



---

Article: Community Collections, Community Museums, Collaborative Projects: the Ottawa Museum Network Conservation Project (Abstract)

Author(s): Pilar Hernandez Romero

*Topics in Photographic Preservation, Volume 14.*

Pages: 137–138

Compilers: Camille Moore and Jessica Keister

© 2011, The American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works. 1156 15<sup>th</sup> St. NW, Suite 320, Washington, DC 20005. (202) 452-9545, [www.conservation-us.org](http://www.conservation-us.org).

Under a licensing agreement, individual authors retain copyright to their work and extend publication rights to the American Institute for Conservation.

*Topics in Photographic Preservation* is published biannually by the Photographic Materials Group (PMG) of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works (AIC). A membership benefit of the Photographic Materials Group, *Topics in Photographic Preservation* is primarily comprised of papers presented at PMG meetings and is intended to inform and educate conservation-related disciplines.

Papers presented in *Topics in Photographic Preservation, Vol. 14*, have not undergone a formal process of peer review. Responsibility for the methods and materials described herein rests solely with the authors, whose articles should not be considered official statements of the PMG or the AIC. The PMG is an approved division of the AIC but does not necessarily represent the AIC policy or opinions.

---

## **COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS, COMMUNITY MUSEUMS, COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS: THE OTTAWA MUSEUM NETWORK CONSERVATION PROJECT**

**PILAR HERNANDEZ ROMERO**

*Presented at the 2011 PMG Winter Meeting in Ottawa, Canada*

From September 2009 to August 2010, the Ottawa Museum Network (OMN) carried out a one year project to help their eleven members to enhance the conservation in their museums with special emphasis in paper and photograph collections.

The OMN is a non-profit organization that a not-for-profit organization, works to promote and advance the interests of its member museums by attracting and engaging audiences, and by helping to tell the greater story of Ottawa. Due to the continue lack of budget of the OMN members to proceed conservation treatments or to have an assessment of their collection's conservation conditions, the OMN decided to put together a conservation project that will benefit all the museums.

During the first seven months, the project assessed the museums' conservation conditions using the Benchmarks in Collection Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries and surveyed their archival collections with the Preservation 101 approach. The collected data was organized and analyzed following the Heritage Health Index to keep the collaborative aspect of the project. The survey results presented in a final report are helping the OMN members to upgrade their conservation conditions, guiding them to plan future conservation projects and will allow them to obtain other grants.

The conservation work demanded flexibility to adapt the conservation surveys and assessments to meet each of the organizations needs. Collections care guides in English and French were put together and punctual training for staff and volunteers was also offered. Continuous communication with directors, curators and collections managers was essential to achieve the project objectives. Know and understand the collections manager.

The lessons learned from the assessment part were to think about viable solutions rather than recommendations, always start with the museum strengths and improvements, propose recommendations that are easy to achieve and have great impact, take one specific and important conservation problem and give the entire solution, proportionate new information about the collection, let the more resilient subjects to the end and remember to Bbe always flexible and open.

The last five months, more than 80 artefacts were treated and a tight schedule and organization was required to treat the whole. Canadian and Ottawa's history were represented in a diverse range of photographic objects: from an 1860's royal ambrotype to a 1970's photo wallpaper mural located in a bunker.

Finally, an exhibition showing the results of the conservation treatment was organized in each

museum to show the work done and the importance of collections conservation. Public attention and awareness were reached with the conservation exhibition where not only images of before, during and after treatment were shown, but also videos of the conservation treatments.

Collaboration between fundraising agencies, museum directors, staff and Parks Canada helped to complete this project successfully and allowed the OMN to win the 2010 Ontario Association Museum Excellence Award for enhancing conservation standards.

PILAR HERNANDEZ ROMERO  
Photograph Conservator, Private Practice

Papers presented in *Topics in Photographic Preservation, Volume Fourteen* have not undergone a formal process of peer review.