



## **CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES**

**Inventory of the  
Cameron family fonds**

**Inventory #F0493**

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## F0493 - Cameron family fonds

**Fonds/Collection Number:** F0493

**Title:** Cameron family fonds

**Dates:** 1865-1990, predominant 1969-1990

**Extent:** 0.04 metres of textual records  
9 audio discs : 78 rpm

**Biographical Sketch/  
Administrative History:** As Margaret Laurence prepared to leave Elm Cottage in Penn, Buckinghamshire, to begin a year as Writer in Residence at the University of Toronto's Massey College, she enlisted the aid of author Dave Godfrey to locate a young Canadian couple who could look after the cottage and provide company for her children, Jocelyn and David. Ian Cameron was a graduate student at York University studying with Professor Clara Thomas, and his wife Sandy was a don at York. They were in England while Ian completed his M.A. thesis on D.H. Laurence, as well as working on his own fiction. The Camerons moved into Elm Cottage in 1969, and developed a close friendship with Laurence that lasted until her death in 1987.

**Scope and Content:** Fonds consists of more than 60 letters, newsletters, poems, and greeting cards written by Margaret Laurence to Ian and Sandy Cameron, as well as a copy of Laurence's will. The correspondence discusses Laurence's work as a writing instructor and speaker at the University of Toronto, her relationship with other Canadian writers and Clara Thomas, her move from Toronto to Lakefield, and her involvement with the Writers' Union of Canada conference in Ottawa in November 1973. Laurence comments extensively on her own works and her efforts to encourage other writers (including Ian Cameron), her efforts to produce a recording of songs with her lyrics and Cameron's musical score to accompany "The diviners," the film contract based on this novel, and her elation at winning the Molson Prize in 1975. The correspondence also discusses her divorce from Jack Laurence, her relationship with her children, and her views on social and generational change. The correspondence is accompanied by nine vinyl recordings given by Laurence to the Camerons that feature European classical music, African palm wine music, and Ghanaian highlife music. The fonds also contains five letters from John Ruskin, the Victorian writer and art critic, to Kate Towney and Arbuthnot Cameron, 1865-1867, regarding Towney's marriage and financial affairs, mineral collecting, and ideas from Ruskin's book, "Modern painters." These letters are accompanied by notes and transcripts, as well as a letter written in 1907 regarding the Ruskin correspondence.

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

**Finding Aid:** File lists available.

**URL of Finding Aid:** <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000493.htm>

**Accruals:** The fonds comprises the following accessions: 2005-049, 2005-050. No further accruals are expected.

**Related Records:** Correspondence from Ian and Sandy Cameron can be found in the Margaret Laurence fonds, F0341.

**Immediate source of  
acquisition:** This fonds was acquired from Angus Cameron (the brother of Ian Cameron) and his two sons, Peter and Andrew.

**Provenance Access Points:** Cameron family  
Laurence, Margaret, 1926-1987  
Ruskin, John, 1826-1900