



ASA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Susan Stanton, President

Ever wonder how the Archives Society of Alberta runs? Are you curious about who is behind the organizational decisions and the everyday operation of the ASA? Many of you may not know how the ASA works or what happens day to day. The ASA has a small, paid staff and many dedicated volunteers who sit on committees, produce the newsletter, organize archival courses, and serve as board members. Let me introduce some of them.



The secretariat is comprised of the Executive Director Michael Gourlie, Administrative Coordinator Carrie Herrick, Financial Coordinator Mandi Wisheu, and System Administrator Janet McMaster. These individuals do a great job of running the ASA and its everyday activities. Michael has been the executive director and archives advisor of the ASA since 1997. As part of his job, he carries out all the outreach activities for the ASA and offers professional advice to ASA members (and non-members) looking for information on records management and preservation of records. Carrie Herrick provides part-time administrative assistance to the Board of Directors (Board) and committees of the ASA. She is the membership coordinator, provides support for all the educational offerings and conferences, and helps assemble the ASA newsletter. Mandi Wisheu is the accountant for the ASA and makes sure the financial books stay balanced, staff is paid, and members receive their grant cheques. Janet McMaster oversees the revisions to the ASA website, provides technical advice and training, and vets the contributions to ASA databases such as ANA database.

The executive director and the Board meet every couple of months to discuss the general business of the ASA such as: future plans, project updates, event planning, and arising issues. Most members of the Board are also members of ASA committees. They represent the Board on the Grants Committee, the Communications Committee, and the Education Committee. The Board is comprised of a president (that's me), vice president, treasurer, secretary, institutional member-at-large, and individual member-at-large. Judy Kovacs is in her second term as the vice president. She is a NAIT instructor and previously served the Board as secretary. Glynys Hohmann began her term as treasurer in 2006. She was an archivist at the City of Edmonton Archives and now works for Service Alberta. Mary Nutting, from the South Peace Regional Archives, is fulfilling a one year term as secretary of the Board. She began in May 2008. Debby Shoctor is the archivist at the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta and has been the institutional member of the Board since 2005. Shelley Respondek was elected as the individual member at the 2008 AGM. She worked at the Red Deer and District Archives but in the fall of 2008 she returned to

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SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

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System Administrator Archives Network of Alberta/Webmaster

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The Archives Society of Alberta is supported in part by a grant from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

Ontario to start a new position. Jennifer Willard from the University of Calgary Archives has filled the individual member-at-large seat on the Board. The ASA is always looking for involvement from its members. If you are interested in participating in the ASA, in any capacity, please contact us.

The ASA could not run without the assistance of its members. Your willingness to contribute makes a difference in the spirit and the strength of the ASA. Thanks to those of you that are already involved, or have been involved, in the ASA. And to the rest - give it a try!

FROM THE DESK OF THE ARCHIVES ADVISOR

Michael Gourlie, Executive Director/Archives Advisor



2009 ACA CONFERENCE

The conference theme, "Rights, Responsibilities, Trust: Archives and Public Affairs," encompasses the increasingly critical role that archival records play in modern society. In addition to one day's stream of papers exploring the evolving residential schools issue, the conference program includes sessions that discuss a wide-ranging array of topics, including accountability in the creation of records, ethics, the changing roles of provincial archives, digitization and electronic records, outreach, and the role of records in public controversies. In addition to the day's presentations, a series of tours, film and theatre presentations, and the traditional conference pub gatherings in the evenings allow conference delegates to experience the social and historical side of Calgary.

As would be expected, Alberta's own archival community plays a large role in the conference. Honorary member Hugh Dempsey will lead a bus tour to Old Sun College, a former residential school, and Blackfoot Crossing, a unique historic site and museum operated by the Siksika First Nation. In addition to introducing the Headless Valley film during one of the conference's social events, the Provincial Archives' Marlena Wyman will present her "Conquering Fear of Film" workshop to a national audience. Calgary historian and Glenbow reference archivist Harry Sanders will lead delegates on a tour of the Palliser Hotel as well as a walking tour of downtown Calgary. The conference will also feature a presentation of *Letters from Battle River*, the popular Edmonton Fringe Festival play based on the letters of Dr. Mary Percy Jackson held by the Provincial Archives. When not presenting papers, a small army of Alberta archivists led by ACA Host Committee chair Lisa Atkinson will be helping with social events and other activities to make the conference run smoothly. If you can volunteer to help out with the conference, please contact Lisa Atkinson at lisa.atkinson@ucalgary.ca.

Last held in Alberta in 2000, the ACA conference provides a rare opportunity for members of Alberta's archival community to meet with their colleagues from other provinces and hear presentations of the highest calibre. For further information about the conference, please visit the ACA conference website at <http://archivists.ca/conference/>. Hope to see you there!

CHANGES TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

Late last year, the ASA revised the guidelines for its popular Professional Development and Travel Assistance (PDTA) Program, with the changes reflected in the *Guidebook to Education and Travel Grants* posted to the website in October 2008. The current guidebook is available at http://www.archivesalberta.org/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=71.

Effective for grants in the 2009/2010 fiscal year onwards, the PDTA grant is a two-stage process. The applicant submits the application form with a budget for pre-approval of the PDTA grant prior to the event taking place. After completion of the professional development opportunity, the applicant submits a second form with the required documentation to receive payment of the PDTA grant. This two-stage process ensures that applicants know how much funding they will receive before attending the conference, workshop or other professional development activity.

Please note that the pre-approval form must be received at the ASA office a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the event. The amount of funding available per grant is one-half of eligible expenses up to a maximum of \$750.

If you have any questions, please contact the ASA office by phone at 780-424-2697 or by email at mgourlie@shaw.ca.

Archives Network of Alberta News

Janet McMaster, System Administrator, Archives Network of Alberta

One of the options that is available to ASA institutions is having a filtered view to their records in our databases. The advantage of this is that an institution can have a link on their web site that will direct users to a view of only their records in ANA, Alberta InSight or Alberta InWord. Users who access the filtered view have the full functionality of the ASA's databases, but are only searching the records from that particular institution. Reports can also be generated showing the number of user sessions on a monthly basis for a particular filtered view. These figures show how many times the filtered views are being accessed from an institution's web site.

Two of the institutions that have filtered views set up are the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta, and the University of Calgary Archives. To view these examples, follow the instructions shown below:

- a) Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta – The filtered views to the ANA database, Alberta InSight and Alberta InWord are available under the Links/Searches portion of their web site (see <http://www.jahsena.ca/links-and-searches/>).
- b) University of Calgary Archives – From the digital resources section of their web site at <http://archives.ucalgary.ca/digital>, select “Scanned Archival Documents” or “Scanned Historical Photographs” to search their material in Alberta InWord and Alberta InSight. A filtered view to their fonds level descriptions in the ANA database is available by selecting the “Search the Catalogue of Holdings” link on the <http://archives.ucalgary.ca/findingaids> page.

There are no fees associated with setting up filtered views for ASA institutional members. If your institution is interested in setting up a filtered view, please contact me. The first step of the process is to send me a copy of your institution's logo, in jpeg or gif format. Once I receive this, I create a draft version of the filtered view for the institution to review. I can tailor the background colors, etc. of the filtered view to match the look and feel of the institution's web site.

As System Administrator, my role is to respond to questions about the system, coordinate training activities, vet descriptions and process bulk uploads. If you have any questions about the Archives Network of Alberta, or wish to arrange for training, please contact me at (403) 236-3406 or jmcmast@shaw.ca.

Melvin and Ethel Go To the Movies – and They Make Them Too: The Provincial Archives of Alberta and Archives Society of Alberta’s Film Night in Calgary

Marlena Wyman, Audio/Visual Archivist, Provincial Archives of Alberta

We generally plan events and outreach activities with the goal in mind to increase awareness of archives. We are happy when that goal is met, but sometimes an unexpected outcome surfaces that makes us sit back and reflect on just why we are in this archives business anyway.

But let’s start at the beginning of this story:

Melvin Ross was born August 19, 1914 at Hutchinson, Minnesota, U.S.A., moved to Dorothy, Alberta in 1932 and worked the family ranch with his father. Ethel Graham was born January 2, 1919 in Drumheller, Alberta. Melvin and Ethel married on February 19, 1946. Melvin and Ethel owned a store at Kenisville, Alberta for a short time and then moved to Calgary, Alberta and built and sold houses for a living. Mel was also an inventor, an artist and a writer. Ethel was a writer and a lobbyist, especially regarding the topic of water resources, and was a member of the Western Canada Reclamation Association, a water rights group. They co-authored the book *The Long Road South* about their trip through Mexico, Central and South America, where they also filmed their travel film *The Pan-American Highway*, in 1960 and 1961.

This story focuses on their work as travel filmmakers and lecturers. After attending a travel film presentation in the early 1950s and thinking that it would be a fun way to make a living, these two fearless entrepreneurs decided just go ahead and become travel filmmakers. So, the Rosses abandoned a conventional lifestyle to live on the road in their homemade camper truck, and in the case of the film *Headless Valley*, in their aluminum canoe and canvas tent. They taught themselves how to use a 16mm camera and proceeded to film around the world and lecture throughout North America for the next few decades. Melvin was the primary cinematographer with Ethel taking over filming where required. Ethel was the still photographer for their films and their trips. When screening the films, Melvin presented the live commentary and Ethel projected the films.

I first met Melvin and Ethel in 2003 when they drove up from Calgary with their nephew to bring their films to the Provincial Archives of Alberta for donation. I had a visit with them as I do with all donors to get some background and ask the ever popular archivist’s question “Do you have anything else?” They replied that that was it, so we said goodbye and thank you and I put the films with other collections awaiting my attention. Several months later when I managed to look at the six films that they dropped off, I knew we had something very special.

The film that struck me as the star of the collection was *Headless Valley*. In 1957, Melvin and Ethel set out alone by canoe on a two month adventure travelling north on the Fort Nelson, Liard and South Nahanni Rivers to the Headless Valley in the Northwest Territories. That alone seemed a bit crazy, but they also filmed themselves on the trip, which meant canoeing sections of the river, backtracking to set up the camera, canoeing it again to film themselves, and then backtracking once more to pick up the camera. Melvin had rigged up an alarm clock system to trigger the camera and when the alarm went off, they knew that they were being filmed.

Not only was the trip amazing enough as a film subject alone, but the film itself has all of the elements of a great movie: story, composition, timing, adventure, suspense, romance and humour. And Melvin and Ethel were the Producers, Writers, Directors, Cinematographers, Photographers, Actors, Editors, Distributors, Craft Services...and everything else.

So I decided that nothing would do but for that film to be screened at our next Film Night. We screened *Headless Valley* at Metro Cinema in Edmonton, Alberta on April 22, 2005 for the Provincial Archives of Alberta’s 20th Annual Film Night. At that time, Melvin was 90 years old and Ethel was 86 and they felt it would be too much to make the trip to Edmonton, so they were unfortunately unable to attend the screening. And that meant that we did not have Melvin as a narrator either. However, the stars were aligned, and Calgary historian and author David Finch, who is also a canoeist and Nahanni enthusiast, had learned about the film from Glenbow Archivist, Doug Cass. David called me and I told him that we wanted to screen the film but had no sound track. Since both David and Melvin lived in Calgary, David kindly offered to record Melvin reading his commentary. The Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society generously paid for a 16mm copy of the original film to be produced, Provincial Archives’ Media Technician and wizard Tom Bernier synchronized Melvin’s voice recording to the film, and it was set to go. We screened it to a very enthusiastic and appreciative audience. We had

a successful event that increased awareness for the archives. The goal was achieved!

A bit of an aside here: as Archivists we often become involved in the lives of donors. And that seemed to be destiny with Melvin and Ethel, or as their great-nephew Chris Stevenson calls them, the Methels. Chris contacted me in 2006 to let me know that he and his wife Tanya had bought Melvin and Ethel's house in Calgary when they moved into their retirement home. Chris told me that, contrary to Melvin and Ethel's declaration, there was a lot more to their archives than the films. I visited the house and spent the day going through boxes with Chris and Tanya. The gaps in Melvin and Ethel's life story began to be filled in and I drove away with their writings, photographs, Melvin's inventions and examples of his brief foray into fine art painting, Ethel's lobbying research and letters, her recipes, outtakes from their films, travel documents, research for their films and book, maps, correspondence for their film bookings, and many other treasures including a box of fossils that ended up at the Royal Tyrrell Museum. I was also regaled with stories from Chris about his great-aunt and great-uncle. They were very resourceful, independent and thrifty people, and apparently personally re-shingled the roof of their house when they were in their 80s, much to the horror of their neighbours. They also kept every bit of string that entered their lives, and Chris showed me the substantial string ball that resided in the basement.

Back to Film Night: Although the Edmonton Film Night was a success, it just didn't seem right to me without Melvin and Ethel there. So in 2008, Provincial Archives' Event Coordinator Jessica King, who was also a member of the Communications Committee for the Archives Society of Alberta, was in the perfect position to suggest a partnership between the Provincial Archives of Alberta and the Archives Society of Alberta to screen *Headless Valley* in Calgary for Archives Week 2008. The Archives Society of Alberta bore some of the costs of bringing the show to Calgary, Jessica worked her magic to find us a venue and take care of all the details, and we were on our way. I contacted Chris to see if he thought Melvin and Ethel were up to attending, and he said that they would be there. I was absolutely thrilled.

On the evening of Film Night, Chris and Tanya brought Melvin and Ethel to the Globe Theatre early, and I managed to have a bit of a chat with them before the show. Ethel told me that she was so pleased that her "children" were being well-cared for in the archives. Melvin humbly stated that the film was "really just a home movie.", which it is not. Not that there is anything wrong with home movies - they are among my favourites in our moving image collection - but Melvin and Ethel's films are so much more.

People began to line up outside of the Globe Theatre and the excitement was building. CPAWS (The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society) who have a special interest in the Nahanni National Park Reserve, set up a table with literature as did the Archives Society of Alberta and the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Jessica had contacted the retirement village where Melvin and Ethel live to see if they could arrange for a bus so that some of the other residents could attend. She discovered that no one there even knew that Melvin and Ethel had been filmmakers. A busload came to the screening and no doubt the event initiated much conversation in the retirement village dining room for some time after.w

I gave a brief introduction about archives and Film Night, and I introduced Melvin and Ethel in the audience. It was obvious from the audience response throughout the screening that the people who attended the show loved it. When it ended, Melvin and Ethel were mobbed like a couple of movie stars, and they definitely deserved all of that attention and acclaim.

When I returned to work the next day, Chris had emailed me a few photos from the event, along with this message:

Ethel is still acting like a school girl who just got asked to go to the Prom. Melvin, ... well, he just thoroughly enjoyed himself. You gave those two a night that celebrated their lives.

And I thought, that's why I am an archivist. We can make a positive difference in people's lives, and we are instrumental in assuring that their life's work will live on beyond them and that their stories will be told. Not a bad job to have.

I will end with an excerpt from Melvin's poem, *Ballad of Two Wanderers*, that I think exemplifies their personalities. After listing in the poem the many places that he and Ethel visited in the world, he writes:

Some folks ask about all these places

And say it must have been sublime.

We tell them "This ain't nothin'

These are just the ones that rhyme.

FIRE DEPARTMENT'S HISTORY PRESERVED

Kathy Coutts, Town of Okotoks Museum & Archives

The Okotoks Fire Department is the type of organization that you don't really appreciate until you need it. The same can be said for its history. You don't really appreciate it until you've read it. This history is now preserved and accessible at the Okotoks Museum and Archives; ready to be appreciated.

The archives has just completed a project which involved processing a trunk full of records from the Okotoks Fire Department. The collection documents a part of the department's history (ca. 1945-1995), from its infancy as a small volunteer fire brigade operating with very limited resources to a large municipal department with paid permanent staff with state-of-the-art equipment. The 142 photos in the fonds provide a pictorial history of fires that have plagued the community, the firefighters who served with the department and the fire-fighting equipment they used. There are also approximately 1.1 metres of records which include minutes, correspondence, membership lists and related documents of the fire department. Within these files are interesting nuggets of history: in 1950, volunteer firefighters received \$1 in remuneration for each fire call they responded to; fire hydrants were installed in Okotoks in 1953

which drastically changed the way fires were fought; and in 1964 Okotoks residents voted in a plebiscite against the town borrowing funds to build a new fire hall because they thought \$15,800 was far too expensive.

The fire department fonds is now accessible to researchers and the public. This project was made possible due to \$2,084.48 in special funding from the Archives Society of Alberta through the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation. The Okotoks Museum and Archives is grateful for this support which assists us in providing public access to our community's history.

Archives in Canada Conference Series

ARCHIVES AND THE CANADIAN NARRATIVE

RE: TELLING CANADA'S STORIES & REGIONAL ARCHIVES IN THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE

June 10-13, 2009

Mount Allison University

Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada

How do archives shape and reshape narratives about Canada? Regional, local, or community archives exist across the country. What resources and new potential do they offer in terms of telling Canada's stories today?

This conference series brings together researchers from the academic community and general public with archivists and librarians to discuss issues and topics relevant to Canadian archives. You are invited to join this dynamic multidisciplinary dialogue.

Highlights include: Noah Richler as keynote speaker and a reading by David Adams Richards, as well as a concert of Acadian music by Corde-à-vent.

Complete programme and registration information available here:

http://www.mta.ca/faculty/arts/canadian_studies/archives_conference/index.html

RECORDS OF RURAL PEACE COUNTRY PRESERVED

Mary Nutting, South Peace Regional Archives

One of the grants approved for South Peace Regional Archives (SPRA) from the Archives Society of Alberta this past year was for the processing of nine small collections from the Eaglesham area in the County of Birch Hills. With this financial assistance, we completed the following collections, brought in by Morris Burroughs and Nick Poohkay:

- Tangent Municipal Nurseing Society, 1958-1968
- Eaglesham Consumer's Cooperative, 1946-1971
- Eaglesham Savings & Credit Union, 1955
- Eaglesham Seniors Social Centre Club, 1974-1994
- Village of Eaglesham, 1963-1976
- Royal Canadian Legion, Sauve Branch 235, Eaglesham, 1947-2003
- Royal Canadian Legion Auxiliary, Sauve Branch 235, 1963-1994
- Tom Lessard fonds, 1950-1971
- Nick Poohkay oral history, 2007

This brings to thirteen, the number of collections we have from the Eaglesham area. Already processed in the Archives are the Veterans Volunteer Reserve, Eaglesham and District; the Eaglesham Cultural Society; the Smoky West Rural Electrification Association; Eaglesham School District 4677; and the Donaldson family collection, which includes a silent film on the people and village of Eaglesham. While SPRA has a good collection of archival documents from this village, it has almost no photographs. SPRA is actively encouraging anyone who can supplement these collections with photographs to contact the archives.

Eaglesham (named after Eaglesham, Scotland) was established in 1916 as a station on the E.D. & B.C. railway. The first Post Office opened in 1929. After World War II, the surrounding area was the site of a large soldier settlement scheme, called the Lassiter Project. Eaglesham received village status in 1967 with a population of 250, but that was the highest it would be. Gradually the population declined until village status was lost in 1997. Today about 150 live in the hamlet.

It is important to SPRA to preserve original documents which tell the history of local farming communities, and the many ways in which their inhabitants contributed to the physical and social well-being of those around them. Rural depopulation has decreased the size and vitality of these small towns, and we need to know how important they were to the fabric of our society. SPRA encourages local residents who know of similar collections to remember the ongoing value of these records in painting a picture of the past and to contact the archives.

We acknowledge the financial support for this project from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation and the Government of Canada through Library and Archives Canada, the agencies which provided the funding adjudicated by the Archives Society of Alberta.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Braving a chilly February evening, local archivists gathered at the Provincial Archives of Alberta for a reception to welcome participants at the spring meeting of the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA). The CCA's Board of Directors, Secretariat, Committee chairpersons, and representatives from Library and Archives Canada travelled from locations across the country to meet in Edmonton to discuss workplans for the coming year as well as the progress to date of National Archival Development Program (NADP). Provincial Archivist Leslie Latta-Guthrie welcomed the participants to the province, and ASA President Susan Stanton thanked the CCA on behalf of Alberta's archival community for the benefits that the NADP funding had brought to archives in Alberta. Ian Forsyth, CCA Chair, thanked the organizers of the reception and Alberta's archivists for their warm hospitality.

Scott Goodine, formerly Team Lead (Private Records) at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, was appointed the Provincial Archivist of Manitoba, effective December 1, 2008. Congratulations Scott!

ASA Treasurer Glynys Hohmann, previously of the City of Edmonton Archives, has taken a position with Service Alberta as a Service Information Management Analyst.

Formerly at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, John Lund is now with the Red Deer and District Archives.

Lori Nordland, recently of the Alberta Research Council and formerly of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, has taken a position with McGill University in Montreal.

Effective December **31, 2008**, Apollonia Steele retired from the University of Calgary Library - Special Collections. **She joined the University on December 18, 1972 and was the Special Collections Librarian from March 1979.** She is continuing to do contract work at Special Collections to complete a number of projects. Some of the significant **archival** collections acquired include **Mordecai Richler, Alice Munro, Aritha van Herk, Fred Stenson, Guy Vanderhaeghe, Maxwell Bates, Srul Irving Glick, and Malcolm Forsyth among others.**

ASA President Susan Stanton has left the City of Edmonton Archives to take the position of Team Lead (Government Records) at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Her predecessor, Anna Gibson, is now the Director, Planning Policy and Information Management, for Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation.

CONFERENCE REMINDER

Association of Canadian Archivists
Conference

May 14-19, 2009

Calgary, Alberta

The theme for the ACA's 2009 conference is **Rights, Responsibilities, Trust: Archives and Public Affairs.** The conference begins with an opening reception on Thursday, May 14th; sessions begin on Friday, May 15th, continuing through Sunday May 17th. These dates coincide with the Victoria Day holiday or long weekend in Canada, where Monday, May 18th is a statutory holiday.

Two ACA-ASA workshops are scheduled to precede the conference. Brief descriptions are included in the Conference at a Glance while a Workshop Registration form is available in the Registration section of the ACA's website:

Plan to join us in Calgary for ACA 2009.

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SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

SUBMISSIONS, QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Archives Society of Alberta News is published quarterly by the Archives Society of Alberta. Submissions, questions and suggestions should be directed to the Newsletter Editor c/o:

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Individuals and institutions are encouraged to submit articles, reviews, reports, photographs or letters to the editor to the Archives Society of Alberta News, Issues #2, 3 and 4. Submissions are preferred in electronic format as Word files for textual submissions, or as JPG files for graphic submissions.

Please note:

Issue #1 is reserved for Annual Reports of the Society and its committees.

The views expressed in the Archives Society of Alberta Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Archives Society of Alberta or its Editor. The Archives Society of Alberta is supported in part by a grant from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.



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ARCHIVES SOCIETY OF ALBERTA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2009 – 2010

Name (Institution or Individual)

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- Archives Employee \$50.00
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- Yes, I would like to volunteer for an ASA Committee

Please make cheque or money order payable to the Archives Society of Alberta and mail to:

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