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Collection Plan: Canada

Mission: In accordance with JOTPY's mission to provide a plethora of responses and experiences in relation to the global pandemic, I suggest that a Canadian Experiences collection be added to the archive to help provide a more succinct geographic boundary to the archive, to provide unique experiences relative to Canada. This is not to exclude other experiences of the global pandemic, but rather to help establish archival spaces which provide unique experiences relative to Canada; which in turn will announce any similarities, or juxtapositions with other geographic regions' experiences with the global pandemic. In particular, the Canadian archive will be useful in creating a more full understanding of the pandemic in North America, as the experiences of Canadians has no doubt been compared to those of Americans throughout much of this pandemic; for better or for worse.

In by doing so, I would also want to provide insight into the unique social dimension of the pandemic on the Canadian nation as a means to debunk stereotypes of the 'friendly Canadian,' or even Canadian exceptionalism. Essentially, I would like to accomplish this through providing a unique space for Canadians of numerous ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds to provide their own experiences which will help draw attention to the prevalence of systemic racism within Canada. Many of these issues were highlighted through increasing economic strains as a result of the pandemic, and more so by civil rights movements within the United States. Essentially, the pandemic has cast a limelight on Canada, exposing wealth inequality, white supremacy, systemic racism and a growing political divide within the nation. I believe a Canadian collection is essential in encapsulating this exposure.

Collection Scope:

- This collection's primary purpose is to document the unique Canadian experience(s) of the COVID-19 pandemic, ranging from the mundane to parliamentary decisions and protest action. The goal ultimately, is to help provide future historians with an extensive archive to draw from in order to create a history for Canada during these turbulent times, by drawing from experiences that range from the Pacific Ocean, to the Atlantic and all in-between.
 - Essentially, the scope would be country-wide in that it will hope to include stories relevant to the geographic boundaries of Canada, and would similarly be extended to Canadians living/trapped abroad and those who are currently within Canada.
- Key subjects in particular which I would like to bring attention to would be in relation to social justice, I'd like this archival space to be utilized to provide insight into Indigenous issues such as the Mi'kmaq lobster crisis and anti-pipeline action with the Wet'suwet'en people.

- This similarly is extended to BIPOC Canadians, as I hope this collection will be able to synthesize itself with broader collections such as Black Voices, Indigenous POV, LGBTQ+, Social Justice and much more – essentially this collection is to provide a controlled geographic element to these overlaps, subsequently developing both collections in the process. Eventually, I would like to see a growth in this direction to be a primary focal point of the archive, to provide a safe archival space for marginalized and systemically oppressed people living within Canada.
- The ultimate long term goal for this collection would be to assist in providing future generations with a repository of information relevant to the pandemic in Canada, how it affected daily life, social justice, the economy – everything. And ultimately what it meant to be Canadian in this crisis, as arguably, many of us have been forced to look deeper into the glaring social issues highlighted by this pandemic, making many reevaluate what being ‘Canadian’ meant. This is a reoccurring theme in Canadian history, the idea of what constitutes a ‘Canadian’ is artificial, yet not fixed – it is constantly subject to change and has been constantly changing since the withdrawal of the British Empire. Therefore this would be useful in providing future generations with how Canadians with diverse backgrounds perceived themselves at this given moment in history, and crises.

Acquisitions:

- I have just gotten in contact with Dr. Michelle Hamilton and would hope to begin the initial collection of materials through close work with her and her students, to see if they would be willing to provide their stories relevant to the archive. I similarly will be trying to expand this network with other universities if possible, in particular I will be reaching out to my previous institution of St. Mary’s University in Calgary Alberta to see if it would be possible to see if students would be willing to assist in the growth of this collection – essentially I will reach out to professors, and the Student’s Union itself to see if either would be interested in growing this collection. Also, I will attempt to reach out to local historical societies/archival organizations to see if they would similarly be interested in assisting with this archive.
- Any material would be useful in growing this archive, stories, photographs, newspapers, oral histories – all which are defined to be created by a Canadian, or from within Canada itself. It would similarly be useful to grow this archive by utilizing the geographic indication filter on the archives themselves to add items to this collection.

Evaluation:

- This collection is similar to other collections such as Peru, as it essentially carries the same goal; that being the collection of stories about Canada, or from Canadians.
- While this archive may not be directly aimed at addressing silences in the archive, I would like to eventually be useful in drawing attention to silences within Canada; as I hope that marginalized Canadians will be able to feel safe contributing their own experiences, as this archive’s main goal is to draw attention to the unique Canadian experience. Essentially, by having this collection will be able to overlap and contribute to other collections, I hope to draw attention to

glaring issues within Canadian society such as the prevalence of racism and systemic racism within Canada. Essentially, through close coordination with collections such as Social Justice, Black Voices, Indigenous Perspectives. I hope to nullify the silence created by decades of Canadian exceptionalism that somehow Canada is more 'polite', has better social support and overall is just somehow a 'better' place to live than the United States – I want this geographic archive to demonstrate that Canada has the same demons, if not more than our Southern neighbor.

Critical Addendum:

There should be restraint, in the application of 'Canadian.' I do not want this archive to be utilized in a way to override or undermine Indigenous sovereignty, if a territory has not been ceded to the Crown or Canada; I do not in any way want to contribute to the erasure of their nation and culture by listing their items as 'Canadian' implying assimilation/ownership by the Canadian state. Subsequently, there would have to be a fundamental understanding that this is purely a geographic tag, to help provide a unique geographic boundary to stories uploaded within what is known as Canada.