THREADING THE WAY

The Celanese museum catalogue

Martin Bergevin | Michaël Bergeron
Société d'histoire de Drummond

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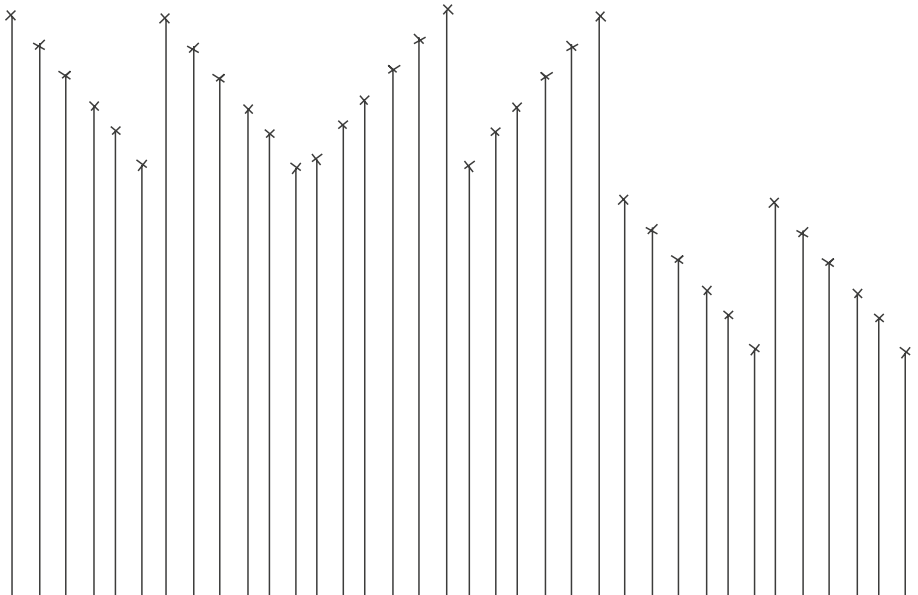

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Proofreading: Katherine Hamel
Translation: Karine Labrecque-Auclair
Printing: Buropro Citation

ISBN: 978-2-922789-11-9 (french print)
ISBN: 978-2-922789-12-6 (french PDF)
ISBN: 978-2-922789-13-3 (english PDF)
Legal deposit
Library and Archives Canada
Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec

The publication of the museum catalogue *Threading the way* has been made possible thanks to the financial support of Library and Archives Canada and its Documentary Heritage Communities Program.

Bibliothèque et Archives Canada Library and Archives Canada

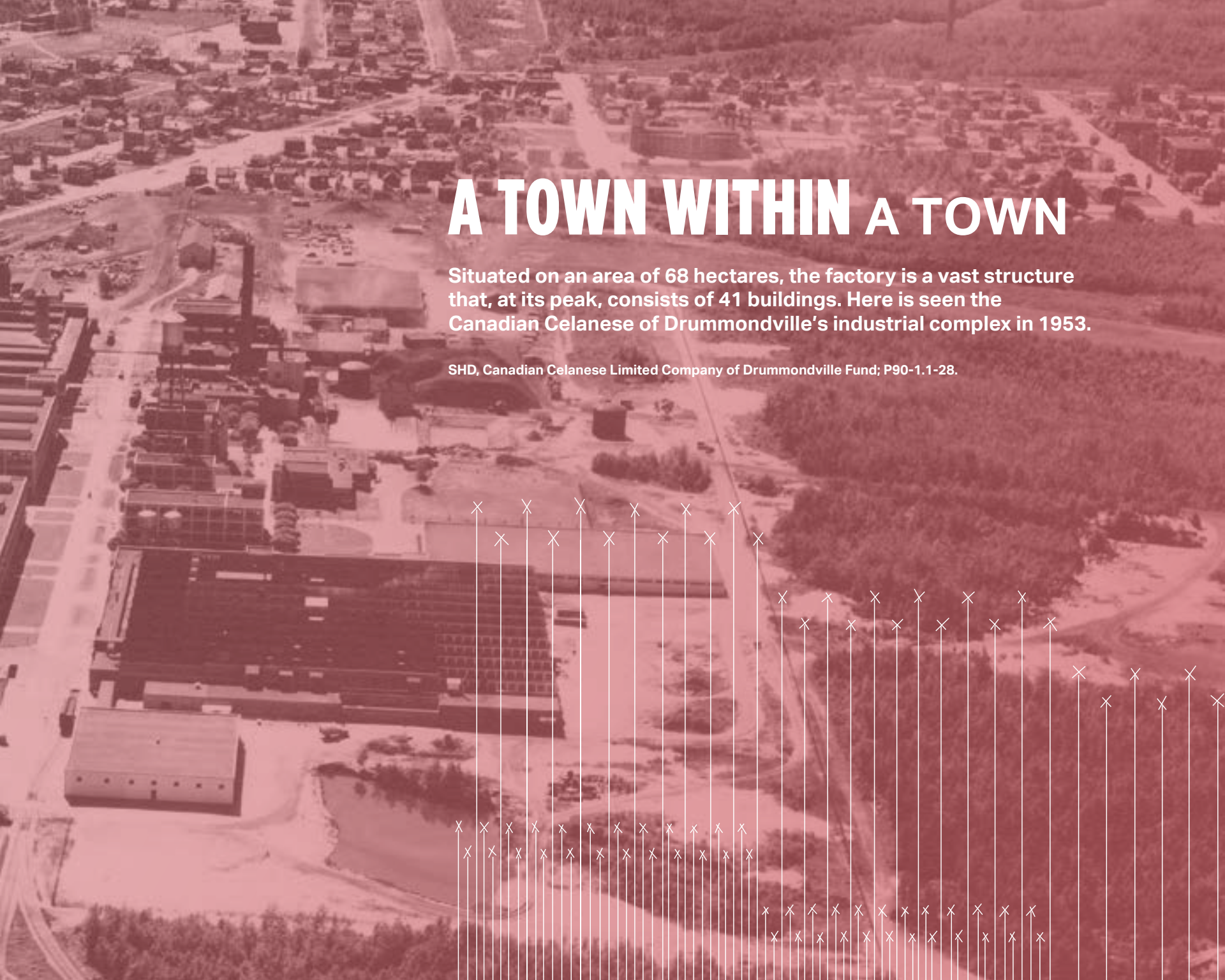
THE SOCIÉTÉ D'HISTOIRE DE DRUMMOND

Guardian of the regional heritage

Containing the archives of the Drummond RCM territory, the Société d'histoire de Drummond (SHD) is a gathering place for researchers from here and abroad wishing to track and understand the evolution of the region's daily, social, cultural, sports and labour history.

Very dynamic, the SHD demonstrates audacity, imagination and versatility regarding its activities and realisations. When we consider its various historical publications and documentaries, its museum projects, its public archiving and record consultation services or its bimonthly column in the local newspaper *L'Express*, it leaves no doubt that the SHD has become a leading player in the field.

Since 2008, the SHD has managed an archives center accredited by the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ). This recognition underlines the organization's quality and professionalism regarding the acquisition and the documentary heritage conservation of the Drummond RCM.



A TOWN WITHIN A TOWN

Situated on an area of 68 hectares, the factory is a vast structure that, at its peak, consists of 41 buildings. Here is seen the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville's industrial complex in 1953.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville Fund; P90-1.1-28.

The Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville factory main's entrance around 1950.
SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville Fund; P90-2.4A59.

THE CANADIAN CELANESE LIMITED COMPANY OF DRUMMONDVILLE

The artificial silk road

At the beginning of the twentieth century, almost all clothing worn by the population come from natural fibres like cotton and linen, animal fur and hides or silkworms. A drastic change occurs when two young Swiss chemists, Henri and Camille Dreyfuss, create a new synthetic substance named cellulose acetate.

Used for fabricating artificial fibres similar to silk, this substance generated a genuine revolution in the textile industry. The Dreyfuss brothers immediately commercialize their invention and name it Celanese. They first establish, in 1916, the British Cellulose and Chemical Manufacturing Company in Spondon, England; then they implement, in 1918, the American Cellulose and Chemical Manufacturing Company in Cumberland, United States; and the Canadian Celanese Limited Company in 1926, in Drummondville, Canada.

The inauguration of the Drummondville factory takes place on September 13, 1927. At its full maturity, the industrial complex includes, among other things, a thermal power plant; buildings used for production, namely extrusion, blending and sizing, weaving, warping and dyeing; an infirmary; a machine shop, a thinsmith and a welding workshop; warehouses; a pumping station and a water filtration plant; laboratories, a cafeteria and a textile store.

Originally, the Canadian Celanese Limited Company produces cellulose acetate yarn, then its technicians develop cellulose triacetate and polypropylene, enabling the manufacturing and the distribution of a large variety of products worldwide like lining and clothing fabrics, knitwear, carpets and furniture fabrics.

On March 31st 2000, after more than seventy years of operation on Canadian soil, Celanese shuts down its Drummondville factory. The Textiles Monterey 1996 Inc. company acquires the property and since then, occupies part of the industrial complex premises for the production of its fabrics.

Looms at the Textile Monterey 1996 Inc. factory in 2014.

THE PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES OF THE CELANESE

Presentation of the weaving looms and the production activities

Only a few months after the factory's inauguration, in 1927, the Canadian Celanese Limited Company jumps into the production of wolving fabric in order to demonstrate the quality of the products manufactured with its artificial silk. As a result, the fabric production begins thanks to fifty looms put in operation. Almost completely manual, the weavers must stop the looms regularly to replace the empty thread spools. A long and costly process

Improvements occur during the decade of 1940. The company then installs completely automated looms. Henceforth, the thread spool replacement is done without stopping the manufacturing machines and production is greatly increased. Similarly, the chemists from the factory's research laboratory develop cellulose triacetate at the end of the 1940s. With this new method, the Canadian Celanese Limited Company is able to gain a whole new market share and now offers a wide variety of fibres and finished products: fashion fabrics, lining fabrics, raincoats, lingerie, ropes, curtains, furniture fabrics, carpet and knitwear.

In 1964, the business acquires 80 new looms that are faster and equipped with Unifil, which allows the production of more even fabric. The procedure is repeated in 1970 and 1980 when the equipment is upgraded with the installation of more advanced weaving looms: the water-jet and air-jet ones.

Over time, millions of yards of fabrics are manufactured by the company. Of that production, thousands of fabric samples are now stored at the SHD. Among these, a summarized qualitative selection divided in four distinctive categories; industrial, fashion, furniture and carpets, as well as lining, is presented in this catalogue. A section is also dedicated to textual archives and artifacts.

THE RESCUE OPERATION

By the end of 1940s, the large pool of men and women ensuring the proper functioning of the Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville reaches 5 000 people. Among them, many work in at the control and quality department and participate in the development of the different fabrics presented in this catalogue.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville Fund; P90-8.3F1.

The Société d'histoire de Drummond team during the rescue operation of the Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville's archives in 2009: Hélène Vallières, executive director; Jason Thiffault and Maryse Deslandes, archivists; Jean Thibault, historian; Huguette Desmarais-Foisy and Louisette Labonté, volunteers. Absent: Fernand Roger, president; Claude Perreault, administrator and Jacques Vallières, volunteer.

INTRODUCTION
The rescue operation

In May 2009, the Société d'histoire de Drummond (SHD) conducts a rescue operation for an important amount of archival documents originating from the industrial complex where the Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville was formerly located.

This operation, closely coordinated with Mr. Jocelyn Maillette of Textile Monterey 1996 Inc. and the help of many volunteers, enabled the SHD to repatriate in its facility more than 315 boxes containing manufacturing data sheets and fabric samples made at the Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville between 1937 and 1995. These documents kept in the quality control department under inadequate storage conditions for more than a decade, are placed in quarantine at the SHD following the rescue operation. Due to a lack of human resources, financial resources and time, the Canadian Celanese Limited Company archival processing will be on hold for several years.

At the beginning of 2016, the SHD undertakes the management of its relocation in a new building downtown scheduled for spring 2017. The handling of the contaminated documents from the rescue operation of 2009 then becomes essential.

Thanks to the financial support of Librairy and Archives Canada, the SHD is able to purchase the necessary equipment and material in order to process these documents, in addition to hiring a supplementary resource person. In September 2016, the design and layout of a suitable workplace located within a watertight bulkhead, as per the Centre de conservation du Québec's recommendations, is completed. The handling process can now begin. Well, almost!

Archivists Martin Bergevin and Michaël Bergeron conduct a detailed inventory of the Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville's archives in the Société d'histoire de Drummond quarantine area during November 2016.

THE TRAINING
Treating the mold

In October 2016, the Société d'histoire de Drummond archivists undertook specialized training entitled "molds and archival documents" offered by specialists from the Centre de conservation du Québec. This training, wich includes theoretical and practical components, is the cornerstone of the decontamination actions thereafter taken by the SHD archivists.

Molds are micro-organisms belonging to the group of fungi. There is a wide variety: more than 230 different kinds have been reported by the librairies and the archive centers over the past few years. Many conditions are necessary for their development such as a relative humidity level equal to or greater than 65%; a room temperature between 15 and 25°C; stagnant air or microclimate; nutrients originating from organic matters like the paper components; lighting, though its role is still unknown.

Molds are a major risk for the archives centers because they cause a physical and chemical degradation of the documents, meaning that the paper goes through a dematerialization and a discolouration process. The characteristic signs of the presence of molds are a fluffy substance made of filamentous network on top of or embedded in the paper or fabric, the appearance of discolouration stains, as well as a damp and musty smell. During periods of active growth, the stains are humid and spread like ink if touched. During dormant periods, their aspect is powdery and dry.

The training validates the concerns of the SHD archivists: the Canadian Celanese Limited Company's documents are indeed contaminated and must undergo a treatment respecting simultaneously the safety measures and the basic archival principles regarding preservation.

Archivists Martin Bergevin and Michaël Bergeron assess the physical condition of the Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville factory's archives in November 2016.

THE TECHNICAL PREPARATION

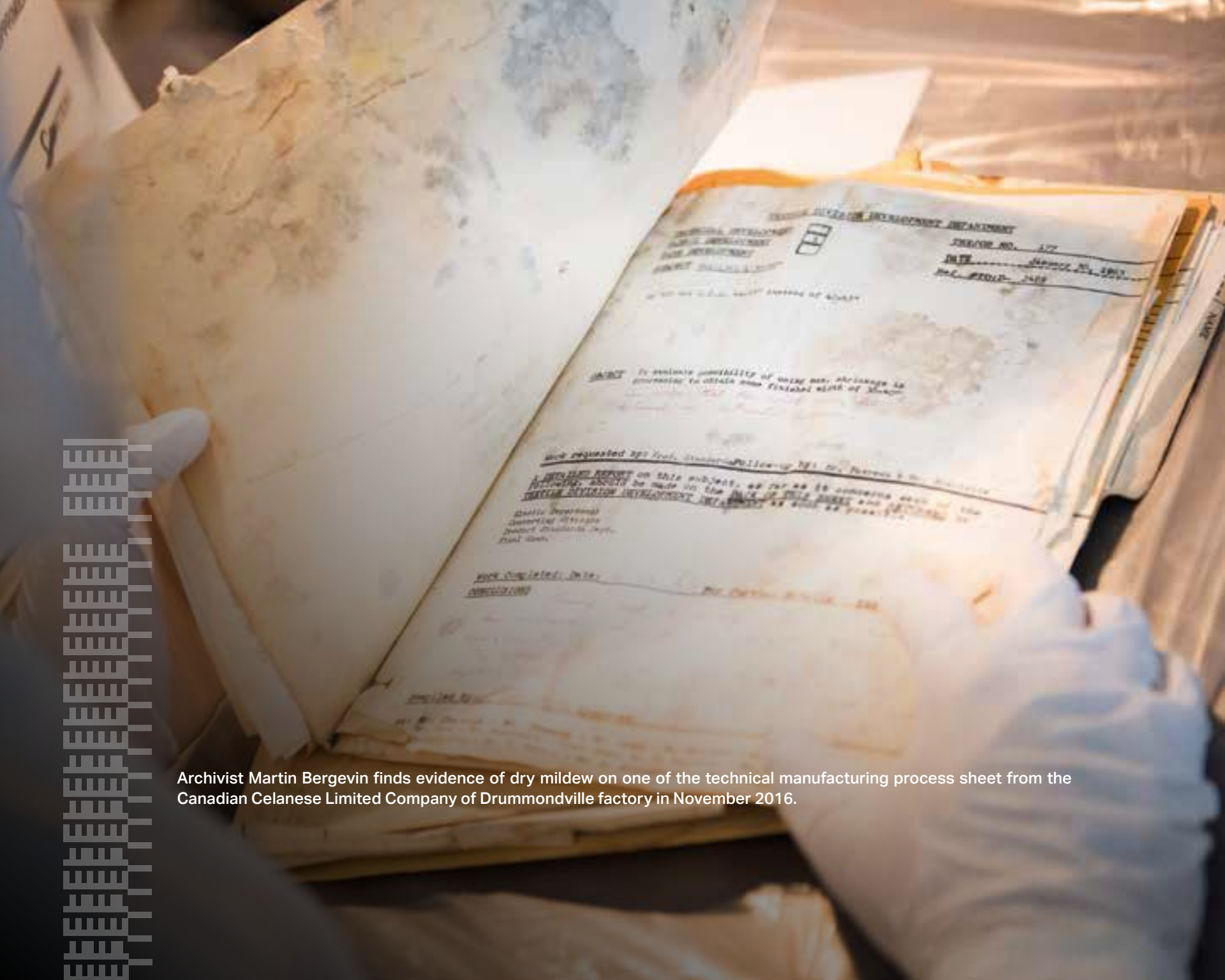
Presenting the specialized equipment

The completion of this decontamination project was made possible possible through the purchase of specialized equipments and appropriate materials required to ensure the safety of the staff. Here are some items and tools primarily used by the SHD archivists during the cleaning process.

Tyvek hooded suits and 3M respiratory systems

Spatulas, sponges, brushes, gloves and alcohol pads

Nilfisk vacuum with HEPA filter



Archivist Martin Bergevin finds evidence of dry mildew on one of the technical manufacturing process sheet from the Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville factory in November 2016.

THE DECONTAMINATION

A crucial step during the Celanese's archives handling

Following the Centre de conservation du Québec (CCQ) training, the Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville archives handling plan is developed by the archivists Élaine Bérubé, Martin Bergevin and Michaël Bergeron of the Société d'histoire de Drummond.

Firstly, the plan includes the compiling of a detailed inventory of the quarantine content which includes 281 boxes holding records, manufacturing data sheets, spools of thread as well as 36 drawers containing fabric samples.

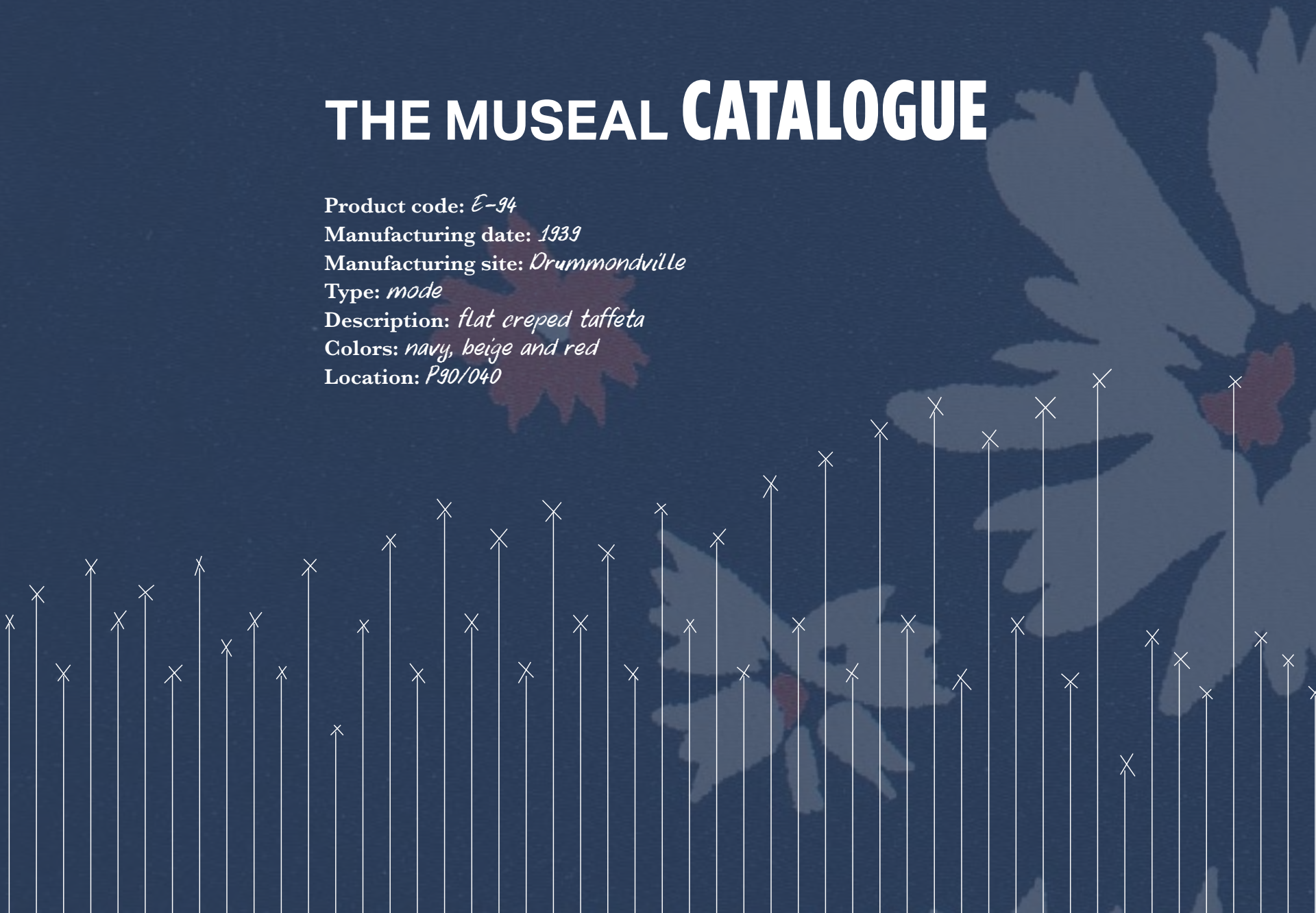
Secondly, considering the tremendous amount of archives to process and a lack of time and space, the definitive document management imposes an intricate sampling based on many criteria, including the historical value, the rarity, the integrity and the representativness of the documents. Therefore, the records kept represent 20% of the original documentary collection.

Finally, all the documents requiring restoration are cleaned and decontaminated according to the highest standards. This step is the most daunting of all; it requires a lot of time, precision, attention and extreme care. Two full months are necessary for the SHD archivists to get the job done.

After the definitive treatment, forty-five boxes of textual material and fabric samples are preserved at the SHD. Stored in archival quality containers and in the best environment conditions possible, the Canadian Celanese Limited Company archival documents represent a considerable amount of information for any researcher, enthusiast or professional, wishing to learn about Drummondville's textile industry, but also about a whole portion of the regional history.

THE MUSEAL CATALOGUE

Product code: *E-94*
Manufacturing date: *1939*
Manufacturing site: *Drummondville*
Type: *mode*
Description: *flat creped taffeta*
Colors: *navy, beige and red*
Location: *P90/040*



INDUSTRIAL

Sign from the Hydro-Québec service center in Drummondville around 1980.

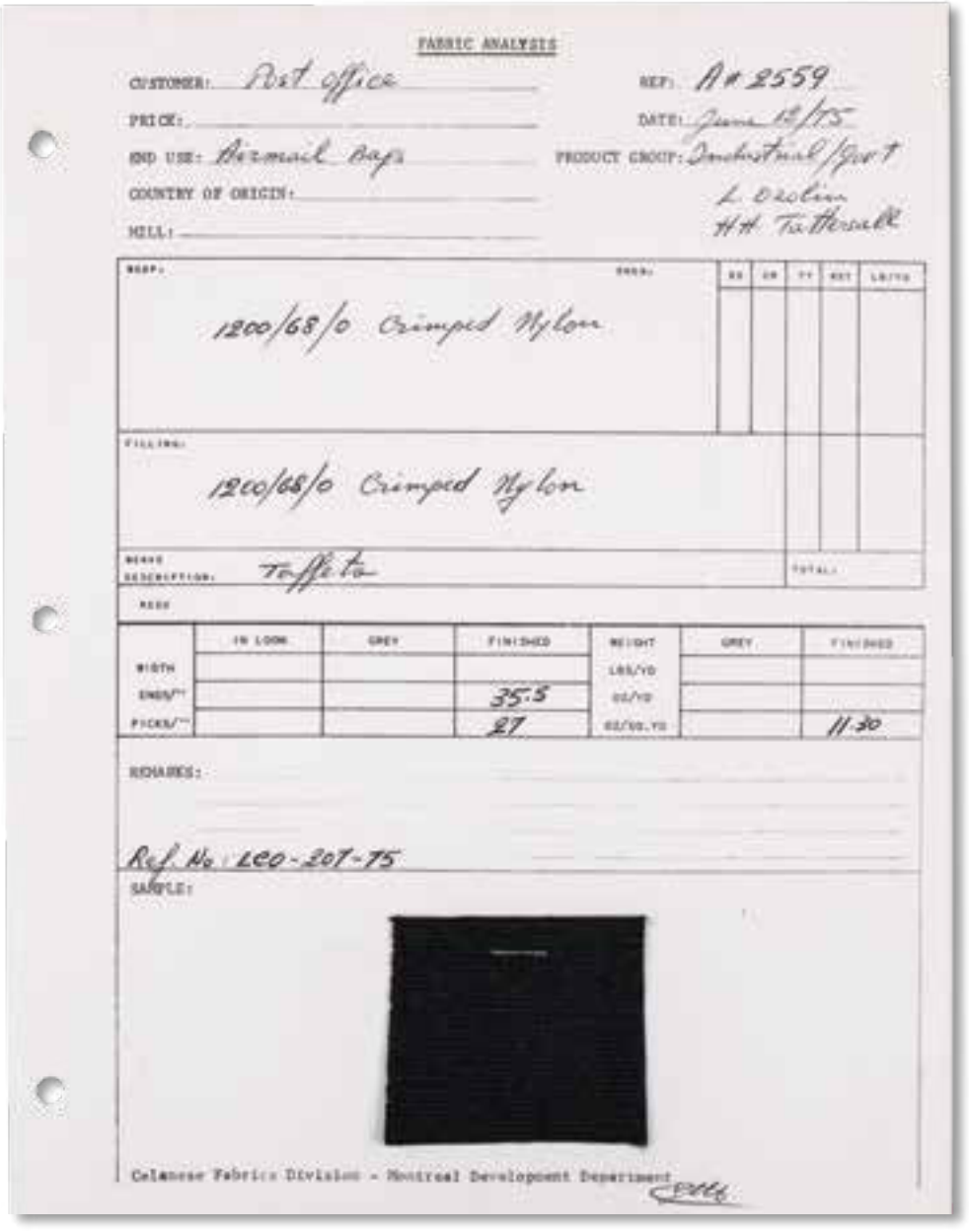
SHD, Ville de Drummondville Fund; P87-4.2-1.

Shipping department of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville in 1961.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-4.2-26.

Training of the 6R22eR Company B reservists behind the Drummondville armoury in 1973.

SHD, *La Parole* Fund; P89-730801-8.



FABRIC ANALYSIS

CUSTOMER: Post office
REF: A# 2559
PRICE:
DATE: June 19/75
END USE: Airmail Bags
PRODUCT GROUP: Industrial/Govt
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:
MILL:
L Oxolin
H# Tatterall

WARP: 1200/68/0 Crimped Nylon

FILLING: 1200/68/0 Crimped Nylon

WEAVE DESCRIPTION: Taffeta

	IN LOOM	GREY	FINISHED	WEIGHT	GREY	FINISHED
WIDTH				LBS/YD		
ENDS/"			35.5	OZ/YD		
PICKS/"			27	OZ/SQ.YD		11.30

REMARKS:

Ref No: LCO-207-75

SAMPLE:

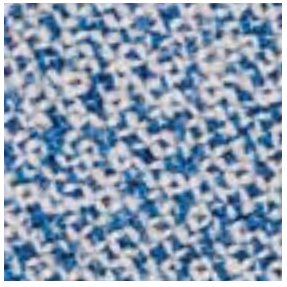
Celanese Fabrics Division - Montreal Development Department

Textile department of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville in 1960.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-4.2-46.

Weaving department of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville in 1961.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-4.2-92.



Product code: *1956-B*
Manufacturing date: *1970*
Manufacturing site: *Drummondville*
Type: *industrial*
Description: *taffeta*
Costumer: *Department of National Defence (Canada)*
Colors: *blue and white*
Composition : *cotton and nylon*
Location : *P90/033*

Product code: *1942*
Manufacturing date: *1967*
Manufacturing site: *Montmagny*
Type: *industrial*
Description: *raincoating*
Costumer: *Department of National Defence (Canada)*
Color: *air force blue*
Composition: *cotton and viscose*
Location: *P90/035*

Product code: *1952*
Manufacturing date: *1966*
Manufacturing site: *Drummondville*
Type: *industrial*
Description: *raincoating*
Costumer: *Department of National Defence (Canada)*
Color: *khaki*
Composition: *cotton and nylon*
Location: *P90/033*

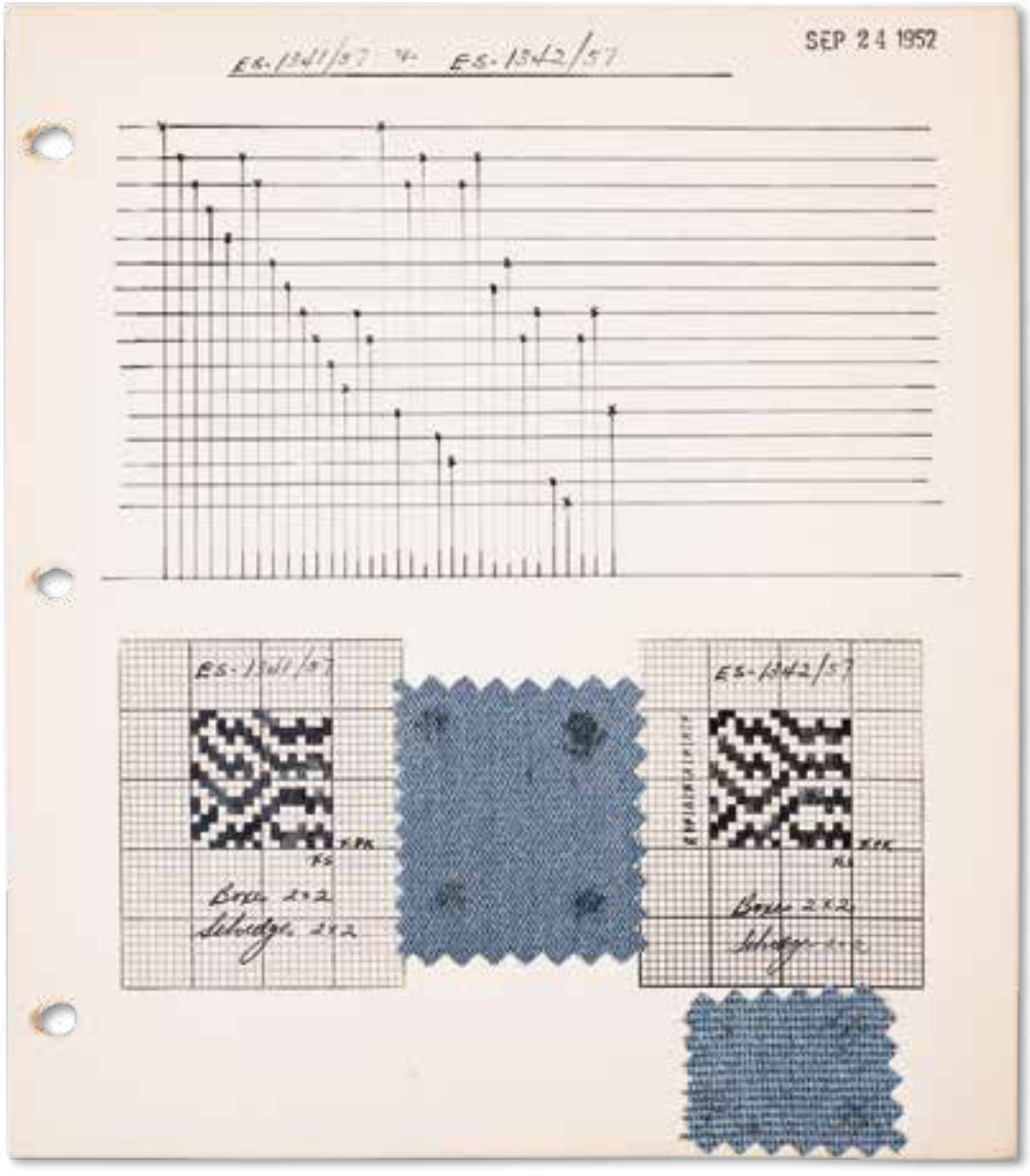
FASHION

Canadian Celanese's fabric store in 1971.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-3.2.

Fashion show presenting the fabrics of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville, 1960. SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-8.1B9 and 28.



Canadian Celanese's fabric shop in 1961.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-2.4A57.

An employee of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville installing a thread reel in 1960.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-4.2-45.

Product code: *D-350*
Manufacturing date: *1956*
Manufacturing site: *Sorel*
Type: *fashion*
Description: *dress fabric*
Color: *pink*
Composition: *acetate and viscose*
Location: *P90/065*

Product code: *E-821/56*
Manufacturing date: *1947*
Manufacturing site: *Drummondville*
Type: *fashion*
Description: *dress fabric*
Color: *turquoise*
Location: *P90/041*

Product code: *E-287*
Manufacturing date: *1938*
Manufacturing site: *Drummondville*
Type: *fashion*
Description: *novelty dress fabric*
Color: *salmon pink*
Location: *P90/040*

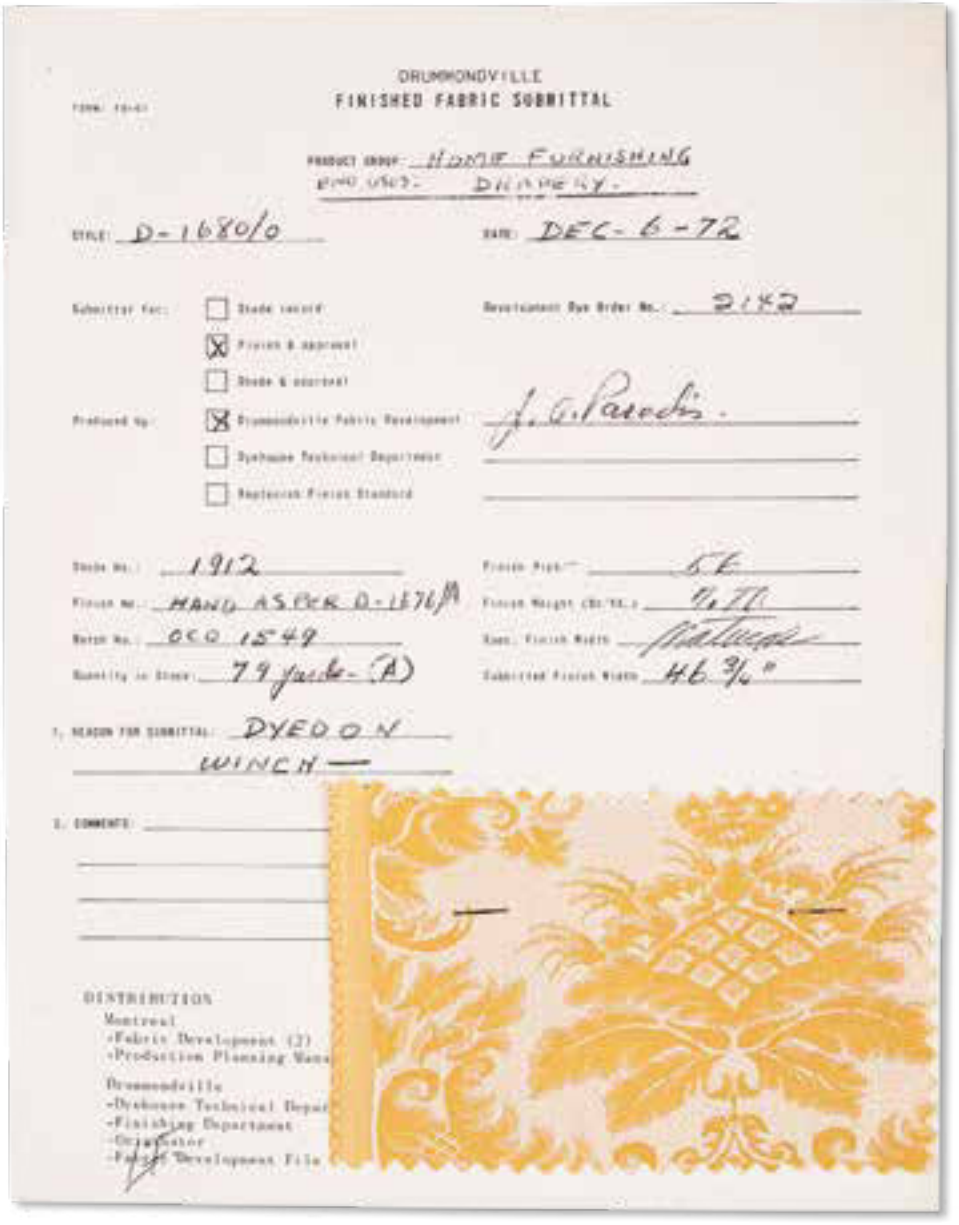
FURNITURE FABRICS AND CARPETS

Carpets manufactured at the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville in 1970.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-2.3.

Furniture fabrics manufactured at the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville in 1970.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-2.3.



DRUMMONDVILLE
FINISHED FABRIC SUBMITTAL

PRODUCT GROUP: HOME FURNISHING
END USE: DRAPERY

STYLE: D-1680/0 DATE: DEC-6-72

Submitted For:
- [ ] Shade record
- [x] Finish & approval
- [ ] Shade & approval

Development Dye Order No.: 2182

Produced by:
- [x] Drummondville Fabric Development — J. G. Parent
- [ ] Dyehouse Technical Department
- [ ] Napierville Finish Standard

Shade No.: 1912 Finish Pick: 64
Finish No.: HAND ASSOC D-1676/M Finish Weight (lb/sq. y.): 9.11
Batch No.: 0C0 1549 Comm. Finish Width:
Quantity in Stock: 79 yards (A) Submitted Finish Width: 46 3/4"

1. REASON FOR SUBMITTAL: DYED ON WINCH —

2. COMMENTS:

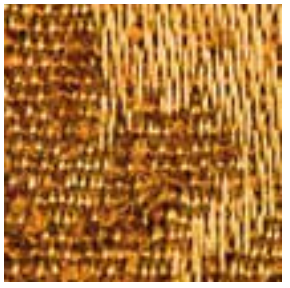
DISTRIBUTION
Montreal
-Fabric Development (2)
-Production Planning
Drummondville
-Dyehouse Technical Depar
-Finishing Department
-Originator
-Fabric Development File

Carpet department of the Canadian Celanese of Sorel around 1960.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-8.1B13.

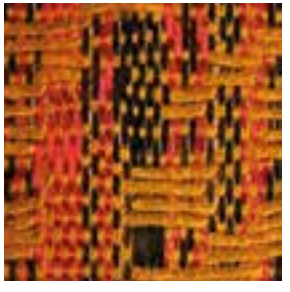
Carpet department of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville in 1959.

SHD, Pierre Dozois Fund; P184-004365.



Product code: A-2431
Manufacturing date: 1973
Manufacturing site: Drummondville
Type: drapery
Description: jacquard
Costumer: Sheftex
Color: yellow
Composition: acetate and viscose
Location: P90/001

Product code: D-5070
Manufacturing date: 1975-1976
Manufacturing site: Drummondville
Type: drapery
Description: fancy
Costumer: Sears
Color: brown
Composition: acetate and polyester
Location: P90/024

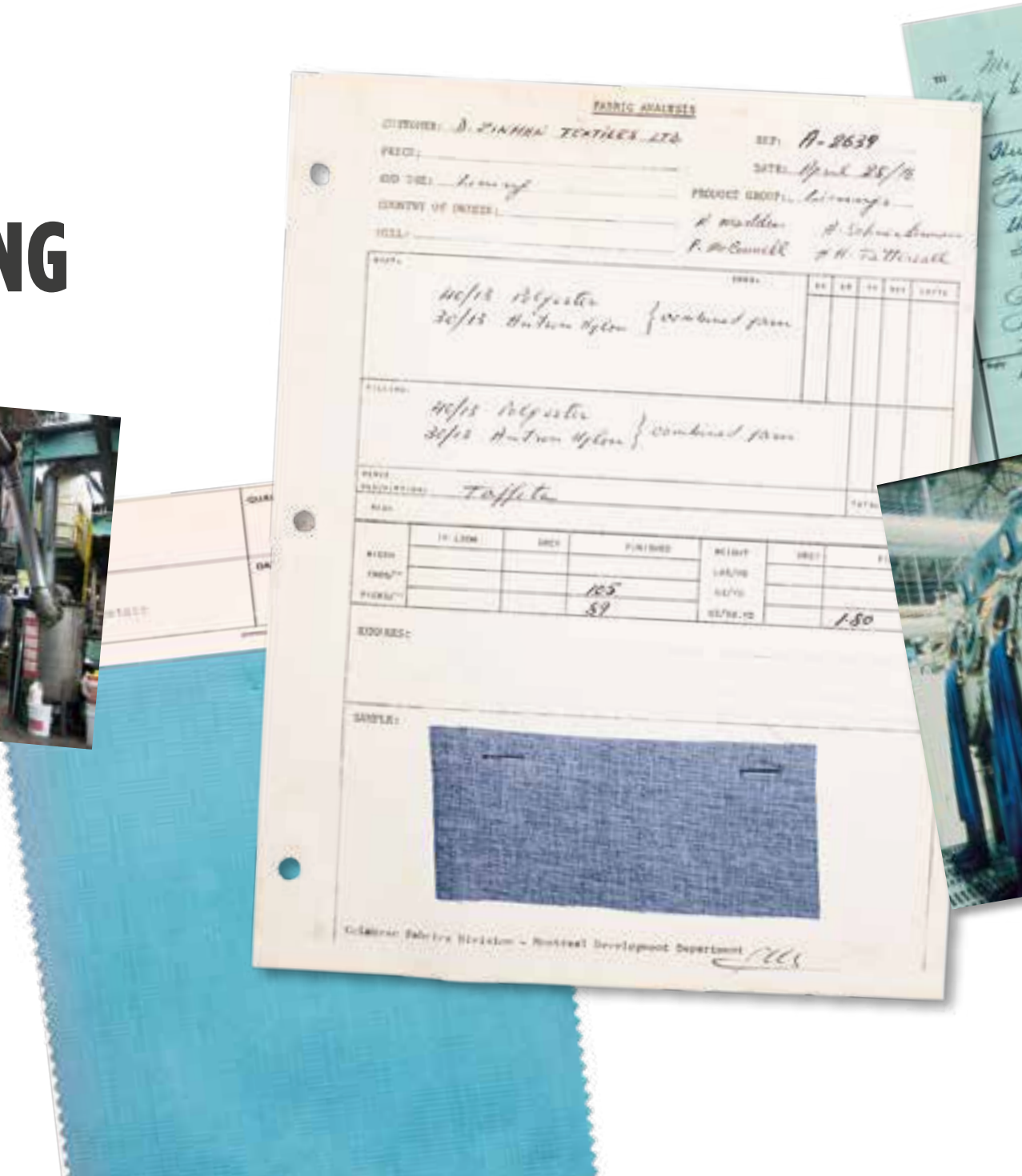


Product code: A-2356
Manufacturing date: 1972
Manufacturing site: Drummondville
Type: drapery
Description: fancy dobby
Costumer: Sears
Colors: orange and black
Composition: acetate and viscose
Location: P90/001

LINING

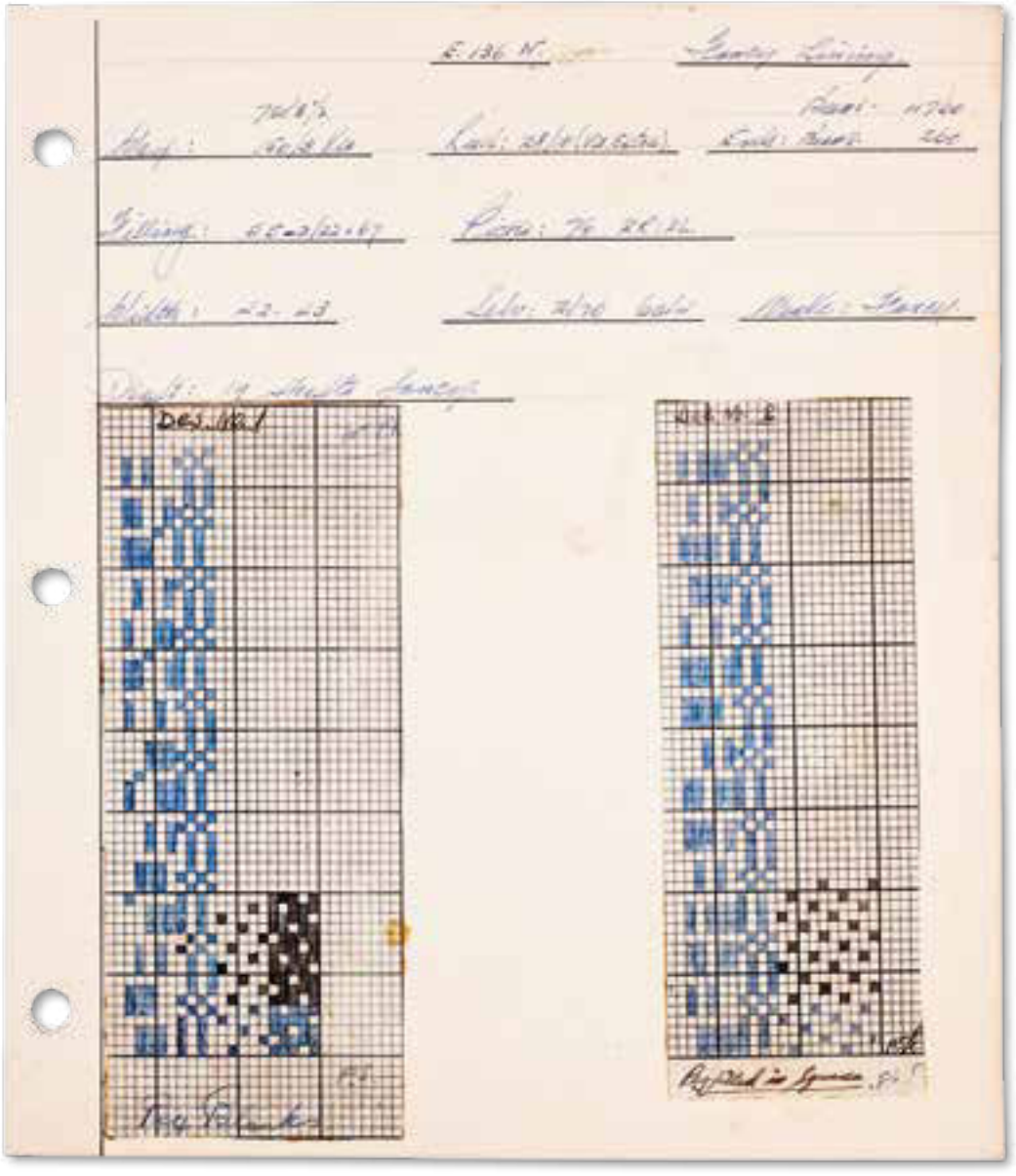
The picot and ream clips of the finishing department allow the adjustment of the fabric's width and the application of coating products.

Archives Véronique St-Amand.



Dyeing and finishing department of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville in 1961.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-4.2-135.



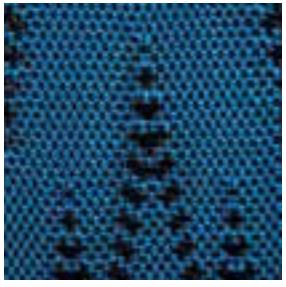
Weaving department of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville in 1961.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-4.2-44.

Weaving department of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville in 1961.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90-4.2-50.

Product code: *D-2632-A*
Manufacturing date: *1972*
Manufacturing site: *Drummondville*
Type: *lining*
Description: *satin stripe*
Costumer: *General Trade*
Color: *blue*
Composition: *acetate*
Location: *P90/029*



Product code: *A-2378*
Manufacturing date: *1972*
Manufacturing site: *Drummondville*
Type: *lining*
Description: *fancy*
Costumer: *Boojady Kimono*
Colors: *blue et black*
Composition: *acetate and viscose*
Location: *P90/001*

Product code: *F.D. 208*
Manufacturing date: *1955*
Manufacturing site: *Drummondville*
Type: *trilan lining*
Description: *fancy*
Color: *mint green*
Location: *P90/065*

DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE AND ARTIFACTS

Print roll once used to print patterns on drapery and furniture fabrics manufactured at the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville. Many of them were recovered by the SHD during the rescue operation in 2009.

SHD, Museum collection.

Former sign placed at the Canadian Celanese and acquired by the SHD in 2009.

SHD, Museum collection.

Pin from the Celanese curling Club of Drummondville in 1935.

SHD, Museum collection.

Wood shuttle used on the weaving machines at the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville. Inside, a spool of thread and opposum fur are found. The fur controls the thread tension. The usage of this device fades in the 1970s.

SHD, Museum collection; ART-010.

Specification and development register. It includes all the necessary technical data to create the fabrics manufactured at the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville from 1951 to 1953.

SHD, Canadian Celanese Limited Company Fund; P90/002.

Thread spools from the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville.

Véronique St-Amand's collection.

A MAJOR PROJECT OVERVIEW

On top of the hundred specification logs, thousands of technical data sheets and tens of artifacts, more than 5,000 samples have been decontaminated on completion of this project. More than 800 hours have been necessary for the SHD archivists to perform the full decontamination of the Celanese's archives.

The archivist Michaël Bergeron is working on the decontamination of the Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville factory's archives in December 2016.


ZONE 2
DÉCONTAMINATION

Overview of the SHD's archives depository in 2018. One can notice that the boxes holding the decontaminated archives display the mention "CAUTION contained molds" and that they are separated from the other boxes of the depository. The goal is to prevent any eventual risks of document contamination. Furthermore, the SHD archivists must monitor the documents two times a year to ensure that the mold growth process is inactive.

THE CELANESE'S ARCHIVES 1926-1999

P90 – Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville Fund

- 15.63 linear meters of textual documents
- 1507 photographs
- 2 plans
- 28 technical drawings
- 6 moving images
- 3 sound recordings
- Approximately 5000 fabric samples

In the year 2000, after the closure of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville, the Société d'histoire de Drummond receives a first shipment of documents originating from the factory and creates the P90 Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville archival Fund. This rich and extensive collection has constantly improved since then, notably through donations from former employees, so that it's certainly one of the most important archival funds of our regional documentary heritage today.

The Fund reflects an important part of the industrial and social history of Drummondville between 1926 and 1999. Furthermore, it attests to the evolution of the factory's activities, from its creation to its closure and represents an inevitable documentary source about the textile history in Drummondville, in Québec and even in Canada. The Fund consists of text documents about administration, human resources management, the unionization of workers, the equipment and factory maintenance, the pumping station, the social and sport clubs, in addition to research and development. Are also found photographs of the industrial complex, the manufacturing operations, the machinery equipment, the workers, etc. Plans and technical drawings of the factory's buildings and equipments, motion pictures and sound recordings presenting some manufacturing processes and scenes of the workers' everyday life complete the documentary collection. In 2009, the Fund was enhanced by an impressive quantity of manufacturing data sheets, registers and fabric samples. They are decontaminated in 2016 and are now available for consultation.

Archivist Michaël Bergeron working on the decontamination of the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville's fabrics in December 2016.

OUR EXPERTISE
Future prospects

At the end of this major project, the SHD strengthens its expertise in the archive material recovery field. Furthermore, the SHD archivists can be proud of the acquired experience that very few professionals and organizations currently possess. With this achievement, the SHD holds all the necessary supplies and equipment for this kind of intervention, in addition to a strong theoretical and practical knowledge.

Looking ahead, the Société d'histoire de Drummond will deepen its expertise and will offer its services in different sectors. When we think of the various archive centers, regional history societies, religious communities, municipalities, cities and villages, librairies, associations or private corporations, all generate and store archive documents. Among them, several are certainly about to be destroyed or thrown away because of their poor physical condition. The significance of these documents is assuredly worth taking action into correcting the situation and insuring sustainability as well as accessibility. All can now profit from our expertise and our services to address the situation. It is in our history and collective memory interest.

The Société d'histoire de Drummond's team as well as those who took part in safeguarding the Canadian Celanese of Drummondville's archives and achieving the museum catalogue pose at the Textiles Monterey 1996 Inc. factory of Drummondville in January 2018.

Seen from left to right: Jacques Vallières, volunteer; Martin Bergevin, archivist; Hélène Bérubé, archivist ; Jocelyn Maillette, former employee at the Celanese and Textiles Monterey 1996 Inc.; Geneviève Béliveau, SHD's executive director; Fernand Roger, former president and administrator at the SHD; Michaël Bergeron, archivist ; Gilles Desmarais, owner of the Textiles Monterey 1996 Inc.; Louisette Labonté, volunteer; Jean Thibault, historian; Hélène Vallières, former executive director at the SHD; Réal Lessard, former employee at the Canadian Celanese; Claude Perreault, former administrator at the SHD. Absent from picture: Véronique St-Amand, Maryse Deslandes, Huguette Desmarais-Foisy, Gilles Marquis and Claude Guay.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Société d'histoire de Drummond first wants to thank Librairy and Archives Canada for its trust and financial assistance which this project would not have been possible without. We also thank the Centre de conservation du Québec for its support and precious advice provided all along this great decontamination and preservation adventure.

Thanks to everyone who made the safeguarding of the Canadian Celanese Limited Company's documentary heritage and, consequently, the preservation of our collective memory possible. Many have participated actively and among them, we particularly offer our gratitude to Ms. Hélène Vallières, Mr. Jason Thiffault, Ms. Maryse Deslandes, Ms. Huguette Desmarais-Foisy, Mr. Fernand Roger, Mr. Claude Perreault, Mr. Jean Thibault, Mr. Jacques Vallières and Ms. Louisette Labonté for their involvement during the rescue operation; Mr. Réal Lessard, Mr. Gilles Marquis and Mr. Claude Guay for their testimonies about their numerous years passed at the Canadian Celanese Limited Company; and Ms. Sophie Morel of the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec for sharing her expertise since the beginning of this project.

Lastly, we cannot sufficiently thank Mr. Jocelyn Maillet, our constant collaborator, without whom the donation of the Canadian Celanese Limited Company of Drummondville's archives would not have happened. We also thank Mr. Gilles Desmarais, owner of the Textiles Monterey 1996 Inc. company for generously opening his factory's doors so that we could put back in their original context the precious textual and textile archives presented in this museum catalogue.

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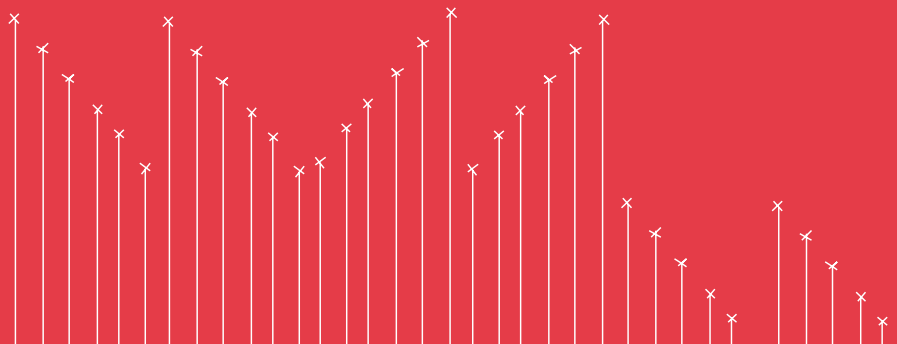
THREADING THE WAY

The Celanese museum catalogue

In 2009, the Société d'histoire de Drummond launches the vast rescue operation of the Canadian Celanese Limited Company's archives, recovering more than three hundred and fifteen boxes of old documents depicting the past of one of the most significant manufacturers in the industrial, economical and social development of Drummondville and its surrounding area.

The colorful catalogue presents both the wealth of the region's industrial heritage, as well as the expertise of the Société d'histoire de Drummond archivists when it comes to preservation and decontamination. This publication features precious archival images as well.

Thus, the accelerated history of a pioneering company unfolds in a creative and unique manner. The reader will be able to track, step by step, the acquisition, the decontamination and the preservation process that a portion of the Canadian Celanese Limited Company's archives have been through between 2009 and 2016. Also, the reader will be given a chance to appreciate the specificity of all fabrics made at the Celanese between 1937 and 1995, as highlighted in this museum catalogue.



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