sites

/009P 150 photographs: b&w ; 5x7 or smaller
 Photographs take by A.J.H. Richardson (includes original list)

Series 11 Slides

ca. 195- - 197- graphic

This series includes slides most likely used to illustrate lectures, publications and possibly CBC programs in which he was involved. Most slides are undated but or identified as to their site location. There is also one box of slides of architectural student projects.

Arrangement:

/011P 423 slides: colour ; 35 mm
 94 glass lantern slides: b&w : 21/4x21/4

Box: "Ren & Bar Quebec & Maritime Spares"

Contains slides of US and Canadian motorsports, Maritime towns and buildings, architecture in Mexico and a few of London England.

Box: "Card Mounts"

Contains two groupings : slides of Granada Spain and slides of "School Projects" from students at UBC, the University of Utah and University of Toronto.

Box: "Romanesque & Catalan Spares"

Contains slides of buildings in France, Great Britain, Italy and Spain.

Box: "Gothic and Islamic Spares"

Contains slides of buildings in Spain, Iran, and Turkey as well as two sets of slides entitled Primitive & Townscape and Gothic.

Box: "1"

Contains slides of Canada, Mexico, Great Britain, Italy and United States.

Glass Lantern Slide Box

Contains glass lantern slides of buildings, especially cathedrals, in France, Spain and Italy

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

James Acland Personal Records

B2001-0044

Series 12 Negatives

ca. 196- graphic

These are mainly 35 mm strip negatives mostly likely relating to the photos in series above although a relationship is not easily established. There are two sets:

/003P 515 negatives: colour
Most are European photographs but the number system does not match those found in Series 8 (Europe 1964 photos). Most were probably taken for vault research and have been cut and resorted according to location and architectural characteristics. There are also photographs of proposed plans for Toronto City Hall and other buildings in the Toronto area.

/010P Approx. 1500-2000 negatives: b&w
These are rolls of black and white negatives. Approximately half are photos and drawn figures for the Gothic Vault. Others are images of various buildings and architectural drawings and models. Unlike most of the images in other series, these are completely unidentified and may have served as a preservation set.