



ASA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Debby Shoctor, President

The last time I wrote to you, we had just completed our successful ASA conference in Banff, which was an outstanding experience for everyone involved. After that, I travelled to Halifax to attend the ACA conference, along with many of my fellow Alberta archivists, who had a very strong contingent there, including our own Michael Gourlie, who did a fabulous job with the programming. Others in attendance included: Angela Smith, Raymond Frogner, Bryan Corbett, Linda Fraser, Tim Atherton, Renee Georgopolis, Braden Cannon, Leslie Latta-Guthrie, Garth Clarke, Ted Hart, Regina Landwehr, Lorraine Mychajlunow, Apollonia Steele, and many others.



Some of these participants were presenters as well. Just as at our conference, Dr. Daniel Caron and Terry Cook gave wonderful keynote speeches, and attendees hung on their every word.

Congratulations are in order for Terry Cook, who recently became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, one of the highest honours available to Canadians, and he is probably one of the few archivists, if not the only one, ever to have achieved such recognition. On behalf of the ASA, we congratulate Dr. Cook on this notable achievement.

The next conference I attended was the Edmonton Heritage Council Symposium

in Edmonton on the weekend of October 1-2 at the Sutton Place Hotel. This was the first Symposium put on by the fledgling EHC, with keynote speakers Linda Goyette and Edmonton's first Historian Laureate, Ken Tingley. For those archivists in the Edmonton area who did not attend, I encourage you to do so next year, as it is important that the archival voice and experience be heard at the Heritage table. Currently, Terry O'Riordan and myself sit on the board of the EHC, and try to make sure that our voice are heard loud and clear. Congratulations to Terry and his wife, Erin, on the recent birth of their daughter, Amelia.

Immediately following the Symposium, Leslie Latta-Guthrie and I were off down the road to Calgary to attend the opening lunch for Archives Week, on October 4th, at Lougheed House. Keynote speaker there was Trudy Cowan, who was the Historian consultant for Lougheed House, as well as for the Little Synagogue on the Prairie, at Heritage Park in Calgary, a project I had some involvement with last year.

Our online exhibit and calendar for Archives Week this year have as their theme "Growing up Albertan," and contain many beautiful photographs from our member Archives around the Province. If you haven't seen them, please go online

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to our website to have a look, or obtain one of the calendars from the ASA office or our member institutions.

This summer, we sadly said goodbye to long-time bookkeeper Mandi Wisheu, who was off to travel the world, but who recently decided to settle down in Kelowna for the winter. We wish her good luck, and welcome our new bookkeeper, Gemma Zarrillo, to her post. We also moved the ASA office to newer and brighter digs on 124th St. this summer, and hope you all had a chance to visit and enjoy the surroundings at our grand opening in September. If you did not, please call Michael and drop by to have a look. We are all very pleased with how they turned out.

NEW OFFICE SPACE

In June, the Archives Society moved from its old location to a new office at 10408 124 Street. Still sharing space with the Alberta Museums Association, the ASA joined with our office mates in hosting an open-house on August 26 to welcome members to our new digs.

Stop by if you get a chance!



INVITATION TO A DISASTER

FROM THE DESK OF THE ARCHIVES ADVISOR

Michael Gourlie, Executive Director/Archives Advisor



On July 28, 2010, the unthinkable happened at the Museum of the Highwood in High River. Early that morning, fire crews responded to a blaze that started outside the building at its southeast corner and quickly spread to the roof and attic. Although the fire was put out relatively quickly thanks to the quick response from the local fire department, that was only the prelude to the massive recovery operation to follow.

Although I have worked in a variety of archival settings for over twenty years, I have never been directly involved in a disaster recovery process. Disasters are rare in archives and, with some exceptions, are often on a relatively small scale, such as a broken water pipe that causes relatively minor damage. Most archival institutions have built disaster planning considerations into their facilities to minimize the impact of such calamities, but even the best plans can't anticipate everything.

After the initial story about the fire broke, I contacted Irene Kerr, the Museum's Director / Curator, to see if I could be of assistance in the recovery process. It would be an opportunity to practice my rusty recovery skills, as well to provide some support in their time of crisis. She readily agreed, and I arrived about a week after the fire had taken place, knowing that assistance would still be required at this point.

I arrived in the early afternoon at the local school where the recovery operations were taking place. As they had since the museum building was cleared, the Museum staff and a small crew of volunteers worked diligently to document the materials as they came out of

freezer trucks or other storage locations. Fortunately, only an estimated two percent of the artifacts were lost in the fire, and, because of their location on the opposite side of the building to the fire, the bulk of the archival holdings suffered only smoke damage. However, the wooden flat storage cabinets had been located in the attic of the museum and suffered smoke as well as water damage. In addition to helping out wherever a pair of hands was needed, I was asked specifically to help with the recovery of the material from the flat storage cabinets.

The next day, after a couple of nervous emails to conservator colleagues, I watched as the first drawer removed from the freezer truck began to thaw. As the ice crystals vanished, I and one of the volunteers carefully lifted a sodden blueprint from the drawer and placed it on a nearby sheet of blank newsprint. Other volunteers then placed blank newsprint on top of the blueprint to help absorb some of the water. Encouraged by our success at removing the blueprint intact, we continued this process for the next three hours, waiting only for material to thaw so it could be removed. By the end of the process, as we thankfully threw away the now-empty, waterlogged, disgusting wooden drawer, the initial material we had removed was largely dry

and seemingly none the worse for wear. The materials will not be the same as they were, but they had survived what could have been a devastating loss for High River's heritage. Although I was leaving the next day, everyone (including myself) felt more confident about dealing with the frozen materials and could continue the process. It was a unique experience, and to see the Museum staff and its volunteers come together to meet the myriad challenges of the disaster was inspiring.

The ASA Newsletter looks forward to a first-person account of the disaster and its aftermath from Irene Kerr, discussing not only the disaster but also the lessons learned as the administrative and recovery process unfolds. If you think you can help the Museum of the Highwood, please contact Irene at irenekerr@shaw.ca.

ROVING CONSERVATOR PROJECT

Mary Hocaliuk, Contract Conservator

The Archives Society of Alberta presented the roving conservator project to its institutional members for the summer of 2010. I was hired to provide conservation advice, complete conservation work and to carry out global preservation assessments for the archival collections of institutional members.

Over a four-month period, I visited 15 institutions across Alberta from Peace River to Medicine Hat. The institutions ranged in size from one room archives in small towns to institutions housing medium to large collections in larger cities or universities. The number of staff also varied from institution to institution ranging from all volunteers to places with several employees and contractors. Some of the institutions had never had a global preservation assessment while others needed an updated assessment. A handful only required some advice on how to deal with some of the conservation needs of their collections, or to have me help out with some minor conservation projects. All of the institutions I visited were welcoming and eager to have this service offered and made me feel right at home.

I found that all of the institutions had their quirks, which only enhanced my experience. Whether it was dealing with people who liked to donate taxidermy animals to the archives, having to be downwind of a pulp and paper mill, sharing a wall with a room holding a working kiln, or finding nitrate film in the basement of your building; it always added to the experience and never took away from it. From driving more north than this girl from southern Ontario has ever been, finding out that cacti grow in southern Alberta, hanging out in a quiet mountain town as elk wander by, to trying to find materials to create a humidification chamber in a small town. The excitement never stopped.

I also found that no matter how big or small an Archive is their problems and achievements are very similar in nature. Everyone needs to deal with a backlog of accessions, they are running out of storage space, or they are in need of more staff/volunteers. Institutions learn to make do with what they have and in some cases that is not much. What stood out the most was the care and dedication that everyone seems to put into their collections. Just because there was no funding for brand new shelving, a fancy scanner or even supplies; people were dedicated to preserving the documents in their collections and having the public access them.

I hope I helped the places I visited and provided them with some guidance in the conservation needs of their archival records. I know I have learned so much from these site visits, and hope that maybe this kind of project will eventually be available to all of the other institutions that were not visited this time.

CONVERGENCE: A MODEL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

H. Thomas Hickerson (closing plenary at 2010 ASA Conference)

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to address members of the Archives Society of Alberta here in Banff. The conference has been most engaging, and I am enthusiastic about addressing institutional and professional convergence and the particular focus represented by the conference title, "The War of Independence Reconsidered: Librarians and Archivists – Past, Present and Future."

At the University of Calgary, we are presently realigning our organization and establishing a framework for better realizing changing roles and responsibilities among archivists, librarians and museum curators. This convergence also incorporates the role of the University of Calgary Press, and we are currently completing construction of two new buildings designed to foster such convergence. Personally, as you will understand when I assume a somewhat biographical tact in my comments, I have spent much of my career challenging some of the traditional views previously employed in preserving the professional demarcations now being questioned.

As prelude to my own comments, I want to express my enjoyment of Terry Cook's masterful overview of the theories, practice and forces for change that have combined to create our present circumstances and contributed to his own willingness to embrace the need for substantive change. Daniel Caron provided a succinct description of the present state of Libraries and Archives Canada regarding these "winds of change" and his hopes and plans for realizing a new framework for the future.

As noted, I am an enthusiast for institutional, programmatic and professional convergence, and the goals that I envision achieving through this approach are:

- (1) To better document the full scope of the social, cultural and economic experience,

- (2) To provide enhanced services and accessibility to the wealth of our resources for the world's citizens, and
- (3) To enhance our capacity to succeed in the 21st century social, educational, political and technological environment.

While thoroughly convinced of the validity of this approach, I have come to this position through a combination of demanding expectations of our memory institutions and of judicious pragmatism. This occasion has provided me with the opportunity to examine the evolution of my present thinking, and I think that a brief description of my progression is an effective means of identifying the issues determining my conclusions. As it turns out, it has been a surprisingly consistent, and, I hope, an enlightened course.

Having done graduate work in history, I entered the archival profession at a time when there was, I believe, only one graduate program in archival management in North America, and that one was at the University of Wisconsin conducted in cooperation with the Wisconsin Historical Society. There were a growing number of institutes and summer programs, and I did attend one of these later, but the primary preparation for an archival appointment at that time was a graduate degree in history. I went to work for the State Archives and Records program in Oklahoma, and within a

couple of years became director of that division of the State Library and Archives.

My professional approach was guided by the writings of Theodore Schellenberg; Assistant Archivist of the United States, whose writings in the 1950s and 60s had replaced Sir Hilary Jenkinson's writings as the dominant archival texts of the moment. I do note that among those identified in Archivopedia as later critics of Schellenberg's appraisal theory, Canadian archival educators, Terry Cook, Luciana Duranti and Terry Eastwood, are listed. While I am unprepared to address their specific criticisms, Schellenberg introduced the concept of a second appraisal value, leading to the retention of records that exhibit an unintended new use that emerges after the record becomes inactive. And as a basis for this secondary value, in addition to evidential value, he introduces informational value, meaning the record contains a unique concentration of information about "persons, corporate bodies, things, problems [or] conditions."¹ In his *Management of Archives* (1965), Schellenberg suggested that archivists should be interested in library techniques because "librarians have provided an object lesson to them as to how to develop a methodology. They have shown archivists the way in which to bring a profession to a high degree of proficiency."²

While I am not intending to turn my talk into a discussion of archival theory, I will suggest that for me the underpinnings of the convergence that I see as the evolving paradigm for 21st century began

very early in my career. By the mid-70s, upon arriving at Cornell University, I began studying newly developing work in anthropology on ritual, myth and symbol and theorizing on how we might document societies through the records and symbols of their principal rites of passage.

Then along came automation, and I led Cornell's participation in the application of SPINDEX II, as part of a ten institution experiment with a mainframe-based indexing system. We published a report of our application of the software to generate a folder-level index to the papers of a university president.³ We detailed all of our procedures and the costs of processing and indexing and also analyzed the results. It provided what was perhaps the first realistic review of such an application, and the results were not entirely rosy. The reviewer in the *British Journal of the Society of Archivists*, congratulated us on both our clarity and our candour -- I have never been one to claim that something is easier than it is. For the purposes of today's discourse, it is interesting to note that the reviewer commented, "In view of the disturbing growth in the tendency to regard archives, libraries and museums as all being aspects of the same discipline, it is refreshing to read a statement calling attention to the essential differences."⁴

Nonetheless, even though in my *Society of American Archivists Basic Manual, Archives and Manuscripts: An Introduction to Automated Access*,⁵ I cited the inadequacies of the then "MARC Format for Manuscripts," I was already greatly concerned about archivists proceeding down paths incompatible with the evolving power of library bibliographic networks to provide broad dissemination of archival descriptive information. I was also beginning to recognize the potential for integrated discovery with published materials documenting the same themes.

Through membership in the Society of American Archivists Task Force on National Information Systems, I participated in the

creation and adoption of a new MARC Format for Archival and Manuscript Control that explicitly incorporated collective description.⁶ With archivists from Yale and Stanford Universities and the Research Libraries Group and a \$1 million grant from the United States Department of Education -- back when a million dollars was real money -- we designed enhancements to the Research Libraries Information Network specifically designed for managing archival processing and description, and we implemented it in 1984, establishing the capacity to offer networked access to archival description worldwide.⁷

While this integration brought terrific computing power into the hands of archivists, more importantly, it offered our users a kind of access that has since dramatically changed the research endeavour. I do not believe that we should acquire and preserve documentary materials unless we are willing to make every possible effort to enable and promote their broad use. It is in this context that I particularly appreciate the emphasis of librarians on public access and use.

The issue of the degree to which access and use is recognized as a core archival function has been debated in archival circles since the mid-1980s. According to both Terry Cook's article in *Archivaria* in 1990-1991 and Richard Cox's article there in 1993, Elsie Freeman's presentation at the 1982 Annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists initiated this debate.⁸ There, Freeman, then an archivist at the United States National Archives and Records Administration, expressed her concern that archivists must adopt a more client-centered approach to the administration of their holdings, stating that archivists must pay more attention to users of archives and their needs.

For Canadian archivists, this issue came to a head at the 1990 Annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists when Gabrielle Blais and David Enns argued that there was a pressing need to

make archival reference tools "respond to the needs of users rather than the expectations of archivists," concluding that "an effective reference program must be based on a solid understanding of two things: users and use."⁹ The Winter 1990-1991 issue of *Archivaria* was devoted to this issue, and included Terry Cook's article, "Viewing the World Upside Down: Reflections on the Theoretical Underpinnings of Archival Public Programming." While urging efforts to increase use of archival holdings and acknowledging that, "It is a truism that the arrangement and description of archives do not -- at least on the surface -- serve most researchers' needs," his principal concern was his opposition to the idea that user needs might influence acquisition and appraisal. This is a difference from a library approach in which acquisition decisions are explicitly driven by perceived user needs, although librarians do also seek to build collections that, over time, broadly document and reflect the human experience.¹⁰

While the rigid approach sometimes employed by archivists in the past was never to the advantage of researchers, in today's world, such distinctions between record creation, dissemination and use are no longer sharply drawn and we must employ a new prism in addressing such issues. We can best address society's needs by employing the capacities of archives, libraries, museums and other memory institutions through integrated approaches. In my experience, integrated discovery enabled the pursuit of other synergies inherent in programmatic and administrative integration. At Cornell University, in 1988, we began designing a new Special Collections Library. It was designed with the intent to combine three previously independent rare book departments with a larger university archives and manuscripts program. When the new library opened in 1992, these four previously distinct units shared a single reading room, combined reference desk, exhibition gallery, classrooms, storage area, and a unified staff. Perhaps most

importantly, we instituted an aggressive program to expand use. By making this our highest priority for all staff, we went from a limited number of class presentations annually to more than 100 in the first year and more than 120 every year thereafter, dramatically increasing collection use.

This development spoke to the advantages of unifying archives and special collections, but the next big milestone was the introduction of digitized aggregations for support of teaching and research. With an Art History professor, we built our first digital learning resource, a collection of images which we digitized. Comprised of images drawn from the History of Art and History of Architecture slide collections, from early printed books and from the University Museum supporting the study of Italian Renaissance art and architecture, she introduced it to her students in the spring of 1995. The collection of images was first compiled on a Kodak Photo CD, but then Mosaic was written, initiating broad public access to the Internet, necessitating our immediate move to the Web. Nothing has been the same since then.

On the Net, the differences between the holdings of libraries, archives and museums have forever disappeared for many of our users. And previously, many never fully understood those differences. To succeed in the terms that society expects of us today, we must perceive our tasks, our methods and our outcomes very differently. While suggesting that such change is absolutely essential to our success, I also suggest that this change is in close accord with the character of the societies that we are documenting. As Terry Cook described yesterday, the introduction of the printing press in the mid-15th century changed our professions and the conditions of production, dissemination and use of text and images in a manner never to be reversed. Why should we expect anything different of the digital revolution?

So what are we doing at the University of Calgary – Extreme Convergence? I do think that our outcomes will prove significant, but the goals that I articulated in my opening are not radically different from those that we, whether archivists or librarians, have pursued in previous decades. But we will proceed via different means and in different intellectual, professional, technological and organizational constructs.

While completion of our new Taylor Family Digital Library will enable the uniting of our archives, library, museum and University Press in a single building, our organizational realignment is based on a vision of convergence centered on the nature of the “record” and its users in the 21st century. We are moving in the right direction. Our prospects for success are good, but success will depend on the on the thinking, imagination and effort of many. That is an exciting place for each of us to be.

Notes

1. Archivopedia, accessed May 10, 2010, <http://archivopedia.com/>.
2. T.R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965), 6.
3. H. Thomas Hickerson, Joan Winters and Venetia Beale, *Spindex II at Cornell University and a Review of Archival Automation in the United States* (Ithaca, New York: Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, Cornell University Libraries, 1976).
4. H. Thomas Hickerson, Joan Winters and Venetia Beale, “Spindex II at Cornell University and a Review of Archival Automation in the United States,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 6 (1978-1981): 112 - 113.
5. H. Thomas Hickerson, *Archives & Manuscripts: An Introduction to Automated Access*, SAA Basic Manual Series (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1981), 25.
6. H. Thomas Hickerson, “Archival Information Exchange and the Role of Bibliographic Networks”, *Library Trends* 36 (1988): 554 - 557.
7. Thomas Hickerson, “Expanded Access to Archival Sources,” *The Reference Librarian* 13 (1985-6): 201 - 206.
8. Richard J. Cox, “The Concept of Public Memory and Its Impact on Archival Public Programming,” *Archivaria* 35-36 (1993): 123.
9. Terry Cook, “Viewing the World Upside Down: Reflections on the Theoretical Underpinnings of Archival Public Programming,” *Archivaria* 31-32 (1990-91): 124.
10. Cook, “Reflections,” 126 - 132.

Archivists/Librarians in the Employment Ring

Kathleen De Long on behalf of the 8Rs Research Team (originally presented at the 2010 ASA Conference)

In 2003, the 8Rs Research Team at the University of Alberta began a major research study directed to a greater understanding of several intersecting human resource challenges believed to be facing heritage institutions (libraries, archives and museums). Reviews of the literature indicated that heritage institutions had not focused much critical attention on human resource planning. Addressing these human resource issues is crucial in light of budget restrictions, rapid technological advancement, organizational restructuring, an aging workforce, and a growing trend towards the use of contingent labour.

Surveys were distributed by mail to 2,579 heritage institutions. The total heritage response rate was 32% (35% for libraries, 44% for archives, and 26% for museums.) The survey data explored variables of recruitment, retirement and succession planning, retention, professional education, continuing education, human resource practices (such as salary and benefits) and job satisfaction, and organizational and role restructuring. The survey concluded with an open ended question asking respondents to express their opinion on “the most pressing human resource challenges the sector will face over the next 5 years and why”.

Table 1
Top 5 Most Pressing Future HR Challenges

Libraries	%	Archives	%
Replacement of retiring librarians (concern over experience gap, replacing senior administration positions)	41	Finances (inability to adequately staff archives and to offer full-time, permanent work)	43
Financial concerns (salaries and ability to adequately staff libraries)	27	New technologies (pressure to adopt, implement, maintain, and train for)	23
Implementation of new technologies (pressure to adopt, implement, maintain, train for, as well as competition from the Internet)	25	Recruiting archivists with appropriate competencies	20
Recruiting librarians with the appropriate competencies	25	Adapting to continuous organizational change (e.g. accommodating increasing workloads)	20
Education and training of librarians in MLIS programs or in organizations (whose role is it? how are students being prepared for the profession?)	23	Retirements (concern over experience gap left from retirements)	16

Table 1 demonstrates that human resource concerns among Canadian libraries are distributed amongst an array of issues. Retirement issues stand out as the most frequently cited human resource challenge. Although the predicted numerical loss of librarians through retirement is perhaps not as alarming as is often presupposed, and concerns about replacing the competencies lost from retirements are not as high as might be expected, administrators feel this is one of the most pressing future concerns. The dominant concern is over the experience gap left after retirements and the need to develop the managerial and leadership qualities among current staff so that they are in a good position to fill the void created by retirements (i.e., succession management). Finances (or the lack of) arise as one of the strongest limitations to human resource development throughout the report and are viewed as a major concern by over one-quarter of library respondents. Most of the financial-related responses were expressions of concern about the inadequacy of salaries and about not having the financial ability to adequately staff libraries. Information technology has had the greatest impact on the roles of librarians, and this was expressed as a challenge by one-quarter of libraries. Continual pressure to adopt, implement, and maintain technology as well as to train in information technologies was a dominant theme within these responses. One quarter of libraries also cited recruitment as one of the most pressing future human resource challenges. While most respondents

commented on recruitment challenges when hiring for entry-level positions, many of the responses dealt with the need recruit to mid- or senior-level positions. Comments also revolved around difficulties in finding candidates with the set of skills needed by their organization (whether it be in the areas of management, leadership, systems, or traditional functions). Education, particularly how well students are being prepared for the profession, is viewed as an issue of major concern by twenty-three percent of libraries.

Human resource concerns among Canadian archives are also distributed among a variety of issues, with financial concerns standing out as the most frequently cited challenge. Finances (or the lack of) arise as a limitation to human resource development throughout the archives data and are viewed as a major challenge by over four in every ten respondents. Most of the financial-related comments were expressions of concern about not having the financial ability to adequately staff archives or having to offer contingent rather than more permanent and full-time positions. Twenty-three percent of archives cited technology-related issues as the most pressing future human resource concern. Continual pressures to adopt, implement, and maintain technology as well as to train in IT was a dominant theme within responses. Recruitment was viewed as one of the most pressing future human resource challenges by one in five archives. Most of these comments

related to difficulties in finding candidates with the set of skills needed by their organization or in finding a sufficient pool of interested candidates for new positions. One in five respondents also viewed issues relating to organizational change as important future concerns. Most of these comments highlighted the challenges associated with increasing workloads. Although the predicted numerical loss of archivists through retirement is perhaps not as alarming as is often presupposed, the results indicate that archives are still faced with the challenge of having to replace some increasingly critical competencies. While a number of respondents simply indicated retirements would be an issue, the dominant theme was one of concern over the experience gap left after retirements.

For more information about the study see:
[http://www.ls.ualberta.ca/8rs/
FutureofHeritageFinalReport.pdf](http://www.ls.ualberta.ca/8rs/FutureofHeritageFinalReport.pdf)

THE EMPLOYMENT RING IN RELATION TO ARCHIVAL FACILITIES

Leslie Latta-Guthrie, Provincial Archivist

During my presentation at the ASA 2010 biennial conference in May, I touched on the expansion of work roles and responsibilities in archival facilities over time, using the Provincial Archives of Alberta as a case in point. Then, I relayed a recent trail of discussion from around the Canadian Council of Archives' board table; that "archives are fundamental to the infrastructure necessary to support the information needs of Canadians in the 21st century" and further, "to sustain a strong Canadian archival system, a diverse professional workforce – ranging from those new to archives to trained, career specialists to aspiring managers – is required to support operations."

A look at the traditional focus of archival work...

The Provincial Archives of Alberta has a mandate to acquire, preserve and make available public and private records of enduring value and provincial significance in order to preserve the collective memory of Alberta and to contribute to the Alberta identity.



Katherine Hughes
Provincial Archives of Alberta
Photo A5398

The beginnings of the Provincial Archives date back to 1906, when the Provincial Library was established. The Library acquired archival as well as published material. There is evidence that as early as 1908, Katherine Hughes served as the Provincial Archivist under the Provincial Library structure. During the summer of 1909, Miss Hughes travelled through all parts of northern Alberta to start gathering the region's documentary

heritage; her journal of this adventure was published by the Historical Society of Alberta in 2006 under the title *In the Promised Land of Alberta's North* as edited by Ken Kaiser and Merrily Aubrey. This illustrates the "acquire" focus of traditional archival work.



Provincial Archivist Alan D. Ridge and Provincial Secretary Ambrose Holowach with unidentified woman at the opening of the Provincial Archives, 1967

Provincial Archives of Alberta Photo Pa5771.4

While its beginnings date back to 1906, the Provincial Archives of Alberta was formally created in 1962 to serve the province and its citizens as the repository of documentary heritage. Hugh Taylor was appointed Provincial Archivist in 1965, to be followed shortly thereafter by Alan Ridge. A 1967 "Survey of Archivists' Positions in Canada" recorded the Alberta Archives as having 4 full-time staff: an Archives Director (\$9420-11940. Supervisor of the Provincial Archives within the Provincial Museum and Archives Branch M.A. diploma in

archives administration and extensive related experience); Archivist 2 (\$7500-9420. In charge of the Museum and Archives library and cataloguing of the photographic collections. B.A. and related experience with a Degree in Library Science and library experience an advantage); Archivist 1 (\$5940-8220. Arranges inventories and indexes, public records and private manuscripts under direction of the Provincial Archivist. B.A., preferably in History, with some related experience an advantage); and, Archives Technician 2 (\$5460-6840. Undertakes all reprographic and photographic services, especially microfilming of collections. Grade 12, with qualifications and experience in reprography and photography). This illustrates a focus on the "acquire and preserve" of traditional archival work



PAA Staff, circa 1982

My colleague Marlena Wyman, Private Records (PR) archivist with a focus on audiovisual records, has told me that when she started working at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in 1982, the staff team

included a Provincial Archivist, Assistant Provincial Archivist, Provincial Archivist's Secretary, Office Manager, Receptionist, 4 PR Archivists (one dedicated to AV and another to Church Records) and 4 Government Records Archivists, Retrieval Aide, Librarian, Library Technician, 2 Audiovisual Technicians and a Driver/Warehouse person. Reference duties were shared by the archivists on a rotational basis. Archivists were also responsible for acquiring, arranging and describing, and processing records as well as exhibit development, outreach and special event activities. Marlena calls "the early days at the PAA the 'Hippie' era, where for example, if someone wanted to donate something we'd say 'Groovy' and they'd say 'Cool' and that was that. Often no Certificate of Gift was signed, no copyright ownership was considered, and very little provenance information was documented. In some ways this made things easier for staff (less work) but in other ways, it made it more difficult when it came to use of the documents." This illustrates the "acquire, preserve and make available" focus of traditional archival work

Matching ongoing traditional need with the realities of today...

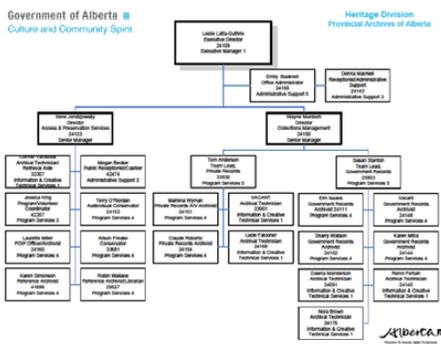
rounds of budget reductions. Some new positions have been added. Five current archival technicians all came to the Archives when other areas of government were downsizing. Reclassifications up occurred. We now have two directors rather than the one previous assistant provincial archivist, and two audiovisual technicians became conservators. More recently, two archivist positions were reclassified into team lead positions overseeing Government Records and Private Records. A FOIP Officer was added with the introduction of new legislation in the late 1990s. And, five new positions have been added since 2005 including an additional Government Records Archivist, a retrieval aide, an additional reference archivist, a public receptionist and a program/volunteer coordinator. Shadow staff members – who are funded through a variety of means including Memorandums of Understanding with other organizations – do not show up on our organization chart. These include a Business Manager (Archives Store & Client Services), Photographic Technician, Private Records Archival Technician, Photograph and Special Projects Archivist, Audiovisual Media Technician and Francophone Archivist. The Provincial Archives also benefits from the contributions of about 50 volunteers annually.

realm – are assisting to meet this critical sustainability need.

Employment and human resources issues facing archival institutions...

Recent discussion¹ around the Canadian Council of Archives' (CCA) board table has noted that a multifaceted national labour force development strategy is required to ensure the supply of well-educated, well-trained archivists, archival technicians and associated professionals in order to meet Canada's documentary heritage needs in the early decades of the 21st century. Developing such a strategy should be identified within a current national archival needs assessment study; the last study was completed in 1989.

Several issues exist. Over the next several years, the supply of archivists and related professional positions will be insufficient to meet the short- and long-term needs of Canada's archives. Competencies have been set out by the Alliance of Librarians, Archivists and Records Management that provide a basic framework for some workers in the heritage sector; however, since its formulation almost a decade ago, the archival profession has continued to evolve and additional changes are anticipated in the decade to come that will need to be met. And, there are currently overlap and gaps in the professional development and training opportunities available to Canada's archival labour force.



The current Provincial Archives of Alberta organization chart (above) shows that our permanent staff size has grown and expanded beyond the traditional archival work focus. Some of the positions from 1982 noted earlier were lost during earlier

Using the Provincial Archives of Alberta, I have tried to illustrate the fact that traditional archival work roles and responsibilities have expanded to better meet the "acquire, preserve and make available" needs in the current environment. It is becoming imperative for archives to burst out of their treasure chests and make their role as keepers of invaluable documentary heritage assets understood by the masses. To do so, it is my opinion that we need to make heartfelt, personal connections that can easily be understood by the majority of Albertans. The expanded roles and responsibilities – also know as new positions outside the traditional archival

¹ The following content is taken directly from the draft CCA "Concept Statement: Creating a National Labour Force Development Strategy for the Canadian Archival System."

The current environment includes Canada's unique geographic and linguistic complexity, and the existence of three generally distinct human resource market segments within the Canadian archival community. The first includes those new to archives with no or basic introductory training received through provincial/territorial council archival association programs. The second segment includes professionally trained, career archivists, archival technicians and associated professionals working in archives requiring ongoing post appointment training. They generally work full-time in continuing positions and are employed for the most part by medium- and large-sized institutions, most of which are publicly funded. And the third includes those who aspire to move into executive leadership and management roles. While recognizing that there are local variations and exceptions to these broad categorizations, in general terms this environment is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. As a result, any national strategy and action plan must consider these segments.

The operational needs of archives require an array of competencies including ones that complement the work of the archivist and or archives technician. They include but are not limited to: facilities management, marketing and communication, project management, retail services, IT/data management, human resource management, monetary appraisal, financial management, and conservation and restoration.

Factors important to a national strategy development process include: recruitment into the profession sector/institutions; retention through continuing education development of those in practice; retention of those who, while not nearing retirement, may be considering leaving the profession; renewal of the part-time/volunteer individuals who staff many of Canada's archives as well as retiring professional archivists; succession planning; promotion and compensation within the profession; corporate restructuring and economic factors; and cross training of related disciplines and recruitment of associated professionals with diverse knowledge and occupational skills.

In order to move these ideas forward during the fall of 2010, the CCA board plans to consult with Library and Archives Canada, Provincial Territorial Councils, the Council of Provincial and Territorial Archivists, and the Bureau canadien des archivistes/Bureau of Canadian Archivists, Association des archivistes du Quebec and Association of Canadian Archivists. Next steps will include the development of a project governance framework, identification of expectations and desired outcomes, and identification of stakeholders and partners. Updates will be shared with the full archival community.

And, a final comment...

The September/October 2009 issue of the Society of American Archivist's Archival Outlook included an article on "The Business of Archives: Managing Time, People and Collections in the 21st Century." The article's final thoughts provide a relevant ending here: "In these difficult times, it can be frustrating to postpone the implementation of new technologies, to cancel exciting outreach programs, and to forego purchasing much-needed supplies, all while facing overwhelming backlogs, reductions in staffing, and rapidly disappearing budgets. Of course, these very frustrations provide...an opportunity to re-evaluate business-as-usual in...archives and make the changes necessary to get the most out of... time, staff, patrons, and collections.... there are many ways to sustain archives through tough economic times, some more beneficial to the archives' visibility and longevity than others. Discerning...true needs and managing...resources to realize those needs is more important than ever. By being more effective managers of time, people, and collections,...can continue to experience the simple, yet incredibly rewarding, daily joy that comes from connecting users to collections."

LITTLE BROTHER, BIG FAMILY

THE ESPLANADE ARCHIVES IN A MULTI-FUNCTION FACILITY

Philip Pype, Archivist

In 2005, the Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat, opened its doors, to much acclaim, and some derision. This new facility included an archives, museum, and art gallery, all of whom had long existed as the Medicine Hat Museum and Art Gallery (Archives were not formally recognized in the institutional title), and a performing arts theatre. Thus, the Esplanade Archives came to be.

The Archives faced many challenges moving into this new facility, resulting from being the smallest (in terms of budget and square footage) sibling in a family with our share of dysfunction.

1. Our facility cost \$40+ million, but the archives takes up only 5% of the floor space and 10% of the operating costs. Yet we face the “waste of money” syndrome.
2. Archives will almost never be the “sexy” and most anticipated part of a building. We have a great space, but at the back of the building. We also were left out of most of the “hype” as the facility was developed.
3. Architects specialize, hired for what is perceived to be the most complicated or aesthetic need of a building. In our case, this was the theatre, with much different technical requirements than archives.
4. More stakeholders means more voices at the table. This may mean less opportunity to participate in design, and needs being overlooked in the final plans.

5. Economy of amalgamation can have long-term implications. We share a storage facility, crate storage, conservation lab, framing room and quarantine with the Museum and Art Gallery. Only due to amicable personalities have stresses not overwhelmed us.

Also, by moving into this multi-purpose facility, we have been challenged by various perceptions.

1. Archives are a sub-department of the Museum.
The Esplanade Archives evolved out of a museum program, but have been working long and hard to be seen as our own entity while continuing to work closely with the museum.
2. Archives are passive.
We have stepped up and made ourselves noticed, developing exhibitions, programming, and creating small publications. I caution however, that these activities take away from holdings development.

3. Culture should pay for itself in hard dollars.
Be aware of the business models of the functions sharing your facility. If there is one big revenue generator in the building, there may be an assumption that the archives will do likewise.

4. If you throw a bunch of ‘culture’ together, the whole will automatically flourish into something much greater than the sum of the parts.
Partnership is wonderful, but cultural groups have varying purpose and needs, and must be respected for those differences.

This transition has been difficult but fruitful for the Archives. In the end we have come out ahead, although not the same as an ideal world. Yet, when we get frustrated, we often have to remind ourselves how good we have it. We have a highly accessible reading room and we have seen our usage almost triple since the move. We have also been able to present and make our holdings accessible in new ways. There is room for holdings growth, and the Esplanade Archives is getting to be known in Medicine Hat and beyond.

BLACK MONDAY

Meghan Power, Archivist

It was just like any other Monday. I initiated my usual Monday back-up before heading home. It was a simple black hard drive that gave a comforting blue glow and quietly purred. The hard drive was for storing my tiffs and born digital records and while it wasn't the ideal solution, it was an alternative to the exponentially growing cost of CD-Rs with their looming burning schedules and their flagrant claim to survive hundreds of years.

It was part of a new policy, one that was going to update the procedure for storage and the so-called preservation of digital records. While no one wants to claim to be able to preserve these ethereal files, I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted to do. I wanted to stop permanently storing on discs and begin storing with a redundant array of inexpensive disks or perhaps a DROBO -- a crazy futuristic data robot that I had heard Terry O'Riordan mention once or twice at a digitization program workshop. Both systems sounded ideal, but expensive and being on a small budget, I was weighing my options carefully. In the meantime, I expected the hard drive to suffice.

Back to that fateful Monday – the next morning I came into work and turned on the computer and went to access the hard drive only to find its icon conspicuously missing from my options – my heart skipped a beat -- I looked over at it and saw there was no blue glow and no comforting purr – my heart skipped another beat - all of the sudden I began to feel very ill and dizzy. It couldn't be – I flipped the device over – as if I thought I would be able to tell something about it by looking at its underbelly. As I flipped the power switch, a spark flew out of the bottom – You would think that my heart skipped another couple of beats -- but by this point, I was numb, barely coming to terms with the year of work that was on the hard drive and that I had neglected to burn to CD – along with the eight plus years of digitization projects that were now stuck inside the lifeless black box – panic – fear – and possibly a tear.

I immediately began to scan the internet for data recovery services. There are tons of them. Some of their websites looked sketchy while others portrayed neon lined labs and talked about forensic data recovery – I imagined Grissom and the CSI gang furiously working to recover my precious data at a cost of up to \$5000 dollars! – What the #%\$@! – now I know that most archivists are quiet subdued and refined people and I try really hard to be subdued and refined – but that morning the Jasper archives reverberated with some very un-RAD descriptives.

Totally out of my element, I immediately fired off an urgent email to Terry O'Riordan at the Provincial Archives. I was confident that as audio visual conservator he would be able to give me some direction. Terry immediately got back to me and told me not to worry, and not to blame myself that in the world of digital storage it is not a question of if, but a question of when. I have taken this phrase as my new digital mantra.

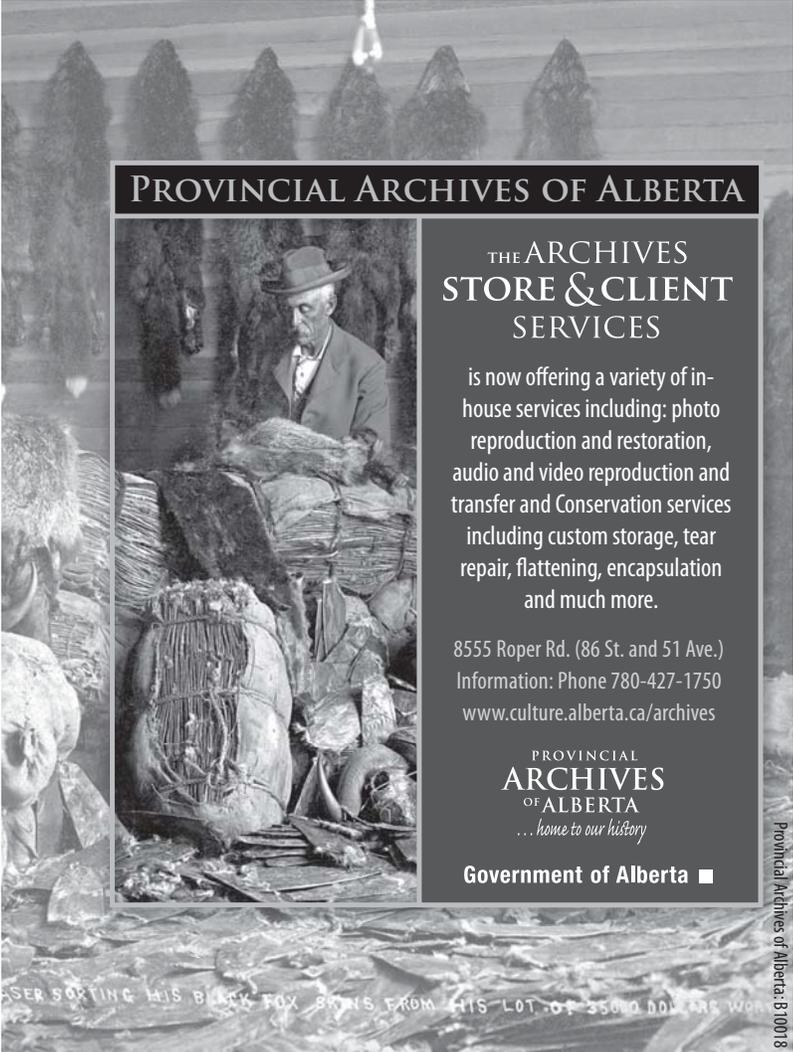
Terry gave me the name of a retailer that an IT person recommended. I called the retailer and while they did not offer data recovery services, they recommended that I call Catalyst Network Solutions. With the support of my boss, museum director Karen Byers, and the Board, I reluctantly wrapped up the hard drive and sent it to Edmonton. Even though I knew the hard drive was as good as dead – I cried as I kissed it good-bye and sent it on its way, like a mother sending her child on a long journey for the first time – luckily Colleen

the post office attendant knew who I was and that I work in a basement with no windows and may possibly be suffering from a lack of oxygen. She smiled and assured me that it would be okay.

After a few weeks of waiting, and waiting, I finally received word that the data had been recovered and there had not been a need for forensic methods. Well, I can only say it was the highlight of my summer (it has not been a very good summer up here). Catalyst Network Systems offers a service where I can view the information that recovered and select which files that I would like to retrieve. This meant that I did not have to pay to retrieve files that were not necessary, like the files and folders that were generated by the hard drive's pesky software.

A few days later I received my precious files on a brand new hard drive, supplied by Catalyst Network Solutions. The total cost for my situation (and keep in mind the price varies depending on the type of recovery, was just under \$350 – but it was worth it. The people at Catalyst were reassuring and understanding and most important up front about costs and worst case scenarios. Needless to say, I am done with your average hard drives. After much thought and discussion, I received permission from my board to purchase a more advanced system for live storage.

The standard RAID systems are still a little out of my league, so I am going to try the DROBO, which seems like the perfect archive robot. I can access my files and the data is made redundant on multiple drives. Of course, I am not putting all my hopes and dreams into the DROBO and there is always the possibility for any system to fail, but my odds are better with a multi-drive system and just in case and off the record – I will be burning some of my files to disc – as an added form of redundancy – not preservation (just don't tell Mary the conservator). Thanks to Terry at the Provincial Archives and Catalyst Network Solutions I am no longer afraid -- and if I can offer any advice it would be to take a deep breath and remember, it's not a question of if -- it is a question of when, and in the tradition of that old egg and basket proverb -- don't store all your tiffs on one drive.



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...SER SORTING HIS BLACK FOX SKINS FROM HIS LOT OF 3500 HOLLAND W...

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Michael Payne, City Archivist and Supervisor of Educational Experiences, has retired from the City of Edmonton. He joined the City four years ago after many years with the Government of Alberta, and, among other accomplishments, saw the City Archives through a major retrofit of the Prince of Wales Armouries. He is leaving Edmonton to join his family in Ottawa. Best wishes Michael!

The City of Edmonton Archives is pleased to announce that Kathryn Ivany has accepted the position of City Archivist and Supervisor, Educational Experiences. Previously an archivist at the City Archives, Kathryn brings to her new position an extensive amount of experience. Congratulations Kathryn!

Karly Sawatzky was recently appointed the new archivist for SAIT Polytechnic. Congratulations Karly!

Raymond Frogner, Associate Archivist (Private Records) at the University of Alberta, was inducted into the Nanaimo Sports Hall of Fame along with his teammates from the 1983 Malaspina Mariners men's soccer team. Raymond and his team won the Canadian Colleges' Athletics Association national championship after going undefeated over 18 games.

John Cole, the Interim Director of Archives & Special Collections, at the University of Calgary, has retired.

Elizabeth Denham, formerly of the City of Calgary Archives and the Calgary Health Region Archives, has been appointed Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia in May 2010, having previously served as the Assistant Privacy Commissioner for Canada from 2007-2010.

archives

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 #1, 2, and 3. Submissions are preferred in electronic format as Word files for textual submissions, or as JPG files for graphic submissions.

Please note:

Issue #4 is reserved for Annual Reports of the Society and its committees.

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