

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: SHINING A UV FILTERED LIGHT ON ARCHIVES

PHILIP PYPE, PRESIDENT



One of the most challenging roles of an archivist is promoter, raising the profile of our work. This is often a slow process of relationship building, but sometimes there are opportunities for more formal discussions of archives with stakeholders who hold sway in recognition, support, and funding.

Often the first barrier is communicating what we do and why we do it. We talk to the public on the street and in the reading room, communicate with administrators, and sometimes converse with politicians. These are all stakeholders who can support us, through personal advocacy, and on occasion with funding.

Two of the fundamental goals of the Archives Society of Alberta are to provide an effective voice for archival interests in Alberta, and to promote and advance the collection, preservation and use of archival materials. The Board of the ASA, its committees, and secretariat have taken a proactive approach to raising the profile of our profession, our institutions, and our needs in preserving and providing access to the records of our society.

The ASA's work depends on funding from the Government of Alberta. In the past year, we have been fortunate to meet with Hon. Rick Wilson, Minister of Indigenous Relations, as well as most recently Hon. Tanya Fir, Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women and her associates, on October 3. Through these meetings we raise awareness of what we do, and hope our conversations will come to mind as projects are developed and budgets are announced. The work of archives is ever-present in our society, although those consuming the wealth of our holdings do not often realize how the information before them was preserved and accessed. We must celebrate and share our successes, as well as advocate for the resources needed to make all we do happen. Self-promotion is not always a comfortable activity, but a necessary one.

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The Archives Society of Alberta is supported in part by a grant from the Government of Alberta.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

RENE GEORGOPALIS

This spring and summer, I was able to offer site visits in numbers that are more typical of pre-pandemic times, which was exciting. In addition to the usual advisory work, the ASA has the following news:

ASA Staff

The ASA has some new temporary staff members who are helping us with a few projects. Reis Pouliot is our Institutional Membership Intern and she is assisting the ASA to complete institutional reviews.

Additionally, we have two staff members who will be undertaking our Supporting Indigenous Archives project. This project includes completing a Needs Assessment for Indigenous Archives as well as creating an Introduction to Indigenous Archives course. Adrienne Larocque will work on the Needs Assessment survey and Jesse Carson will work on developing the course. The ASA is very excited to get these projects started and to have extra assistance in the office so that we can better support the province's archives. Welcome to the new ASA staff!

Professional Development

In May of 2023, the ASA hosted our biannual conference. The theme for this year was Care for the People in the Archives (for more details, see the section, *ASA Conference*, below). We also offered two workshops including *Compassion Fatigue* in May and *Records Management Refresher for Archives and Museum Professionals* in September. We hope that our members were able to benefit from these opportunities.

Advocacy Work

I have attended several events recently that have given me the opportunity to advocate for archival work. This fall, I was invited to attend the Alberta Museums Association gala. The Minister was unable to attend due to illness but nonetheless, I was seated at a table with an MLA and an MP, and I was able to speak with them about the importance



of archival work in Alberta. I also attended an Arts and Culture Mixer, arranged by the Arts and Culture Critic. I met a variety of MLAs and discussed archives at this event. In early October, the ASA had a meeting with the Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, Hon. Tanya Fir, and the Deputy Minister, Kim Capstick, during which we discussed the work of the ASA and our members. We hope that the meeting will raise the profile of our profession and encourage the return of our grant program, *Access to Holdings*.

In terms of upcoming advocacy work, the ASA will be attending a Canadian Heritage presentation about the results of the Museum Policy consultations. I will share the findings from the consultations with our membership once available.

Our Advocacy and Outreach committee will be meeting this fall to further work on the Advocacy Toolkit that is currently in development. We will keep our members posted on our progress.

Upcoming projects

The ASA continues its work on our website redesign, which is nearing completion. Expect an announcement this fall/winter.

This winter we will begin planning for our 2025 conference. If you have any ideas, please contact us.

On the subject of conferences, the Association of Canadian Archivists is seeking volunteers for its host committee for the 2024 virtual conference, which is being held in Alberta. If you are interested, please contact Anna Gibson Hollow at Host.Team@archivists.ca



Keynote Presentation at ASA's 2023 Conference, *Care for the People in the Archives*.

This summer, I had an opportunity to participate in the first InterPARES Summer School organized by the InterPARES Trust AI project, the Italian Ministry of Culture - Soprintendenza archivistica e bibliografica delle Marche, the University of Macerata and the Municipality of San Benedetto del Tronto. The school started on July 7th with a Symposium on Artificial Intelligence, which included speakers such as Luciana Duranti and Muhammad Abdul-Mageed (University of British Columbia), Jim Suderman (City of Toronto), Umi Mohktar (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia), Pat Franks (San Jose State University), Sanja Seljan (University of Zagreb) and many more (the full list of presenters is available here: <https://interparestrustai.org/trust/article/inter pares-summer-school-july-2023>). Symposium presentations addressed how AI can support the ongoing availability and accessibility of trustworthy public records.

Over the following four days, over 30 archival professionals from approximately a dozen countries on four continents gathered in Palazzo Piacentini—home of the Historical Archives of the City of San Benedetto—to learn about the InterPARES research project and its findings and outcomes. We talked about the concept of digital record (Luciana Duranti), authenticity and authentication in the digital environment (Corinne Rogers), the TrustChain model and how it can support records integrity (Hrvoje Stancic), and data as records (Tracey P. Lauriault). Other topics included records in the cloud (Erik Borglund), trustworthy digital preservation (Ken Thibodeau), authenticity metadata (Joe Tennis), access and AI (Pierluigi Felicciati), and using AI for managing digital image collections (Jessica Bushey).



I was fascinated by how much the different phases of the InterPARES project have contributed to archival theory and practice as it relates to emerging technologies. There is so much more for me to learn, to test, and to implement in my own archival practice. But the Summer School was not only about the lectures and presentations. I also met many international colleagues whose different perspectives enriched our discussions. And I learned a lot of what may seem not directly applicable to my work as a digital archivist, but what made me think or smile, or made me surprised or hopeful. Ideas like: datafication is cultural and data never exist independently of ideas, practices, context, knowledges; the fact that one of the fundamental Swedish laws—the Press Act, which supports freedom of information—is over 250 years old, it was passed in 1766; that the first look-alike cloud computing was presented in 1961; that in some places, archival institutions can buy storage as “archives on tap”; that trust is essential, every step of the way, whether it’s about preservation or access, and that it can be a major obstacle or an asset; and many more. Importantly, I heard recognition from experts, especially those coming from non-archival fields, that while AI is important for archival science, archives in their turn are very important for AI. And this is what I see as another remarkable outcome of the InterPARES project: collaborating with so many scholars outside of the archival field, it is inevitably getting them to understand archives and archival work better, getting them to think about and question what a record is, and so on. I personally think it’s a huge win for all of us in the archival field to have supporters and advocates for the value of archives outside of our field.

ACA 2023: BELONGING – CONSIDERING ARCHIVAL BONDS AND DISCONNECTS

MICHAEL GOURLIE

From June 28 to July 1, 2023, archivists from across Canada and around the world gathered in historic Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island for the 48th annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA). Its theme of *Belonging - Considering Archival Bonds and Disconnects* sought to examine the ways in which people may or may not see themselves represented in archival institutions and how archivists address the underrepresentation or exclusion of certain communities.

The conference opened with a plenary by past Poet Laureate of Prince Edward Island, Julie Pellessier-Lush, describing her seven generations of Mi’kmaq ancestry. Concurrent sessions following the plenary included discussions of collaborative archival organizations designed to manage the records of religious orders that are “coming to completion,” examinations of the influence of artificial intelligence and the need to document its impact when used for archival work, and the creation of new Indigenous resources designed to address the need for reconciliation initiatives and to broaden the scope of the holdings related to underrepresented communities.

After the next day’s plenary on linked open data, further concurrent sessions examined the current issues surrounding monetary appraisal, including the development of a monetary appraisal manual for appraisers as well as condensed version for institutions seeking an appraisal. Another session discussed the new reconciliation toolkit developed by the Archives Advisory Services Working Group, which contains resources designed for non-Indigenous archival institutions seeking to work with Indigenous communities. Following the day’s sessions, the participants gathered at Beaconsfield Historic House for a picnic overlooking Charlottetown Harbour.

The final day's plenary focused on the outreach efforts of university archives to connect with student populations, using classroom activities to create a sense of belonging within the university as well as an understanding of archival work. The first concurrent session of the day included discussions of outreach activities by the National Archives of the UK with the 1921 British census; the development of Ādisōke, the new shared location for Library and Archives Canada reading rooms and the Ottawa Public Library; and new initiatives at the National Archives and Records Administration, including its new catalog and reparative description activities. The final concurrent session discussed the documentation of diaspora communities, including the vibrant Black community of Kitchener-Waterloo. The conference's closing plenary by Mary Louise McCarthy-Brant highlighted her journey through Canadian archives as a Black scholar.

After all that conferencing, of course the ACA held its annual dinner dance, interrupted only briefly by the Canada Day fireworks over Charlottetown Harbour. The archivists were soon back at it, dancing late into the night (except for this archivist, who kept up until he pulled a calf muscle trying to keep up during Boney M's *Rasputin*).

Next year, the conference will be “anchored” in Alberta but entirely virtual. Hope to see you online next year!



Beaconsfield Historic House



Charlottetown Harbour



Canada Day fireworks

ASA CONFERENCE: CARE FOR PEOPLE IN THE ARCHIVES

From May 25-27, 2023, the ASA hosted our biannual conference at the Prince of Wales Armouries in Edmonton. This year's theme was *Care for People in the Archives*. The conference was offered both virtually and in-person, allowing out-of-town delegates to participate remotely. Thanks to the flexibility of this hybrid model, we had speakers and delegates from near and far, from across Canada, the United States, Australia, South Africa, the Philippines, and Europe.

The opening reception was held at the Provincial Archives of Alberta building, and included a small reception, during which members of the archival community had the opportunity to network, and to check out the exhibit *Dried Out: Prohibition in Alberta*.

Megan Hunter (CMHA) led the online preconference workshop, addressing the issue of how compassion fatigue affects archival workers, and discussing strategies for how to mitigate its negative effects.

In her session, *Keep Running Towards the Danger: The Transformative Potential of Archival Care*, keynote speaker Jennifer Douglas (UBC) discussed the importance of what can be emotionally-taxing archival work for generating change, and provided a call to action to archivists: to continue to face up to these more difficult aspects of archival work.

Further sessions were held over Friday and Saturday (see full program here: https://archivesalberta.org/doc/ASA-Conference-program23w_film_FINAL.pdf). The final day of the conference included our Annual General Meeting, as well as an advocacy meeting, during which attendees heard about the ASA's advocacy strategy for promoting archivists and archival work in Alberta.

We are already looking forward to hosting the next ASA conference in the spring of 2025, and hope that you'll join us!



Prince of Wales Armouries building



We love Alberta archives



Lunch is served!

FEATURED: MILLET MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

TRACEY LEAVITT

1) What is your position and how long have you been working at the archives?

Our two permanent staff are Tracey Leavitt, Executive Director/Curator, since 1992, and Maggie Peterson, Assistant Curator, since 2019. While neither of us is an archivist, we have both taken the ASA's Archives Institute course. Due to a lack of funding, we don't have a permanent, designated archivist. For the last three years, we have had Young Canada Works Building Careers in Heritage interns through the Canadian Council of Archives. As we are a not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization, there are a number of volunteers who also work in the archives. There are a few that have volunteered for the Archives for over 20 years who bring a wealth of knowledge about the community and the organization. We have one volunteer who has been actively involved with the Archives since its inception 38 years ago.

2) What types of records do you acquire at your archives?

We hold a mixture of personal records, organizational records such as the Millet in Bloom fund, and some municipal records, specifically Village of Millet council minutes from 1910-1956 and descriptions up to 1999. We also hold several local newspaper collections from small newspapers run by Millet residents, and a large collection of donated obituary cards and clippings.



3) What is the physical extent of your site's holdings?

Our physical space is very limited. We have one specified archives room in our museum, with about three mobile shelves. We have approximately 48 m of records.

4) What do you think is the biggest challenge at your archives currently?

Our biggest challenge is a lack of funding. While we have never had a paid, permanent Archivist on staff, in the past we used ASA grants to hire contractors. Since ASA funding was cut in 2020, we haven't had any archives-specific funding. Instead, we rely on interns for eight-month contracts. The other four months, our permanent staff or summer staff try to fit in requests, description, digitization, and preservation whenever possible. The inconsistency of staffing makes it very difficult to complete projects and to maintain a consistent standard of work.

5) Which project at your site do you feel most proud of?

Our Women's Institute fond is currently being researched for use in a book on Women's Institutes around the country. The variety of records in this fond provides a good picture of what individual experiences were like in Women's Institutes in small, rural areas like Millet.

6) What is your favourite item in the holdings?

Our favourite item would be the *Millet in Bloom* annual recognition awards and scrap booklets, showcasing improvements through the years in the community, as well as public beautification and environmental conservation efforts in Millet.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Please send announcements of retirements, newly-hired staff, or any other personnel changes to admin@archivesalberta.org to have them included in this section.



archives

SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

The Archives Society of Alberta News is published 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. Submissions are preferred in electronic format: as Word files for textual submissions or as JPG files for graphic submissions.

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The Archives Society of Alberta is supported in part by a grant from the Government of Alberta.

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Name (Institution or Individual)

Address

City

Province

PostalCode

Telephone

Business Phone

Fax

E-mail address

Voting Delegate (Associate)

Institutional Affiliation (Individual Members)

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

Please Check

- Archives Employee. \$60.00
- Students, Volunteers, Seniors. \$30.00
- Associate Institutional Member. \$90.00
- Institutional Member (Please contact the ASA for further information)
- Yes, I would like to volunteer for an ASA Committee

Credit Card No. _____

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Cardholder name (please print) _____

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