

# archives

## SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

# NEWSLETTER

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### CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

*Michael Gourlie, Executive Director/Archives Advisor*

After you've spent several years in any community, you begin to notice patterns in the growth and development of that community. While one could argue that Alberta's archival community is too diverse to identify specific trends, a case can be put forward that the province's archival community provides examples of change and continuity in their best measures.

On the side of change, the most remarkable aspect is the commitment on the part of sponsoring agencies to provide updated facilities for archival institutions. While the new building for the Provincial Archives of Alberta may be the grandest archives structure in the province, the new facilities for the Esplanade in Medicine Hat and the Galt Museum & Archives in Lethbridge are striking examples of buildings that provide the archival records (and archivists) of those communities with excellent accommodations. Smaller communities and organizations are developing archival facilities that meet minimum standards and provide a starting point to expand. While there will likely always be an organization which has a new building just out of reach, it is heartening to see the number of archival facilities either newly-built or renovated, a situation that does not occur frequently in other provinces.

On the side of continuity, one can point to the members of the archival community itself. Of course, there are the inevitable retirements and movements out of the province that fit into the "change" column, but, for the most part, many Alberta archivists have spent several years working at one archival institution. It is difficult to quantify the beneficial effect that the accumulated wisdom of these years brings to the process of appraisal, description and reference services, but certainly the receipt of grants, reduced backlogs, increased online content, innovative public

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

## ARCHIVES NETWORK OF ALBERTA NEWS

Janet McMaster, System Administrator, Archives Network of Alberta

### What's new in the ANA Databases?

#### 1. Archives Network of Alberta (ANA) Database

The ANA database contains over 10,600 fonds level descriptions from 40 archival institutions throughout the province of Alberta. Several institutions have contributed new descriptions recently, including Athabasca Archives, Lutheran Historical Institute, Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives, and the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Esplanade Archives (formerly Medicine Hat Museum and Art Gallery) recently completed a review of their fonds level descriptions in ANA. This review consisted of revising and updating their existing 400+ descriptions, as well as submitting over 25 new descriptions.

New contributions from Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives include:

- *Gillett family fonds*, that contains records pertaining to early railroad employees and the day-to-day life and activities of Jasper residents in the mid-to-late twenties;
- *Harold Allen fonds*, that tells the story of one young Canadian's journey to Jasper to enlist for military service during World War I; and
- *Robert Dowling fonds*, that contains records generated by a well- respected MLA and active member of the Jasper community.

Since April, the Glenbow Archives have added over 50 links from their existing fonds level descriptions to new on-line finding aids. Links to on-line finding aids have recently been added to the *Calgary Allied Arts Council fonds*, *Pumphouse Theatre fonds*, *Alberta Provincial Woman's Christian Temperance Union fonds*, *Hurst Construction fonds*, *CFCN News Footage fonds*, *Pincher Creek School Division fonds*, and *The Riley Family fonds*.

#### 2. Alberta InSight Database

The Alberta InSight database contains over 32,000 scanned images from 20 ASA institutional members. South Peace Regional Archives and Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives have recently contributed new material to Alberta InSight. *The Norman C. Lindhjem fonds* from Jasper contains over one hundred unique images and rare film footage of the 87<sup>th</sup> Mountain Infantry Detachment and their activities (military training) in Jasper National Park during World War II, including images of a Studebaker test program for a secret military vehicle known as the Weasel. Jasper has also recently added photographs and programs from live performances from the 1960s by the *Jasper Senior High School Dramatic Society*.

### 3. Alberta InWord

The Alberta InWord database contains over 90,000 scanned pages from 10 different institutional members. Recent additions submitted by the Glenbow Archives include:

- *F.R. Scott's closing speech at the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) convention in Regina (1933);*
- *Report to the Indian Association of Alberta about National Indian Brotherhood political action in London, England (1981); and*
- *Letters and reminiscences written by Phil Weinard about his life as a southern Alberta rancher.*

The ANA databases are available to all of the ASA's institutional members. Training is also provided at no cost to members who wish to contribute new material or who have questions about revising their existing material. If you have any questions about the databases, or would like to arrange for training, please contact me by e-mail at [jmcmast@shaw.ca](mailto:jmcmast@shaw.ca), or by phone at (403) 236-3406.

## CONTINUITY AND CHANGE...

programming and numerous satisfied researchers are some indicators. It seems likely that the capital expenditure and specific designs necessary for the new facilities is an additional benefit of the skilful lobbying and reputation of the local archivist. Attendance at the ASA's Archives Institute and special topics workshops and requests for additional workshops shows that the community continues to upgrade their skills in a variety of new and challenging topics. While each archivist will have his or her own particular perspective on issues, it seems that the archival community as a whole is roughly on the same page, allowing it to move forward on issues of common interest and benefit.

Maintaining this healthy balance between continuity and change may be difficult in the coming years. As more experienced archivists move out of province or retire, recruiting new archivists to fill these gaps will require some luck and a succession plan that includes professional development opportunities to bring them up to speed on the existing and upcoming needs of the institution. Once-new buildings will require maintenance and upgrading, a tough sell when other seemingly more important organizational needs present themselves.

Awareness of archives and the archival profession will be a continuing theme as well as an ongoing struggle. Then there are the unforeseen challenges that no one can predict. But Alberta's archival community is more than equal to these tasks, weathering the coming storms with the usual mixture of practicality, hard work, and innovation for which it is famous.

## 70 Days in the Cold Vault

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

The Provincial Archives of Alberta is pleased to announce that a recent Moving Image Preservation Assessment was completed with the generous financial assistance of the National Archival Development Program.

The contractor who completed this project was media specialist, local filmmaker, and owner of the Edmonton Film School, Tom Bernier. Tom braved the glacial conditions of the cold vault, the ickiness of sticky shed syndrome, the acidity of vinegar syndrome, the vexation of torn sprockets and more in his search to identify short, medium and long term preservation recommendations for the moving image collection.

Tom created an Excel master database that provides information regarding the age, formats, existence of preservation and access copies, and notes on physical condition of the films and videos in the holdings of the Provincial Archives of Alberta. The database is expandable and searchable and therefore, any number of subsets of information may be accessed through a custom search. All the relevant data that existed was located and a data base of 8,599 accession numbers has been created to date.

A few of the many recommendations include:

- The older, the smaller and the more obscure the format, the more the risk of deterioration increases. The age and relatively limited number of videotapes produced in the 1960s and 1970s dictates that these tapes should be the first priority.
- A video inspection report should be created and filled out for each video in the collection as well as on a regular inspection schedule. Inspection reports should also be filled out for each video as acquired.
- A basic video inspection would include making note of any physical damage to the container and the tape, identifying the videotape base, noting any tape pack deficiencies, rewinding, and filling out the video inspection report. It is necessary to play at least the first few minutes of the tapes to determine condition of the picture and sound and note this on the inspection report.
- A basic film inspection would include the removal any non-archival tape and paper, repairing or making note of any physical damage, identifying the film base, determining the manufacture date from edge codes where possible, conducting a shrinkage meter test and noting results, winding off the reel and onto a large archival core, and filling out the film inspection report.
- In terms of preservation priority for film, of specific note are any films that have magnetic sound, whether full coat mag stock or magnetic strip on film. The magnetic sound and the film should not be stored together. It is recommended that magnetic media should not be stored below 8 degrees C.
- Much of the film collection is acetate based, which is prone to vinegar syndrome. Identification of film base, whether acetate or the more stable polyester, should be carried out on a regular basis, along with a report of stage of deterioration. In the meantime, cold storage will slow down deterioration.

- An ongoing effort must be devoted to the maintenance of the equipment, acquisition of new and obsolete equipment, and the inventory and surplusing of equipment.
- Maintenance of the database is required to ensure precise information regarding dates of migration and projected dates of remigration. This becomes even more urgent as the Archives moves into the acquisition of digitally born moving images.

This database will allow the Provincial Archives to focus our future conservation treatment efforts on those items deemed to be at most risk. This database will be especially useful for the Provincial Archives of Alberta's new Audio/Visual Conservator, Terry O'Riordan in his work. Welcome Terry, to the Provincial Archives, and keep your winter coat handy for those cold vault visits, even in the summer!

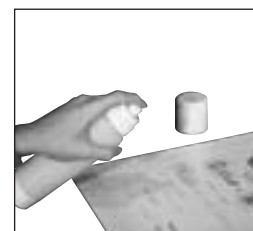
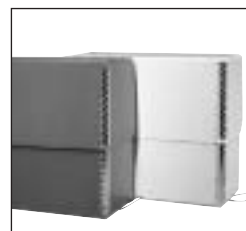
## REMINDER

The Archives Society of Alberta is looking to reduce the amount of paper used to produce and mail the newsletter, so the ASA will be transitioning its quarterly newsletter into an electronic newsletter. The first electronic newsletter will be available for the winter 2008 issue.

Please contact the Administrative Coordinator at (780) 424-2697 or at [cherrick@shaw.ca](mailto:cherrick@shaw.ca) should you wish to receive the print version.

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# TECHNOCRACY

Raymond Frogner, University of Alberta

The University of Alberta Archives (U.A.A) wishes to announce the completion of its project to research, write, and digitize a file-level descriptive inventory of the records of the Technocracy movement held at the University of Alberta Archives.

Technocracy's sweeping perspective means the movement holds value for several research constituencies. Beginning in 1919 when the term was coined, Technocracy was a response to the social, economic, and political storms buffeting Western democracies after the First World War. The difficult post-war political and economic environment was a hothouse for sweeping social movements such as socialism, anarchism and fascism. In a less violent fashion (witness the movement's symbol, the Monad, an ancient generic symbol signifying balance and harmony between nature and science), Technocracy essentially promoted modernism's emphasis on scientific analysis and technological solutions to the ills of humanity. The objectives of the new organization were:

- to carry out a program of economic research; to bring technocratic theory to the attention of the public;
- to provide a skeleton organization capable of forming the Technate, (a society premised on technocracies scientific guidelines in North America in the event of a final collapse of the social and economic order based on the price system).

From the beginning the movement disavowed revolutionary and political activities. The movement was founded by Howard Scott, an American engineer. Scott and a number of other scientists and engineers organized a group known as the Technical Alliance in a bid to reproduce the results of the mobilization of resources and production during the First World War. With Scott elected "Chief Engineer" the Technical Alliance studied all facets of the American social and economic system to design a new system of production and distribution for continental North America that would provide a better standard of living, conserve non-renewable resources, and ensure 'an economy of abundance.' The

Technical Alliance was renamed Technocracy in 1930 and in 1932 and it began to publish its basic findings. In the fall of 1933, Technocracy was incorporated in New York State as a "nonsectarian, educational-research membership organization" (Technocracy Digest, No. 231, pp 4).

As society grasped for solutions to the economic and social problems of the interwar period, the movement gained strength but in 1940, due to its stated opposition to the Second World War, it was banned in Canada. The ban was lifted in 1943 when Technocracy modified their opposition to the war and sections were re-formed accordingly. However, the post-war years, perhaps due to continued economic prosperity saw membership and interest in Technocracy decrease. The Technocracy papers reflect the popular interwar currents of thought in North America regarding the political and economic organization of society. In this sense, the Technocracy movement is significant in the same manner that many prairie populist movements hold historical research value. Though relatively insignificant today, the movement has continued into the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Their magazine *The Technocrat* is still published. For students of the history of science, political science, the history of ideas, social history, and economics, the records of Technocracy are a valuable resource.

The *Technocracy fonds* at the U.A.A. contains the records of the Edmonton and Calgary chapters of Technocracy Inc. The predominant portion of the fonds is comprised of newsletters, pamphlets and booklets, articles, periodicals, correspondence and writings of individual members, and books. Individual members also wrote papers on a variety of Technocracy topics, and submitted their writings to CHQ (Corporate Headquarters) for comment and approval before considering wider distribution. Also included are other articles, papers, theses and books that write about Technocracy as a topic or about subject-

matter of interest to Technocracy members. A published series of lessons discussing Technocracy doctrine was published by Technocracy, Inc. and titled "Technocracy Study Course"; various editions of the Study Course publications are found in this fonds.

The *Technocracy fonds* arrived at the University of Alberta Archives in four separate accessions. Walt Fryars of the Edmonton Chapter of Technocracy donated the Accession 93-20 (1.8 m of textual

records) in April 1993. Dr. Helen Diament of the Calgary Chapter donated Accession 93-55 (1.5 m of textual records) in April 1993. Doug Tomlinson of the Edmonton Chapter donated Accession 95-54 (1 cm of textual records) in May 1995. Walter Fryars donated Accession 96-123 (2.8 m of textual records) in 1996.

The descriptive inventory can be viewed on line at the following address:

<http://archive1.lse.ualberta.ca/FindingAids/Technocracy/technocracy.html>

## 2007 ARCHIVES INSTITUTE

The Archives Society of Alberta held its eighth Archives Institute at the University of Calgary from June 4-9, 2007. Nineteen participants attended this year's Institute, with people travelling from across Alberta and Manitoba to attend the course. From the newly hired to those seeking a more comprehensive overview of archival theory and practice, the participants brought eclectic backgrounds and experiences in community, corporate, government, military, religious and university archives that came out during classroom discussions, exercises, and breaks.

The feedback from participants on the six-day course and the take-home exercise confirmed that the Archives Institute's balance of theory and practice remains relevant for the core educational needs of the archival community. In the words of one participant, "this was an exceptional workshop on many levels. It leaves me anxious to go back to my home archives and get started!"

The ASA would like to thank the University of Calgary for generously providing the facilities (and Suzanne Ell, Institute participant from the University of Calgary, for her local arrangements support), as well as guest instructors Doug Cass, Janet McMaster, Alison Freake, and Apollonia Steele, for their presentations to the 2007 Archives Institute. For information about the Archives Institute, visit its page on the ASA website at [http://www.archivesalberta.org/default.asp?V\\_ITEM\\_ID=49](http://www.archivesalberta.org/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=49).



Photo caption:

2007 Archives Institute class picture. Standing, left to right: Peter Stanulonis, Stacy Kaufeld, Carol Hollywood, Kendra Drever, Carol Ranson, Conrad Stoesz, Chantelle Opyr, Diane Kelly, Zeld Matkea, Suzanne Ell, Janice Nermo, Amanda Kriaski, Heather Nielson, Michael Gourlie, John Wright. Seated, left to right: Debora Oranchuk, Wendy Dyck, Edward van Vliet, Lindsie Bruns, Sgt. Bruce Graham.

## MICHAEL GOURLIE: SO MANY FONDS; SO LITTLE TIME

*Judy Kovacs*

1997. Ten years seems like such a long time, but it has slipped away very quickly. A decade *always* sounds longer than it feels.

When Michael arrived in Alberta in 1997, the ASA had already been representing the interests of Alberta archives and archivists since 1981. Was Michael prepared for Alberta's archives and archivists? Were Alberta's archives and archivists prepared for Michael? We may never know the answer to those questions, but we do know all parties concerned have achieved a great deal over the past ten years.

Michael has accomplished much since he arrived here in 1997. The somewhat raw statistics include:

- Approximately 300 site visits;
- Tens of thousands of kilometers travelled;
- 25,000 emails (not including SPAM);
- 5 ASA Conferences organized (with help) and attended;
- Helped administer over \$400,000 in grant funds;
- Helped coordinate virtual exhibits – including this year's "Archives Unleashed";
- Helped organize, direct and promote the three Trunks and the four online objects connected with them;
- Did way too much stuff in and around the CAIN project(s);
- Worked with (and sometimes was) all the ASA Committees and their respective projects;
- Over 50 Board Meetings;

- 10 AGMs;
- 4 ASA Presidents;
- Helped teach, promote and organize 8 Archives Institutes;
- Helped organize, direct and promote over 20 Workshops;
- Written over 50 articles for the Newsletter and other publications; and
- Promoted the ASA, Trunks, Archives Tutorial, Workshops, Institute and all the ASA Databases at countless meetings, trade and educational fairs, classroom and site visits.

While the somewhat raw statistics are impressive indeed, they do not tell the whole story. The framework they present leave out the hours spent working on projects, settling details, meeting with people, and the jillions of phone calls for all the arranging, supervising, researching, cheering, cajoling, wheedling, sighing and explaining that goes with all the things that Michael does for the ASA. I'm sure there were days where the sighing and wheedling outnumbered the cheering, but overall there have been more good days than not-good days. During the past decade, Michael has not only achieved a great deal, but has achieved this while still enjoying his job and his commitment to doing his best for the archives of Alberta. Over the past ten years, Michael has become the face of the ASA – the archives' "go to guy" here in Alberta. You want commitment to archives? Ask Michael about his tattoo – that's commitment to archives.

Cheers Michael! Here's to more successful years with the ASA! <clinks coffee cup as can't have alcohol in the workplace>



# ARCHIVES WEEK

Mark your calendar! This year's Archives Week will take place from October 1-6, 2007. This year's theme, "Archives Unleashed: Animals in Archives," has resulted in an eclectic submission of images and documents for this year's virtual exhibit. A new addition to the activities this year is the creation of a 2008 calendar based on a selection of the images submitted for the exhibit. More details about the calendar will be available during Archives Week. If you have any Archives Week events you wish to publicize, please post the notice to the asa-l listserv or send them to Michael Gourlie, Archives Advisor, at mgourlie@shaw.ca for posting.



Jasper- Yellowhead Museum and Archives / PA18-144

## Attention All Archives!!!

Are you looking for a way to get more media coverage? Want to increase the attendance at your next special event or workshop? And do it all for the least amount of money possible? Then the Provincial Archives of Alberta has the seminar for you!

During Archives Week 2007 the Provincial Archives of Alberta will be hosting a FREE morning workshop for anyone who works in Archives in Alberta.

**Archives and Outreach**  
Tuesday October 2, 2007  
Provincial Archives of Alberta  
8555 Roper Road, Edmonton  
8:45 - 11:00 am

### What Makes The Media Want to Cover Your Story?

Arnold Grandt, Head, Community and Corporate Relations, from the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village will present a session on dealing with the media. Who exactly are the media and where to find them, what their needs are, why work with them, what makes a good news story and tracking. It's a good introduction into an unknown world.

### Provincial Archives of Alberta Outreach Programs and Practices

Jessica King, Program/Volunteer Coordinator, from the Provincial Archives of Alberta will discuss the outreach programs offered by the Provincial Archives Alberta, describing successful initiatives to date and the ways in which you can develop archival programming for your institution and community on a limited budget.

Minimum 10 participants, Maximum 25

Pre-registration required. To register, call (780) 427 -1750. Registration closes Thursday September 27, 2007

## ASA Fall Workshop

### **“Dancing with Genealogists” for Archivists and Librarians: How to Lead and Not Step On Any Toes While Creating An Effective Rapport With Your Genealogy Clients**

Successful reference service, like successful ballroom dancing, depends on good communication. “Where can I find my family tree?” can be an overwhelming question. But if the problem is approached one step at a time, the result can be satisfying for everyone.

This two day workshop will discuss the basics of genealogical research, well-known and more obscure sources of genealogical information, as well as new online sources to help archivists and librarians assist the new as well as the experienced genealogist.

#### **Instructors**

*Sharon Murphy, Professional Genealogist, Timelines Genealogical Research.* A past president of the Ontario Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists, Sharon Murphy has conducted workshops and lectures at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels to aid both amateur and professional genealogists in their ongoing training in the use of numerous archival sources.

*Jim Bowman, Archivist, Glenbow Archives.* A graduate in Librarianship at UBC, Jim Bowman has worked in many archival institutions in BC and Alberta as a professional archivist, volunteer, and consultant. He specializes in reference services at the Glenbow Archives. He holds a Professional Learning Certificate in Genealogical Studies from the University of Toronto and has particular expertise in Métis genealogy.

#### **Dates**

October 12-13, 2007

#### **Location**

University of Calgary Library, Mackimmie Library Tower, Room 909  
2500 University Drive NW

#### **Fees**

\$125 (members) / \$150 (non-members)

## PEOPLE & PLACES

On July 21, **Michael Gourlie** celebrated ten years of working for the Archives Society of Alberta. Congratulations Michael!

Formerly of the City of Edmonton Archives, **Terry O’Riordan** has joined the staff of the Provincial Archives of Alberta as its Audiovisual Conservator.

**Karen Simonson** has returned to the Provincial Archives of Alberta as the latest addition to its reference staff.

**Leslie Pearson** is this year's recipient of the ASA Bursary. Having worked at the Lutheran Historical Institute and the City of Edmonton Archives, she will be attending the Master of Archival Studies program at UBC.

At its recent meeting, the ASA Board approved the institutional membership application of the **Sylvan Lake & District Archives**. The ASA now has forty institutional members.

## LETTERS FROM BATTLE RIVER REVIEW

*Jonathan Nordland*

As a member of the archival community in Edmonton, it was pretty hard to miss the Fringe production *Letters from Battle River*. Supported by the Provincial Archives of Alberta, this production was marketed well to the heritage community and those close to it. It did have a lone detractor from the *Edmonton Journal*, but after actually attending the play I’m convinced he must have went to the wrong venue. *Letters* captured my extremely limited attention and held me for the duration, which is saying a lot since I tend to enjoy singing and dancing in my theatre and hold no illusions about the dryness of most archival material.

Heather Swain’s interpretation of Mary Percy Jackson’s life as a rural doctor in early 1900s Battle River brought the time into focus. I laughed at her description of transporting her luggage across the landscape and I cried for her dog as it suffered from distemper. But the production didn’t shy away from the social problems of the time, which still plague Canadians today. Specifically, I was impressed by Percy’s transformation from British subject to Canadian pioneer, described through her interactions

with the different cultural groups in the region and her criticism of the residential school system. More than the actual content of the play though, I was impressed by what *Letters* could mean for archives, themselves.

Dramas such as this represent an opportunity for archival outreach that cannot be recreated in the archives itself. Too often the existing user group, which is already familiar with the archives, are those that come to the exhibits, which is great, but doesn’t really bring the archives to new clients. Theatre and outreach like theatre takes the archives to the community, which often times is completely unaware that the institution even exists or often times they associate it with work and boredom of the highest degree. *Letters from Battle River* and outreach projects like it can be a model for future outreach because it entertains, informs, and doesn’t demand an awareness of archives. An awareness that, in my opinion, may not be there for a significant portion of the general public.

# SUBMISSIONS? QUESTIONS? SUGGESTIONS?

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

Archives Society of Alberta  
PO Box 4067  
South Edmonton Post Office  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T6E 4S8

Editor contact information:  
Telephone: (780) 424-2697  
Fax: (780) 425-1679  
Email: jlnordland@yahoo.ca

Individuals and institutions are encouraged to submit articles, reviews, reports, photographs or Letters to the Editor to the ASA Newsletter, Issues #2, 3 and 4. Submissions are preferred in electronic format as Word files for textual submissions, or as JPG files for graphic submissions.

Submission deadlines are:  
September 30th Issue #2 - Winter  
January 15th Issue #3 - Spring  
April 30th Issue #4 - Summer

\*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.



## *Archives Society of Alberta Membership Application 2007 - 2008*

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- Associate Institutional Member \$60.00
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- Yes, I would like to volunteer for an ASA Committee

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