

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

PHILIP PYPE



Municipal election day in Alberta is October 20. Local governance impacts all archival institutions to various degrees. Whatever the nature of our institutions, developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with our local governments, whether municipality, county, band or otherwise, is important. Such relationships may not be without strain, but there is much that interconnects the archive and the municipality in which it resides.

Financial support, whether direct or indirect (such as a facility agreement) is an obvious relationship many of us have with our local government. This is often not where the relationship ends.

Archives are on the front lines of privacy and access to information. As Alberta's archives learn about and adapt to Alberta's new privacy legislation, the Protection of Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act, we will be learning alongside our municipal counterparts to ensure compliance and mutual understanding. The ASA is aware of the desire to enhance understanding of this legislation, its implications, and potential effects for members. Privacy and access go hand-in-hand with another pair of terms that archives and municipalities often focus: transparency and accountability. Whether our institutions care for municipal records or not, there is a responsibility upon archivists to ensure accessibility to documents of past decisions and practices. As democracies, it is not only important to be a source of information for civic pride, but also to provide information of missteps made in the past. Discussions are more often had within provincial or federal level jurisdiction, but many decisions impacting people's well-being and rights are made at the local level.

All archives physically exist within a local jurisdiction. Whether we hold records created by our local government or not, we hold records that have an impact on our local jurisdiction. Local officials, employees and volunteers, whether direct users of the archives we operate, or indirect users who receive board packages informed by the archive, need to know where the knowledge comes from. Educating local officials about what we do, and what we can do for them is not an easy task, but one on which we must expend energy. We can ensure credit is given in reports, invite local representatives to events, and have informal conversation in the community.

Local governments have significant impacts on our everyday lives and our archives programs. I encourage everyone to be visible and be heard.

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

RENE GEORGOPALIS

After a spring of reconnecting with colleagues at ASA's AGM and the ACA conference, and after a summer of rest, I am feeling ready to take on the busy tasks that happen at ASA at this time of year. We are offering an in-person Archives Institute this fall. ASA will also be offering a workshop for managers of archives addressing the topic of Emotions in Archives. Institutional members will



receive an invitation for that workshop taking place on November 21. ASA will also have a presence at an upcoming Indigitization course which the Edmonton Heritage Council is hosting in October. We are excited to host those who are attending these course and workshop offerings.

You may have already noticed that we sent out a demographic survey, so we are working on the survey results this fall as well. Please do fill in the survey - we will keep it open until September 30.

In addition to our events and compiling data from the survey, we are conducting some institutional membership reviews. We will also be applying for a couple of grants and trying to secure funds to continue our reconciliation work. Some site visits have been planned and preparations continue for our 2026 conference which will be taking place in Canmore next spring. For the conference, you will see some new design work and swag which we have been working on to give ASA a refreshed look.

In other news, Bronwyn, who has been our Administrative Assistant since 2022, is leaving the ASA as she has a new position. We are sad to see her leave as she has been so helpful for our work.

If you have any questions about our current work and how we support the archival community, please do reach out!

ACA CONFERENCE

RENE GEORGOPALIS

This June, I attended the ACA Conference which took place June 10-12 in Ottawa at Carleton University. The conference theme was ACA at 50: Critical Reflections, Envisioning the Future. The conference started with a panel featuring some of the founders of the ACA. They spoke about the state of the archival community when ACA was formed and how much the field has changed over the past 50 years. There were presentations on community archives, and disability. My favorite session, by far, was a presentation about the 60's Scoop. A family who survived the scoop disclosed their experience of it for the first time. The presentation was moving and it was so brave of the family to share this moment at an archives conference. Our work truly has an impact on peoples' lives and



we need to remember this fact as we conduct archival work. It is important to reflect on how our work and decisions shape others' lives.

I would like to highlight some presenters from Alberta at the conference. The University of Calgary and Whyte Museum presented some of their work and I would like to note our members who presented did include Curtis Frederick, Leland Reed, and Dagny Dubois. The total attendees for the conference was 320, 23 of whom attended from Alberta. The ACA offers a conference in-person, every odd year, and virtually, every even year. Please remember that the ASA can support our individual members who wish to travel to this conference or other archival conferences.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ACA CONFERENCE

MICHAEL GOURLIE

Fifty years ago, Canadian archivists took a brave step forward in their professional identity. After being represented by the Archives Section of the Canadian Historical Society since the 1950s, the archival community formed the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) in Edmonton in 1975. To honour its golden anniversary, the ACA held an in-person conference at Carleton



University in Ottawa from June 9 to 12 with the theme “ACA at 50: Critical Reflections, Envisioning the Future.”

After the usual pre-conference professional development opportunities and the meetings of committees and special interest sections, the conference opened with a welcoming reception at 395 Wellington Street, the home of Library and Archives Canada (LAC) since the 1950s. Librarian and Archivist of Canada Leslie Weir greeted conference delegates and updated the community on the status of the new joint Ottawa Public Library-LAC facility, *Ādisōke* (“storytelling” in the Anishinābemowin Algonquin language), on nearby LeBreton Flats that will replace 395 Wellington in 2026.

After an Indigenous welcoming ceremony, the conference opened with a plenary panel discussing the formation of the ACA and reflecting on its future. ACA Fellows Ian Wilson, Marcel Caya, Marion Beyea, Jean Dryden and Fred Farrell skillfully drew on the origins of the ACA and its role in fostering the community’s sense of professional identity over time. Other concurrent sessions that day dealt with archival program for underrepresented communities, the future of archival description and finding aid databases, and the growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in archival settings.

The next day dove straight into concurrent sessions. Some of the sessions included a presentation on the recovery of Jean-Luc Godard’s History of Cinema video project in Montreal, addressing the needs of researchers with disabilities, monetary appraisal, the challenge of electronic records of cabinet ministers, and dealing with complex

processing projects such as large digital systems and architectural records. The ACA Awards lunch also took place that day, with Loryl Macdonald and Lara Wilson becoming ACA Fellows for their numerous contributions to and support of the Canadian archival community. Elder Albert McLeod received the Honorary Archivist award for his work in the development of the Two-Spirit Archives in Winnipeg.



The final day opened with a plenary by lawyer, author and journalist Mark Bourrie, who spoke from a researcher's perspective regarding underfunding of Canadian archives, delays in access requests, and other impediments to research. His presentation was later published on The Walrus website. Subsequent concurrent sessions examined reparative description, the emotional impacts of archival work, the changing role of Canadian university archival programs, and the views of emerging archivists entering the profession at this time. The conference proceedings concluded with a plenary in the form of a conversation with Leslie Weir and former US National Archivist

Colleen Shogan, touching on her recent dismissal from that position. After a closing Indigenous ceremony to conclude the conference, there was the traditional dinner dance held at the Mill Brew Pub just down the road from 395 Wellington.

Despite having just put on a thought-provoking conference, the ACA is planning its virtual conference in 2026, available to anyone with an Internet connection, as well as its next in- person conference in Winnipeg in 2027. Watch for details!

FEATURED: BOHDAN MEDWIDSKY UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES

NATALIIA YESYPENKO

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

I have been working as an Archives Assistant at the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives for several years. I began as a Research Assistant in April 2022, working with Archivist Maryna Chernyavska. When Maryna left her position, I was promoted to Archives Assistant in January 2023. Since then, I have been coordinating the work of three part-time students, focusing on arranging, describing, and digitizing materials to make our collections more accessible.



2) What types of records does your organization acquire?

The Bohdan Medwidsky Archives accepts a wide range of archival records on Ukrainian and Ukrainian Canadian folklore and cultural topics. It involves student fieldwork, ethnographic materials, family histories, oral history interviews, personal documents, and records of Ukrainian cultural organizations, like Ukrainian dance ensembles or choirs. We also actively collect born-digital records that reflect current folklore and cultural practices.

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

The Archives has two temperature- and humidity-controlled rooms, which together house approximately 200 meters of our archival records.

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

One of the biggest challenges we face today is digital preservation. Our archival backup storage, which holds approximately 145 TB of data, requires constant maintenance to operate efficiently. The growing use of AI, combined with our limited funding, makes it even more difficult to ensure that our digital data remains accessible and preserved for the future.

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

The Archives has many exciting projects, but I would like to highlight our work on the UCAMA photograph collection. UCAMA, the Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museums of Alberta, closed in 2020, and the Bohdan Medwidsky Archives inherited their extensive archival records.

FEATURED: BOHDAN MEDWIDSKY UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES (continued)

NATALIIA YESYPENKO

During the summer of 2025, with the help of a Young Canada Works student, we digitized over 2,500 photographs and created metadata for more than 1,200 of them. The full collection includes about 15,000 photographs. These images capture personal stories, family events, and community life, making them a valuable resource for ethnographic and cultural research.

Next, we plan to continue digitizing the collection and to crowdsource descriptions, in order to decipher handwritten inscriptions for the remaining photos. To support this, we are creating a secure platform where volunteers from around the world can add descriptions.

6) *What is your favorite item in the holdings?*

I have a special fondness for photographs, especially black-and-white and large panoramic ones. But working in the Archives has taught me that what matters most for me is helping visitors and witnessing the joy of their discoveries.

In February 2025, one of the researchers spent two weeks at the Archives exploring Ukrainian folk songs and ethnographic materials to prepare for a social dance workshop. She was especially interested in fieldwork interviews from the prairies of Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. On one of the tapes, she suddenly heard the voices of her parents, herself as a child, and her beloved grandparents. This discovery was both unexpected and deeply moving for her, and the fieldwork audio recording became a true treasure.

Moments like these give me inspiration and motivation in my work.



COPYRIGHT BASICS WORKSHOP

MARISSA FRASER

On May 29th, the ASA provided a full day virtual workshop on the basics of copyright. The workshop was taught by Dr. Jean Dryden and introduced Canadian Copyright Law and gave an update since the changes made in 2023.

The course provided a starting point for archivists and ASA members to feel more comfortable with understanding the various aspects of copyright law and the steps they can take to apply copyright to their holdings. The course taught about some of the aspects of archival work where copyright should be considered including when creating archival descriptions, assisting researchers, creating take-down notices or copyright statements, and making records available online. It is also useful to know where to look for information on copyright and when to get legal advice.

It is important for archives to understand what Dr. Dryden called the “bundle of rights” within copyright. Topics covered in the course included ownership rules and physical, intellectual property, economic, moral, communication and performance rights. Throughout the workshop there were polls to evaluate participants' understanding and knowledge and examples to illustrate the various rules and rights.

Overall, the workshop provided introductory knowledge to those who are just learning about copyright and a good refresher for those who needed one after the updates.



SPRING GATHERING AND AGM

BRONWYN BURLINGHAM

The ASA's annual AGM and gathering was held May 29-30 at our offices in the Prince of Wales Armouries building, in Edmonton, AB. The event involved our copyright workshop (see Marissa Fraser's write up on page 8), followed by our Institutional Forum, AGM, and AOR Workshop the next day. Awards were presented to Musée Héritage Museum for their online exhibit, St. Albert Place 40th Anniversary and Wayne Murdoch who received an Honourary Life Membership Award. As always, it was wonderful to connect with our members, and we look forward to our next opportunity to do so. Our next gathering will be our conference on May 21-23 in Canmore.



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.

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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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