



CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES

**Inventory of the
Archambeau-Thomas family collection**

Inventory #F0612

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Fonds/Collection Number: F0612

Title: Archambeau-Thomas family collection

Dates: 1946-2013, predominant 1967-2004

Extent: 0.24 metres of textual material.
3 scrapbooks : 20 x 37 cm and 30 x 25 cm.
42 photographs : col. and b&w ; 18 x 15 cm and smaller.

**Biographical Sketch/
Administrative History:** Gerald A. Archambeau is a Canadian citizen (b.1933) who emigrated from Jamaica to Montreal in 1947. He was the first black adolescent to join the Canadian Naval Cadets in Montreal in 1948, and the first black telegraph messenger to work for the Angelo American Telegraph Company. Archambeau worked as a passenger car attendant for the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railway in the 1950s. From 1967 to his retirement in 1993, Archambeau worked as a station attendant for Air Canada at the Malton (now Pearson International) airport. In 2004 Archambeau published his autobiography: "A Struggle To Walk With Dignity: The story of a Jamaican-born Canadian." Archambeau's grandfather was a police inspector, naturalist, lecturer and explorer in Jamaica, Herbert T. Thomas. His first wife was Gertrude Thomas. They had five sons and one daughter. The couple lost four of their sons during WWI. Archambeau's grandmother, Leonora Thomas, was Herbert T. Thomas' second wife. She was a seamstress and owned a local bakery. The couple had four daughters. Archambeau's mother Phyllis A. Thomas, was a nurse. Phyllis had three sisters: Dorothy M. Thomas (also known as Dorothy Coot) was a legal secretary and the first female underwriter at New York Life Insurance Company; Beatrice V. Thomas was a cost accountant for a rum company based in Jamaica; Kathleen M. Thomas was also a legal secretary.

Scope and Content: Accession consists of biographical writing, genealogical documents, published and photocopied books, scrapbooks and mementos created, collected and accumulated by Gerald A. Archambeau from various sources, including genealogical information regarding his grandfather Herbert T. Thomas, a police officer in Jamaica who was also a naturalist, lecturer and explorer. Material relating to Herbert T. Thomas is photocopied and scanned pamphlets, online articles and newspaper articles of material originally published from 1881 to about 1927 and relates primarily to Thomas' campaign to eradicate the practice of obeha in Jamaica.

**Restrictions on
Access and Use:** No restrictions on access.

Finding Aid: File list available.

URL of Finding Aid: <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000612.html>

Accruals: The fonds comprises the following accessions: 2011-047, 2013-016. Further accruals may be expected.

Related Records: Copies of Archambeau's autobiography "A Struggle To Walk With Dignity" (Toronto : Blue Butterfly Books, 2008) and his grandfather Herbert T. Thomas's "The Story of A West Indian Policeman, or, forty-seven years in the Jamaica constabulary" (Jamaica: The Cleaner Co. Ltd.) 1927. have been added to York University's Special Collections.

**Immediate source of
acquisition:** Donated by Gerald Archambeau in 2011.

Other Notes: [RAD 1.8B21] General note: Archambeau was assisted by genealogists Alan Grevson and Madeleine E. Mitchell in compiling genealogical information regarding the Thomas family.

Provenance Access Points: Archambeau, Gerald A., 1933-

F0612 - Archambeau-Thomas family collection

Thomas, Herbert Theodore, 1856-

Date of creation: 2012/02/28

Date of last revision: 2013/12/18