Archives are entrusted with the difficult task of capturing the nation's history. Obtaining an accurate reflection of a diverse nation through the documentary evidence they choose to retain is a great challenge. For much of its history, Canada's National Archives has concentrated its collecting efforts on documenting an Anglo-French perspective of Canadian history. This has resulted in a lack of archival heritage of Canada's more marginalized groups in society including women and first nations people. The group that this thesis addresses is that of Canada's ethnic communities. Ethnic people did not see their experiences and contributions to Canada reflected in the nation's heritage. Therefore, many groups took it upon themselves to establish their own archival repositories. These early efforts met with difficulties including lack of resources and professional knowledge. The introduction of federal multicultural policy served as a catalyst for the growth of ethnic-run archives in Canada. The Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives serves as a working example of the evolution of a community-based ethnic archives. As well, two surveys were conducted in order to better understand the beginnings, evolution and persistence of the country's ethnic archives. These surveys, and the associated literature review, demonstrate some of the most valuable uses and potential applications of ethnic archival materials. This thesis extols the value of Canada's ethnic-run archives in this period of government austerity.