MEMORY IN ARCHIVE, ARCHIVE OF MEMORY – ASA 2012 CONFERENCE

Michael Gourlie, Archives Advisor/Executive Director

From May 24-26, a sell-out crowd of over 70 archivists from Alberta and literally around the world gathered at the University of Calgary for the Archives Society of Alberta’s biennial conference and annual general meeting. The conference theme “Memory in Archive, Archive of Memory” chosen by keynote speaker Verne Harris of the Nelson Mandela Foundation proved irresistible and provided the foundation for another memorable ASA conference.

Technically, the first conference event was an unofficial one. The ASA presented a lecture open to the general public featuring Verne Harris at the ConocoPhillips Glenbow Theatre on the evening of Wednesday, May 23. Thanks to a splendid article by Val Fortney of the Calgary Herald in the preceding week promoting the event, approximately 80 people attended and heard Verne talk about “Nelson Mandela and Reckoning Past and Futures,” which addressed the progress of social justice in South Africa in the post-apartheid area. The question and answer period following the lecture was lively, with questions ranging from everyday life in Johannesburg to how Nelson Mandela would view the progress made so far in modern South Africa.

The following day featured a workshop presented by Terry Cook and Verne titled “Archives for Social Justice: Implications for Archival Functions.” Using pre-workshop readings as a starting point, a capacity crowd examined social justice issues in the field of archival work and presented case studies involving either their own institution or their views on the issues raised by the readings. Gathering together to discuss their findings, the group deepened their understanding of the work of social justice inherent in the work of archives. The day concluded with the conference’s opening reception, which took place at the Hotel Alma with words of welcome from Tom Hickerson, Vice-Provost (Libraries and Cultural Resources) at the University of Calgary.
Friday morning began with Verne's keynote address to conference delegates. Titled “Archives, Memory and Trouble,” Verne eloquently addressed the problems created by archives and memory and how they influence the work of all archivists. After the keynote, the day's concurrent sessions began, with examinations of how archives and memory are handled in repressive regimes as well as discussions of how memory pertaining to labour issues and eugenics can be hidden or left inaccessible if only traditional archival activities are employed. While some delegates took part in a social justice roundtable discussion, other participants heard about some of the unique projects taking place in Alberta's archives. The detailed discussion of the appraisal of the Panda Camera fonds was well-received, and you haven't lived until you've seen the “Big Ed” image from the City of Edmonton Archives. The day concluded with an examination of the impact of an archivist or an archival institution on a community (as broadly as you can define that notion), as well as an assessment of the impact of women's memoirs and the oral histories of holocaust survivors.

After a day of reflecting on memory and archives, the delegates relaxed over drinks in the Senate Room at the Hotel Alma. Following a generous buffet meal, the evening’s entertainment began. Terry O’Riordan of the Provincial Archives of Alberta presented “Archives at the Movies,” a Canadian version of the popular feature created and presented annually by Leith Johnson at the conference of the Society of American Archivists. With clips ranging in date from the 1940s to the 2010s and drawn from genres including drama, horror and comedy, Terry skillfully drew together pop culture's image of archives, archivists and the research process to the amusement of everyone. After the movie, delegates continued to socialize well into the night.

After the annual general meeting on Saturday, the final conference plenary focussed on Calgary in 1912, with an examination of that pivotal year in the city’s history from the perspective of newspapers, the influence of Calgary’s first chief librarian, and the “forgetting” of influential local chatelaine Belle Lougheed. Following this plenary, one concurrent session focussed on issues surrounding the preservation of memory in resettled Newfoundland outports and Toronto's gay and lesbian communities, while the other addressed personal memories resulting from food, the passing of family members, and the need to document family traditions within a community.

The conference concluded with a closing plenary by Terry Cook titled, “I Remember, Therefore I Am.” Drawing upon the experiences in his workshop with Verne and the conference sessions he had attended, Terry reflected on the conference theme and encouraged archivists to continue to incorporate social justice concerns in their work. As with the other presentations and social events at the conference, small clusters of archivists continued to discuss and share opinions after the closing plenary, clearly inspired by what they had experienced.

Overall, the 2012 conference will go down as one of the most memorable the ASA has held so far. Thanks go to the ASA Secretariat (Michael Gourlie, Carrie Herrick-Fitzgerald, Gemma Zarrillo and Carrie-Ann Lunde), Conference Coordinator Mandi Wisheu, and the University of Calgary for providing such a remarkable venue for the event.

Hope to see you at the 2014 conference!
AWARDS AND HONOURS

The conference marked an opportunity to recognize the achievements of the ASA’s members over the past year.

Honorary membership was presented to Irene Jendzjowsky, who retired from the Provincial Archives of Alberta earlier this year. In her years at the PAA, she oversaw the institution’s outreach, preservation and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy initiatives, including a number of well-received publications and exhibits in the new space on Roper Road. Congratulations Irene!

In a break with tradition, the ASA handed out four Alan D. Ridge Awards. Named for a former Provincial Archivist of Alberta, the awards honour notable archival achievements in the areas of publications and other media. One award was given to Hugh Dempsey for Always an Adventure: An Autobiography, his memoir about family, activism, and the early development of the Glenbow’s archival program. The book even includes a reference to his honorary membership in the ASA. A second award was presented to the South Peace Regional Archives for its newsletter, Telling our Stories, for its blend of local history and archival outreach. The Provincial Archives of Alberta received a Ridge Award for Family Histories: Preserving Your Personal and Family Documents. The final Ridge Award was presented to the Canadian Architectural Archives for the exhibit catalogue and essay, Building a History: Highlights of 20th Century Canadian Architecture from the Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary.

For a list of past winners with links to winning articles, please visit the ASA website at http://www.archivesalberta.org/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=23, where this year’s recipients will soon be listed.

The ASA Nominations and Awards Committee welcomes nominations for Ridge Awards and honorary members. Please consult the webpage above for terms and conditions and submit your nominees to mgourlie@shaw.ca.
ASA CONFERENCE 2012

Terry O’Riordan presents ‘Archives at the Movies’

Delegates at a conference plenary session

Michael Gourlie during the Annual General Meeting

Karen Simonson, Braden Cannon, Adam Wisheu, Garth Clarke, and Michael Gourlie

Denise Swelin and Terry O’Riordan

Adam Wisheu, Mendi Wisheu, and Michael Gourlie

During the banquet
THE CALL TO JUSTICE: REFLECTIONS ON THE ARCHIVES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE WORKSHOP

Braden Cannon, Provincial Archives of Alberta

On May 24, the ASA held a pre-conference workshop entitled Archives for Social Justice: Implications for Archival Functions. The workshop was co-led by conference keynote speakers and noted archival theorists Verne Harris and Terry Cook with assistance from archival educator Wendy Duff of the University of Toronto. The purpose of the full-day workshop was to explore applications of social justice in the practical administration of archives, specifically within the archival functions of appraisal, acquisition, arrangement, description, reference, public programming, preservation, and advocacy. Participants were assigned readings related to the topic prior to the workshop and were also instructed to create a case study of a situation with social justice implications encountered by the participant in the course of his/her work.

The first part of the workshop focused on the introduction and discussion of key concepts, including Verne Harris’ idea of “memory for justice,” which he defines as having four aspects: memory as tool, memory worker as active participant in social discourse, giving space to community members in discourse, and building new structures of memory preservation.

The second part of the workshop focused on discussion of the case studies with particular emphasis on suggestions for how to deal with the situations involved. The discussion was very open-ended and led to more questions rather than concrete answers, but this was a strength of the workshop as it resulted in a critical engagement with the concepts and radical re-assessment of archival practices.

The open-ended nature of the workshop led to some profoundly unique and challenging discussions. For instance, the notion of a “network of archivy” was introduced as a new method of interacting with constituent communities. With this model, the active collecting of records is de-emphasized, especially in cases that the removal of records from the creating community would ultimately be more damaging than beneficial. In situations such as these, we were encouraged to think outside of our collecting mandate and consider ourselves as enablers of community preservation; instead of collecting, archivists could offer expertise on archival functions and empower community members to become active participants in a wider archival network that gives equal footing to non-professionals.

Challenging the very imperative to collect and preserve records was arguably the most radical aspect to the workshop as a whole. Discussion on this topic revolved around the definition of justice and how various constituency populations might have a very different meaning of the concept. An activist-archivist might perceive the collective, safekeeping, and accessibility of records related to marginalized communities as being as act of justice; however, the communities themselves might see the removal of their records from their control as a traumatic act with detrimental implications unacknowledged by collecting institutions.

In this light, what Verne Harris dubbed the “call to justice” becomes not only a call to engage in critical, social justice issues and activities but also a call to listen to and respond to those at the receiving end of injustice. From there, we arrive at Harris’ notion of “hospitality,” or the ceding of total control of archival functions to the community as an act of true cooperation. In other words, the “guest” becomes the “host;” the “other” becomes part of the whole and an agent of his/her own path.

These ideas and principles relate to the archival function of appraisal, among other functions, in that it leads the archivist to fully understand power structures within our society as a starting point. Only through the analysis of power and how it is wielded can archivists understand counter-voices, but it is not the task of the archivist to define these counter-voices. Archivy consists of dialogue and interaction with user groups and potential user groups and not just the administration of archival functions. Through this dialogue comes the creation of space for collaboration and mutual understanding.

This sort of outreach was also discussed during the workshop, although once again new angles to old
approaches were examined. Verne Harris noted that reaching out to the public is not enough; we must also engage in creating publics. In other words, archivists have a responsibility to work with communities that are conducting “in-reach,” or engaging in a self-reflexive process in order to define who they are, where they come from, and what they need. In this manner, new publics are created or connected to wider publics and archivists must seize these moments to participate in wider, social processes that may or may not lead to the formal acquisition of records but will always result in the creation of trust and mutual respect.

The workshop provided a challenging set of ideas and principles that allowed the participants to seriously question and define archival work through the filter of social justice. The use of case studies also provided a rare opportunity to discuss the underlying principles of our profession and how we can better incorporate social justice into each segment of our daily work. And above all, the discussions clearly showed that the call to justice is the most fundamental calling of all for an archivist.

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN ARCHIVISTS
37TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: IN SEARCH OF ARCHIVAL GOLD
WHITEHORSE, YUKON
JUNE 6-9, 2012
Lorraine Mychaljukow, CARNA Museum and Archives

The annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists brought together national and international archivists, researchers and historians providing a wonderful opportunity to learn about current issues in the heritage community. This particular conference held in Whitehorse, has as its theme ‘In Search of Archival Gold’. Session topics included findings from two research studies on social media and archives, a discussion on the state of Canadian digital information infrastructure, case studies of reappraisal and deaccessioning programs, provincial movement towards ICA-AtoM, collaborative strategies within a Pan-Canadian documentary heritage community, and solicitor-client privilege as an obstacle to accessing archival records.

The session reflected on how archival institutions are responding to the world of digital media by re-examining theories and practices set in place approximately 60 years ago. The sessions I attended were well-presented and informative providing much food for thoughts and lively discussion on the many challenges presented to archival practice by the digital age.

Attendance at this conference allowed me to learn about initiatives and programs at other institutions, some of which brought me up-to-date on broader issues related to the archival field. It provided networking opportunities with provincial, national and international cultural, heritage and information professionals. I view the ACA Conference as a ready-made
ARCHIVISTS PROTEST NADP CUTS

On May 28, a group of approximately 30 archivists and archives supporters gathered at Canada Place in downtown Edmonton to protest the funding cuts affecting Library and Archives Canada, in particular the cuts to the National Archival Development Program (NADP) that had funded numerous beneficial archival projects in Alberta. Wearing white gloves and holding protest signs, the protesters chanted slogans including “Information is a Right / Join Us in the Fight” as well as (in a moment of inspiration) “You Gotta Fight / For Your Right / To Archives.”

The protest in Alberta mirrored the larger protest in Ottawa, where approximately 150 protesters marched from Major’s Hill Park in Ottawa along Wellington Street to the Library and Archives Canada building at 395 Wellington. Also wearing white gloves, marchers carried a small coffin and held a mock funeral for federal funding for archives that included eulogies by MPs and representatives of the CCA and other groups.
The Archives Society of Alberta held their annual Archives Institute from Apr 30–May 6, 2012 at the Provincial Archives building in Edmonton. 17 participants from all over Alberta and 1 participant from Manitoba were in attendance. With the combined sponsorship from the Milo Lions Club and Milo Library Board, I was able to attend. It was a comprehensive 6 days filled with lectures, sample exercises, tours of the lab, vaults and the reading room, and of course great lunches as well.

These 2 pictures are of different vaults in the building. The first is a map drawer vault and the second one shows some of the ledgers that are archived.

There are 20 vaults in all – including a cold storage for movies (-20 and low Relative Humidity) and cool storage for negatives and audio (5 and low RH).

We learned the ins and outs of acquisition, arrangement, accession, de-accession, description, and preservation of archive material. The digitization process allows for greater access to these materials. This institute provided us with examples and exercises to guide us through each section of the process. It was easy to come up with examples that I could relate to our own Archive Collection. It is a daunting process, but one that is vital for community/ government/corporate/personal historical preservation.

Disasters can and do happen, as seen to the left, when a protester dropped red ink on the original Canadian Constitution document at the Library of Archives Canada over a land claim dispute. Knowing how to deal with disasters and preserve our history is vital. I look forward to the challenges ahead.

Left to right: Natasha Gray, Rob Meckelborg, Meghan Leschert, David Reed, Caroline Lieffers, Lucas Antoniuk, Debbie Williams, Giselle Schreiber, Mandy Malazdrewich, Rosalie Lammle, Joanne Monner, Karen Byers, Karon Tooken, Christopher Powell, Amanda Louie, Greg Borowetz, Kimberly Main, Elyse Fiore.
UPLOADING RECORDS TO THE ASA DATABASES

Carrie-Ann Lunde, ASA Database Administrator

Making your collections available on the Archives Society of Alberta (ASA) Databases is one of the many benefits of having an institutional membership with the Society. The ASA hosts three databases: ANA (fonds-level descriptions); InSight (digitized images); and InWord (digitized documents). The ASA Databases are a valuable resource for researchers and other archivist professionals. It is an easy and cost-effective way to increase access to your collections and raise awareness about the value of archival collections in Alberta.

Uploading records can be time consuming, but there are several ways that the process can be streamlined.

1. Have current and accurate data.
2. Make sure all your records are RAD-compliant.
3. Export the record(s) from your in-house database rather than re-create the record.
4. Send bulk uploads to the Database Administrator to complete.

Outlined below are some pointers on how to effectively submit information for inclusion on the ASA Databases.

ANA

When uploading records to the ANA database, it is important to complete all of the required fields as outlined in Chapter 3 of the Database Reference Manual and to complete the fields according the standards outlined in the Rules for Archival Description (RAD).

If you have multiple records to load to the ANA Database, the information may be sent to the Database Administrator and the records can be uploaded for you. This can be done by sending the fonds-level description in a Word Document, Excel Document, Notepad (plain text document), or as DMP / CSV file exported from your database.

InSight and InWord

All records must have all required fields completed (see List of Fields in Database Manual Chapter 5 for Insight and Chapter 6 for InWord). Some key points to remember:

1. Have a Relation Link to the fonds-level description (the Control Number of the fonds record).
   a. A Control Number is the unique identifier that is automatically assigned to each record in every database. The control number of the fonds-level record is the one used to connect the photograph and document image records to the right description.
2. For Insight, have a Photo Identifier (file name of the image).
3. For InWord, have a Pages Identifier (file name of the scanned document) - use a running page number in the file names (e.g., 2003.10.12.p02).
4. File Naming
   a. Be consistent with file names – records should be accession number or some other unique record identifier used by institution.
   b. Do not include any special characters or blanks - use only letters, numbers, dashes, dots, or underscores.
   c. File names are case sensitive.
5. Bulk Uploading

a. Minor updates and small amounts of new records can be added using the edit screen, but for larger amounts (i.e., bulk uploads) should be done by the ASA Database Administrator.

b. To do a bulk upload an institution must:

   i. Have all files organized properly and required fields in the descriptions completed.

   ii. Load the records onto the ASA FTP site in their assigned institutional folder.

   iii. The pages associated with an individual record must all be in the same (sub)-directory in the ftp upload directory, and they must be the only records in that sub-directory.

   iv. Only include maximum 50 records per folder – break upload into “batches” (e.g., Batch1 includes 2003.10.01.jpg to 2003.10.50.jpg).

   v. Contact the System Administrator to inform that there are records on the FTP site waiting to be loaded onto one of the ASA Databases.

There are many free FTP software solutions available. For the ASA FTP site, an open-source, free solution is sufficient. If you have trouble accessing the FTP site, files can be sent to the Database Administrator on a CD or memory stick care of the ASA office.

For more information about the ASA Databases, or to request a training session at your institution, please feel free to contact me at carrie.lunde@gmail.com.

UPDATE – ICA-ATOM CONVERSION

At the 2012 conference, the ASA announced that it will be convering the ANA database from the current Cinemage software to ICA-AtoM in 2012-2013 in conjunction with Artefactual Systems. The features of the latest version of the ICA-AtoM software offer new functionalities that the current software can no longer match. The existing system will remain active until the final conversion is complete sometime in early 2013.

Details of the conversion process, member training, and launch date of the new system will be forthcoming. Some important items to note:

1) Uploads and description revisions to the old system will be allowed until July 30, 2012. This closure date is necessary to allow the ASA Database Administrator time to perform a data cleanse on the existing entries so that clean data is transferred into the new software.

2) The ASA is considering a new name and domain for the databases. Inspired by the MemoryBC rebranding that brought the system from within the AABC website to its own new, revised site, the ASA is looking for member input and possible new names for the database. Please send your comments to Braden Cannon, ANA Committee chair (braden.cannon@gov.ab.ca), and Michael Gourlie (mgourlie@shaw.ca).

Please contact the ASA office (mgourlie@shaw.ca) or the Database Administrator (carrie.lunde@gmail.com) if you have any questions or concerns.
ARCHIVES SOCIETY OF ALBERTA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2012 – 2013

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