

Friends of the PAA Newsletter

Fall 2016

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www.friendspaa.ca

FRIENDS OF THE PROVINCIAL
ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA SOCIETY
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Mission:

To help make the historical records of Alberta more accessible by promoting and supporting the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Staff Update

Kaslyne O'Connor is the Conservation Intern hired through the Young Canada Works program as of July 11, 2016. Kaslyne's focus is the conservation and preservation of paper objects and photographic negatives in the collection. She is also undertaking treatment projects to ensure the continued accessibility of the PAA collection for future exhibition and research interests.

Message from the President

There are many reasons to love archives and this issue of the Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta newsletter is all about what makes people love archives. The secrets held in the PAA records and the secrets of what is behind the scenes keep some people coming back day after day and year after year. For others it is the people who make the PAA special; from the archivist who helps you find that key document to the technicians who make the visual and audio holdings accessible. Then there is the heritage held inside the archives that can teach us about the tangible and intangibles of the past, whether that is finding out where our ancestors first settled or getting the sense of someone's personality through a letter or diary. Finally, the PAA is forward thinking and innovative as the staff continually seek out new acquisitions to preserve the story of Alberta and Albertans, while keeping up with technology to make the records more accessible to everyone.

As you explore the newsletter think about what you love about archives. Stay posted to the PAA Facebook page and the FPAAS Twitter feed during Archives Week 2016 (October 1-7) for daily features about the PAA and the chance to share with us what you love about archives.

Lauren Wheeler, FPAAS President

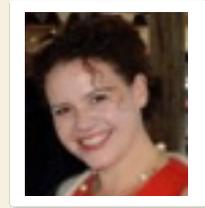


*Albert Women
Attending Parliament
During Passage of
Equal Suffrage Bill,
Edmonton, March 1,
1916*

*Photo Number:
PR2000.0949*

Meet the FPAAS Board

Lauren Wheeler, President "I love any opportunity to go into the stacks and storage areas of an archive and the tours the PAA gives of the back rooms are fantastic. It is like entering a secret world with something new to discover around every corner."



Richard Bee, Interim Vice-President "The archives for me are an opportunity to get in touch with my past. The collections, the staff, the facility; all of these play a significant role in creating an ecosystem that allows history to become tangible for us in the present."

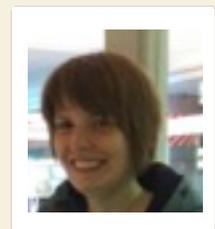
Karen Hesson, Treasurer "My favourite thing about the PAA is that the staff are so knowledgeable, helpful and friendly and they are continually finding new and interesting ways to showcase the hidden gems of Alberta's documentary heritage, through archival film presentations, lectures and workshops, travelling displays, social media, and so much more."

Paul Gifford, Secretary "I appreciate the breadth of information contained within the stacks, which provides endless entry points into Alberta's history for local and travelling scholars alike."



Linda Borys, Director-at-Large "My favourite thing about the PAA is the history that is stored within its walls just waiting to be discovered. I have been with the board for 8 years and appreciate the value of the PAA and the services it provides to Alberta and Canadian citizens."

Laura Gerlitz, Director-at-Large "I love being able to stumble upon unique and unusual things housed within the archives. The PAA is so content-rich that it's always fascinating to hear stories researchers have about their experiences with the materials."



Eileen Rose, Director-at-Large "I love hearing about outreach activities at the PAA. I think the staff at the PAA find meaningful ways to connect the treasures found at the archives with the general public."

Judy Kovacs, Director-at-Large "My favourite things about the PAA are: it's filled with people who love history, it's full of interesting information, and did I mention the free parking?!"

A Glimpse at the Technical Side of Archival Photography

By Yesan Ham, Photographic Technician

As Photographic Technician at the PAA, I am responsible for digitizing and reproducing photographs and text documents for preservation and access purposes. When scanning an item for preservation, I follow PAA guidelines and save digital copies in a TIFF format. A TIFF file is the standard format for printing and publishing because it preserves image quality and allows for better editing. A JPEG file, on the other hand, is the standard format for displaying images on the internet. JPEGs reduce file sizes through lossy compression, meaning some information is discarded and resolution is reduced. Resolution refers to the amount of detail or information in an image. Resolution is the amount of pixels in a digital image or the amount of dots in a printed image. Higher resolution results in smaller, but more, pixels or dots in an image.

The types of photo records in the PAA's collection include glass negatives, acetate negatives, nitrate negatives, slides, prints, and positive film. The collection is made up of black & white and colour photographs that come in a variety of sizes such as 35mm, medium format, 4x5, 5x7, etc. Our photo records are often original negatives but sometimes they are reproductions of the original, meaning they may be prints, duplicate negatives or copy negatives.

When I digitize items from the PAA's collection, I generally do not retouch or restore them. The scratches, emulsion damage and any writing on the source item are left on the digital scan as they are now a part of the history of the photo. I do, however, adjust the contrast, colour balance and levels of the image to enhance the details and create a visually pleasing photograph.

Due to the age of our records, many challenges occur when scanning. Dust, fingerprints, mould, negative warping, Newton's rings and silvering of emulsion are common issues with aging photographs. Wearing gloves prevents fingerprints; using a gentle air blower removes dust; scanning with the emulsion side down or using negative holders reduces the likelihood of Newton's rings; and, cleaning the scanners regularly helps to prevent the spread of mould. In some cases, copy photography is a better option than scanning; for instance, when an item is too delicate, too large, oddly shaped or too heavy.

After an item is scanned or photographed, it will usually require digital processing. This involves adjusting the colour balance, shadows, midtones and highlights in the image. In archival photography, it is ideal to process the image so that as much detail and information is revealed. However, it is still important to create a result that is appealing to look at.

Although I don't usually retouch photos in our collection, the PAA's Archives Service Centre offers digital retouching and restoration services to clients who provide their own photos or documents. Retouching includes removing blemishes and minor scratches. Restoration includes repairing major damage, such as missing pieces and large creases. Restoration and retouching are time consuming activities and require lots of patience and artistic skill.

Colour management is an important component in digitization and reproduction. It involves setting up controlled conversions between devices, such as scanners, monitors and printers so that the resulting colour representations are matched. This is done through the calibration of devices and creation of profiles. Colour management can be complex and difficult to achieve.

The technical side of archival photography is sometimes complicated and can take a long time to figure out. Processing photos requires a lot of practice. Understanding the scanning, printing and photography equipment is crucial as there are many technical decisions to consider at various points during the workflow. In my role as Photo Technician, I am always learning better and more efficient ways of doing my job. Through observation, experimentation and research the processes at the PAA will continue to improve.

Archives Society of Alberta 2017 Calendar

The Archives Society of Alberta's (ASA) 2017 calendar is themed "Coming to Alberta", to tie into the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation. Archival institutions from across Alberta submitted photographs of the people who make up Alberta and the ASA's Communications Committee tried to represent as many different cultural groups as possible (the calendar only has 12 months!). The calendar will be released during Archives Week which is October 1-7, 2016. Watch for details about the ASA's Archives Week launch event.



Dominion day Parade, July 1, 1930
Photo Number: BA213



Doukhobor women pulling plow, ca. 1900
Photo Number: P452

Fact or Fiction?

By Glynys Hohmann, Team Lead of Government Records

Everything at the PAA is publicly available.

In keeping with the provisions of Alberta's *Historical Resources Act* and *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*, one of the primary purposes of the PAA is to provide access to the records of ongoing value that it preserves. The PAA's holdings include the official records of the Government of Alberta as well as records created by the province's citizens, voluntary organizations, businesses and families.

Legislation governs how government records are accessed. All government records that were received by the PAA after October 1, 1995 are automatically subject to the *FOIP Act* and records received prior to 1995 that had access conditions placed on them and were not routinely available as of October 1, 1995 are also subject to the *FOIP Act*. Other legislation, such as the *Vital Statistics Act*, may also affect access.

The PAA's FOIP officer/archivist reviews all requests from the public for access to records held by the PAA to which FOIP provisions or other legislation applies.

Vital Statistics Records at the PAA

By Lauren Maclean, Government Records Archivist

Every birth, death, and marriage that occurs in Alberta is required to be registered with the Vital Statistics Office. Vital statistics are an important indicator of a society; they demonstrate its health and growth, record the number of babies born, the number of individuals dying, as well as how they died. Vital statistics records are an unparalleled source of genealogical information for Albertans – or anyone with roots in Alberta – who are interested in learning more about their family’s history.

In keeping with the Vital Statistics Act, the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) makes available all “historical” vital statistics records; that is, any death record when 50 years have passed since the date of death, any stillbirth record when 75 years have passed since the date of the stillbirth, any marriage record when 75 years have passed since the date of marriage, and any birth record when 120 years have passed since the date of birth or 50 years have passed since the date of death.

Vital statistics records at the PAA include registers, indexes to an event, and registrations. The most requested records are registrations, which are long form documents that provide detailed information about vital events. Birth registrations, for instance, indicate a person's full name, their parents’ names, date of birth, and where they were born; marriage registrations indicate where and when the marriage took place, the bride’s maiden name, and the bride and groom’s birthplaces, and even whether the bride and groom were literate; and death registrations specify where, when, and how a person died.

In early fall of 2016, all “historical” vital statistics records were transferred from the Vital Statistics Office to the Provincial Archives. As a result, the nature of vital statistics requests at the PAA have changed drastically as clients shifted their demand for vital statistics records from the registers (a brief listing of a vital statistics event) to the registration record.

This has meant a very busy year for vital statistics at the PAA. PAA staff currently research, respond, and retrieve more than 250 vital statistics records every month. To ensure more efficient access to these records, PAA staff have re-boxed and begun to process these records. Volunteers are also helping the PAA to make these records better available by helping to create nominal listings of every registration that has occurred and to re-house the registrations into archival quality folders. In addition, to provide greater access for the public to these records vital statistics indexes, which are the finding aids for registrations, they have been digitized and are being prepared to go on the PAA website so researchers can search for registration numbers right from their home.

Stay tuned for more exciting developments in the PAA vital statistics program by visiting <http://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/how-to/search-your-genealogy.aspx> or by contacting us at paa@gov.ab.ca.





Thompson Butcher Shop, Camrose Alberta

Photo Number: A2448



Herding Pigs, Edmonton, Alberta (19-)

Photo Number: A4760

MEAT IN ALBERTA

"It's interesting to see the sale of meat in Alberta throughout the decades. Check out these photos from around the province that date back to 1913!"

#YEGHERITAGE

"Although the historic Transit Hotel in Edmonton remains visually unchanged, here's a scene you likely won't see today!"

"Herding Pigs, Edmonton, Alberta: (19-) Photo Number: A4760"

APRIL 19TH

"April 19, 2016 - Today we celebrate 100 years of suffrage in Alberta!"

On February 25, 1916, Alberta Premier Arthur Sifton introduced a bill declaring Alberta's women's equality and on April 19, 1916, the bill was passed, making Alberta the third Canadian province to grant women the vote. Prior to this, a petition calling for the political equality of women was presented to the Premier. It bore a staggering 40,000 signatures! The Provincial Archives of Alberta still has the historic petition. You can see its tremendous bulk in this photo."



*A glimpse of the
40,000 signatures
presented to Premier
Arthur Sifton calling for
political equality for
women.*

Social Media

The Provincial Archives of Alberta Facebook Page is a great place to find photographs, audio, and video treasures from the collection.

Here are a few of the posts that got the most attention this year.

Reading Room Memorials

The PAA will be posting four memorial plaques to recognize former Provincial Archivists. In honour of these commemorations, we are featuring each former Provincial Archivist in the FPAAS newsletter. In this issue, we present Katherine A. Hughes, the first Provincial Archivist.

Born in Prince Edward Island in 1874, Katherine Hughes received her teacher's license in 1892, teaching for several years in Quebec before becoming a journalist and author. She worked for the Montreal Press from 1903-1906 and was one of the founding members of the Canadian Women's Press Club in 1904. She moved to Edmonton in 1906 to work for the Edmonton Bulletin, which included reporting on the day's activities in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

In 1908, she was appointed Alberta's first Provincial Archivist, creating the Bureau of Archives within the Legislative Library. During her tenure, she researched local place names and traveled to the Peace River region to collect documents and stories from early settlers. Her appointment as Provincial Archivist was brief, ending with her secondment in 1910 to serve as private secretary to Premier Arthur Sifton.

Outside of public service, she remained active as an author and community organizer. In 1911, she wrote a biography of Albert Lacombe, *Father Lacombe: The Black-Robe Voyageur*. In 1912, she was a founding member of the Catholic Women's League of Edmonton, an organization devoted to helping newly arrived Catholic immigrants.

In 1913, she was transferred to London to serve as the secretary to Alberta's first Agent-General. Inspired by the Irish political and cultural leaders she met in London, she resigned in 1915 to pursue her career as an author as well as promote Irish cultural renewal and a separate Irish state.

She died in New York City in 1925.



Katherine Hughes 1874 - 1925

Photo Number: A5398

Box by Box: A Decade of Valuable Volunteer Contributions

By Glynys Hohmann, Team Lead Of Government Records



On July 12, 2016, the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) celebrated the contributions made by its volunteers in the processing of the court records that it holds. The PAA holds over 5 kilometres of court records, some of which pre-date the founding of the Province of Alberta. These records include civil, criminal, divorce, probates and other proceedings that made their way through Alberta's courts. They highlight the history of women, indigenous peoples, business and settlement in Alberta and help people to gain a better understanding of their past and their family's past. The stories found in these records are intimate and personal. Both divorce and probates include records of the well-known and the not so well-known Albertans, demonstrating that no one was above divorce or death for

that matter. The probate records, for instance, include the will of Emily Murphy as well as the will of Alexander Petrie, a miner who lost his life in the Hillcrest Mining Disaster of 1914. The records also demonstrate how court documents were made accessible for people with disabilities. At least one will in the PAA's holdings was written in braille. Others are written in the language of the deceased person.

Throughout their volunteer careers, which for many spans over a decade, the court record volunteers have focused their efforts on preserving these records and making the divorce and probate files better available for the public. By rehousing these records, the court record volunteers help to ensure the permanent preservation of these records of enduring value while the creation of detailed nominal file lists aid in making them more accessible to researchers. The projects undertaken by the court records volunteers demonstrate their dedication. **In total, over 440 metres (1320 ARC boxes) of these records have been processed and file listed by the volunteers. Working on extents such as this takes time - in fact years - to complete.** However, the court records volunteers have not been daunted and have helped the PAA considerably through their perseverance. Notable accessions completed by the volunteers includes 70 metres (210 boxes) of probate records, dating from 1907-1962, from the Stettler / Red Deer Judicial Districts and 32 metres (96 boxes) of probate records, dating from 1897-1975, from the Macleod Judicial District. One of the most recent projects completed wrapped up after 10 years of work and saw nearly 220 metres (660 boxes) of textual records processed and file listed. The records, probate files from the Judicial Districts of Edmonton, Northwest Territories and Athabasca, were dated from 1898 to 1969. The work that the court record volunteers have undertaken and continue to work on is greatly appreciated by the PAA.

Curious about the PAA's holdings of court records? Explore these records further by visiting the PAA's on-line exhibit **Law and Original Order** at: <http://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/how-to/explore-learning-and-education/discovering-albertas-court-records/Default.aspx>

What's New in Collections Management

By Tom Anderson, Private Records Team Lead

On behalf of the Collections Management staff, I am pleased to announce that a number of donations have been made available over the past year. These include government records, family, individual and business records, records of community groups and province-wide associations. Notable government records of provincial interest and significance include the case files of the Judicial Districts of Macleod and the district of Red Deer, tracing the history of those areas from the 1880s.

Private records recently acquired or made available include the editorial cartoons of Edmontonian Malcolm Mayes, administrative records of the Alberta Land Surveyors Association, administrative and operational records of the French-Canadian Association of Alberta and the Federation of Francophone Parents of Alberta, audiovisual records of Hindu Society of Alberta events, records of the Alberta Women's Institute, the Catholic Women's League and many other groups representing all areas of our province.

One prominent donation available for use by researchers is from the Alberta Ballet Company. Donated to the PAA in 2012, these nearly 24 metres of administrative and operational records document the whole of the organizations development, and touch on a number of subjects relevant to art in the province: the history of Alberta Ballet (including the merger with Calgary City Ballet and that organization's history), the influence of artistic directors, ballet education & training, prominent productions, and the documentation of performing arts and intangible activities.

As well, the PAA will host a related gallery exhibit! *Alberta Ballet & the Documentation of Performance* will mark the 50th anniversary of Alberta Ballet, and will display records from PAA holdings that document the entirety of the company's history including posters, programs, audiovisual recordings of performances, costume sketches, set designs, photographs, and textual records. The exhibit will run from September 1 to December 17, 2016.



Photo Number: PR2012.0781.1192.0050.0001

Services at the PAA

Did you know that the Provincial Archives of Alberta offers facility tours? Learn about the PAA's work in acquiring, preserving and making available records of ongoing value. If you are interested in a tour, please contact PAA@gov.ab.ca to make arrangements.



The Archives Store

The Archives Store is here to help you preserve your family history.

We sell archival and museum-quality preservation supplies to protect your records. A variety of in-house services including photo reproduction, digital restoration, audio and video reproduction and transfer are available and completed by trained technicians. If you have any damaged records our conservator is able to repair and stabilize most photos and paper documents.

For more information, go to <http://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/shop/Default.aspx> or call 780-415-4867.