

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

PROVINCIAL
ARCHIVES
OF ALBERTA

GENERATION TO

ANOTHER

**Your
Archives,
Your
Project.**

Alberta 

Introduction: How the Provincial Archives Can Help

You work with records every day. Action requests, blueprints, case files for grants and subsidies, databases, emails, photographs, policies and procedures, position papers, presentations, reports – records and information are the lifeblood of the Government. Whether you create or receive them, records provide evidence of your work, and also ensure the accountability of the Government of Alberta (GoA) for the actions it takes.

But what happens to the records that you create and receive? And what if, for some reason, you require information again from a particular file many years after it was originally created, perhaps even from files created by your predecessors?

Government records identified as having ongoing value are preserved by the Provincial Archives of Alberta. The Archives preserves and makes available private and government records of all media related to the province, and serves as the permanent archival repository of the Government of Alberta.

This booklet illuminates how some of the work of the Archives supports your day to day activities and the work of the Government. Each of the stories in this booklet illustrates how archival records supported a Government related initiative more substantive than a typical reference and information request. The highlighted stories discuss preservation advice, access to records, boilers, Indigenous peoples, Gainers Ltd – the meat packing plant, photographs, and taxation.

Moreover, the stories demonstrate the importance of the Government's archival program. As the accumulated documentary evidence of the lives and activities of individuals, businesses, associations and governments, archival records contribute to the collective memory and sense of the Alberta identity for present and future generations. Without them, we would have no record of our past, no understanding of our present and no foundation for our future.

We hope the stories in this booklet are interesting in and of themselves but you may also want to consider their relevance to your own ministry activities. You may also want to consider what the Provincial Archives has to offer that may find a home in your history.

- Leslie Latta, Provincial Archivist of Alberta

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1967 - 2017



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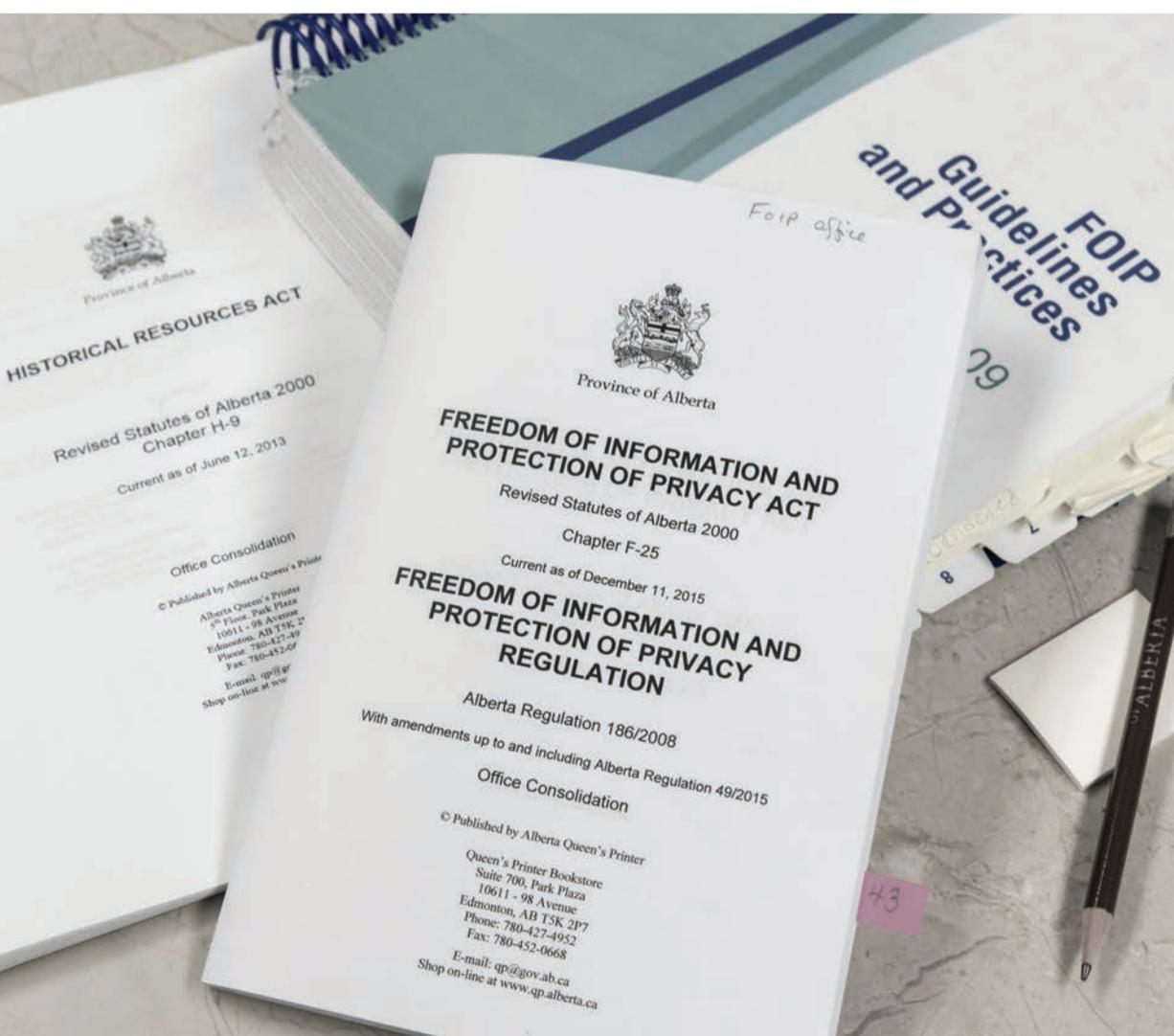
Accessing Records

You have a question that your colleagues cannot answer. It is a question about your Ministry's past activities but there is nobody with that corporate memory in your unit. You know from speaking with your information management staff or your Senior Records Officer (SRO) that the records you need to help answer a pressing work-related question might be at the Archives. You telephone or email an archivist, who recommends that you visit the Archives to research your request or tells you that the Archives has exactly the records you need.

Access to many of the archival records at the Archives is provided in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP Act). Some records are open and available to the public and to Government, meaning that they may be viewed in the Archives' Sandra Thomson Reading Room. Others are restricted under the Act. The Archives has a FOIP Office that responds to requests for records from the public that are subject to the FOIP Act.

A request from a government employee for government records does not require a formal FOIP request. Government employees, however, must demonstrate that they are employed by the GOA and that they require access to these records for business purposes. The FOIP process works the same for employees of a local public body's records. It is straight forward and merely requires the employee to contact the Archives' FOIP Office.

Everyone is welcome to visit the Archives, where the staff would love to assist you!





Discover Your Visual History

One of the more striking images in the Provincial Archives of Alberta's photographic holdings is a picture of Marilyn Monroe arriving in Jasper to film *River of No Return* (1954). This photo has appeared in exhibits as well as the media, and is just one image that represents a multitude of audiovisual records preserved at the Archives for the people of the province.



The Archives has nearly two million photographs and negatives and around 72,000 audiovisual records, which include film, video and audio recordings. Our images come in many formats, and are of various subjects like people, buildings, agriculture, cityscapes, special events and mountain views. They date from the late 1800s and include photos and negatives from the collections of prominent Albertan photographers such as Ernest Brown (1877-1951), Nicholas Gavinchuk (1889-1968), and Harry Pollard (1880-1968).

Close to one million of the Archives' photographs were transferred from the Public Affairs Bureau. These images document all facets of Alberta life including government at work and play, politicians, celebrities, groups and activities in Alberta starting in 1899.

Film and photos from the Archives' holdings are used for projects and publications, for promotions and advertising, and for outreach and media events. Images preserved in the Archives have also been used to celebrate anniversaries, as retirement gifts, and to decorate offices and work spaces.





Gainers Ltd.

Kim, a lawyer from Alberta Justice, contacted the Provincial Archives of Alberta looking for an agreement for a piece of property connected to a loan guarantee for Gainers Limited, an Edmonton meat-packing company.

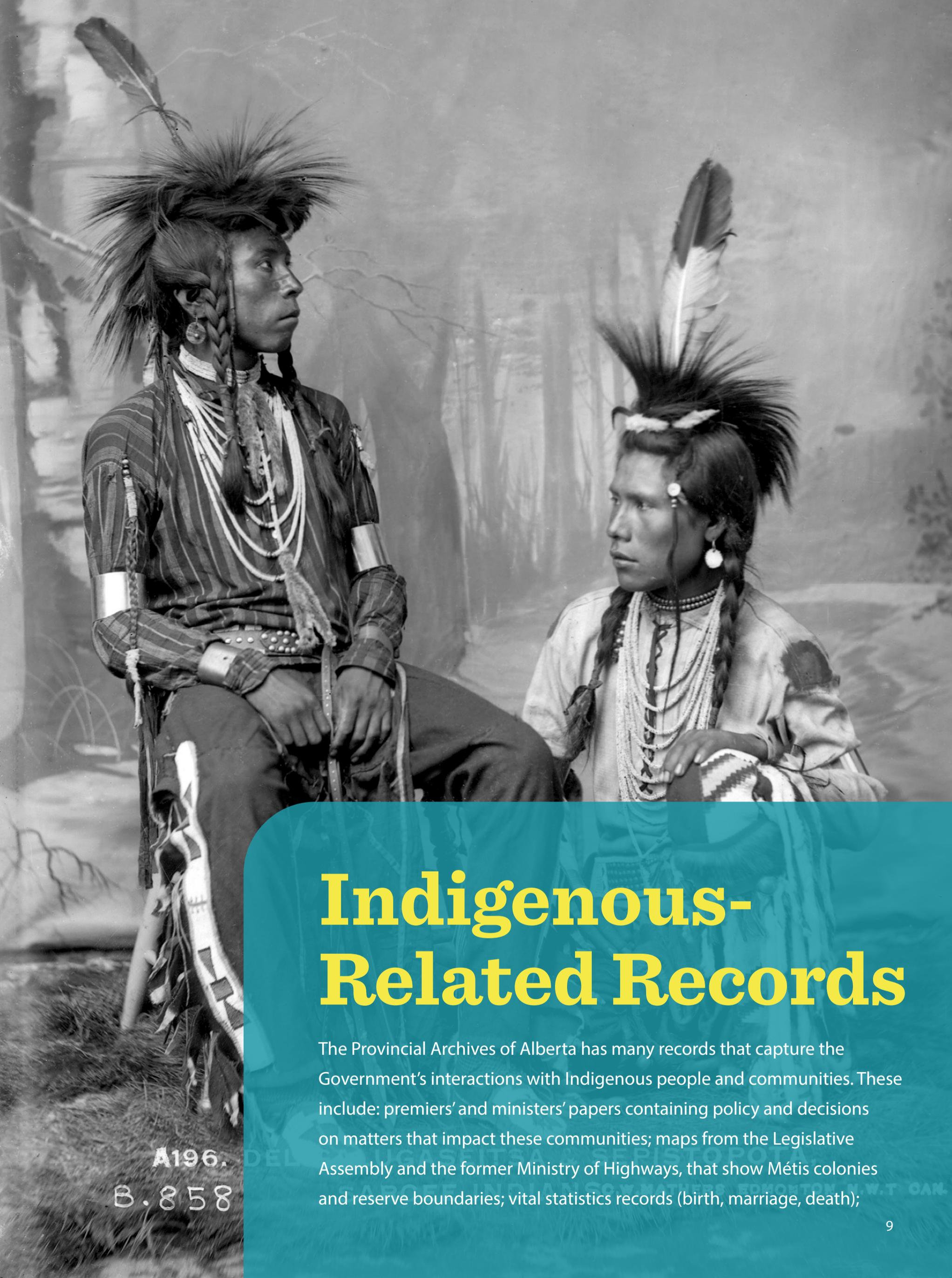
Founded in 1891 and incorporated in 1911, Gainers Limited was a meat processing company that grew into Western Canada's largest meat packer by the 1980s. Gainers was taken over by the Government of Alberta in 1989 after the company breached a master cooperating agreement involving loan guarantees with the province. The company was sold to private interests in 1994.

Records at the Archives include the corporate records of Gainers Limited that were part of the assets taken over by the Government. These include photographs, meeting minutes, agreements, appraisals, trademark files, and labour relations records. Although these corporate records of Gainers referred to the property agreement, nothing was found.

Being the corporate archives for the Government, the Archives knew that other government records may be of use to Kim, in particular, the legal files of Justice and of Treasury Board and Finance. Archives staff members were able to find the original loan agreement and the associated property information in loans and guarantees related files, and helped Kim get the information she needed.

For legal perspectives on any number of issues, the holdings of the Archives provide many insights into the world of law and order, and include business correspondence and decisions, labour agreements, case files and court judgements, judge notebooks, property files and financial records for many provincial jurisdictions. The Archives can help you to navigate detailed finding aids to locate a file or a decision that helps clarify the status of a business in the province, or support research into how fortunes in the province have changed over time.





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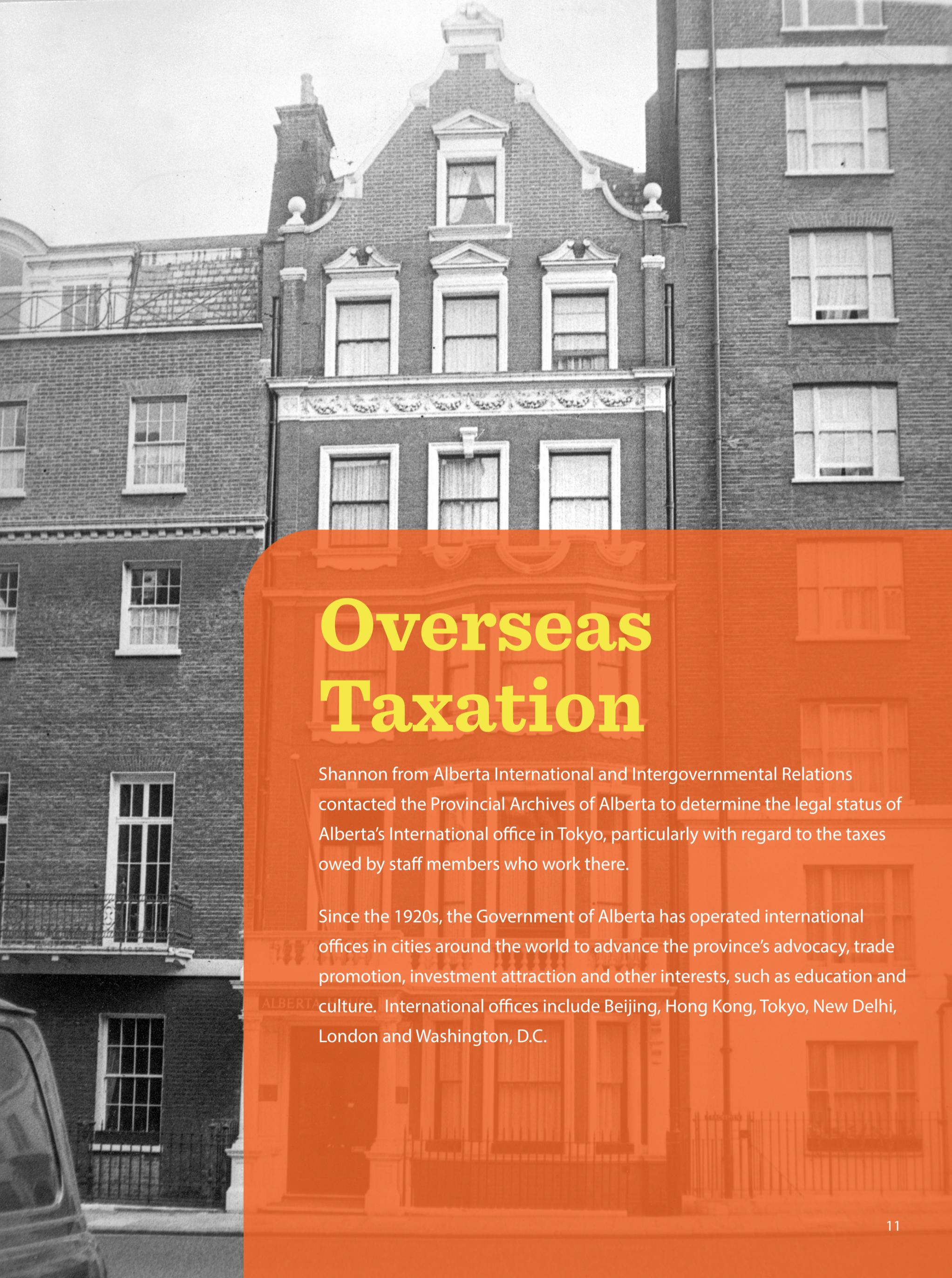
Indigenous-Related Records

The Provincial Archives of Alberta has many records that capture the Government's interactions with Indigenous people and communities. These include: premiers' and ministers' papers containing policy and decisions on matters that impact these communities; maps from the Legislative Assembly and the former Ministry of Highways, that show Métis colonies and reserve boundaries; vital statistics records (birth, marriage, death);

records from Justice and Solicitor General that relate to policing on reserves and Justice initiatives for these communities; education records relating to the Ministry's Aboriginal Services Branch and records about schools attended by Indigenous students and some records about the students themselves; as well as records from various councils and commissions such as the Northern Alberta Development Council, the Métis Settlements Appeal Tribunal, the Métis Settlements Transition Commission and the Office of the Métis Settlements Ombudsman.

In addition, other organizations and Indigenous Albertans have donated records to the Archives to help preserve their history. These include church records, images of communities and people captured by photographers and filmmakers like Gil Cardinal, and records of community leaders such as the Honourable Ralph Steinhauer, Canada's first Indigenous Lieutenant-Governor, and Jenny Margetts, president of Indian Rights for Indian Women.





Overseas Taxation

Shannon from Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations contacted the Provincial Archives of Alberta to determine the legal status of Alberta's International office in Tokyo, particularly with regard to the taxes owed by staff members who work there.

Since the 1920s, the Government of Alberta has operated international offices in cities around the world to advance the province's advocacy, trade promotion, investment attraction and other interests, such as education and culture. International offices include Beijing, Hong Kong, Tokyo, New Delhi, London and Washington, D.C.

Although the role of coordinating international relations has moved through various departments, the Archives preserves records of most international offices, including the first office in London in the 1920s. The Archives holds trade and investment records covering the history of the province's efforts to promote Alberta and its culture and businesses. These include policy records, draft legislation, ministerial orders, premiers records, and deputy minister and branch correspondence.

With some careful research, the Archives was able to locate an agreement connected to the establishment of the Tokyo Office in 1969, which demonstrated that individuals working in Tokyo are permitted a more favourable income tax rate.





Partnerships in Action

The Francophone Secretariat represents the needs of the Francophone community in Alberta and supports initiatives promoting French language and culture. The Provincial Archives of Alberta and the Secretariat have long had a beneficial partnership, which has led to increased Francophone archival record holdings at the Archives.

Knowing this, the Secretariat referred researcher Eduard to the Archives when he inquired about where to find records to support the designation of an historic site in his community.

In addition to the records of Francophone organizations, associations and Albertans, the Archives has many resources that would be useful to communities and local public bodies. The Archives has a reference library, photographs, diaries, and records of organizations and local governments.



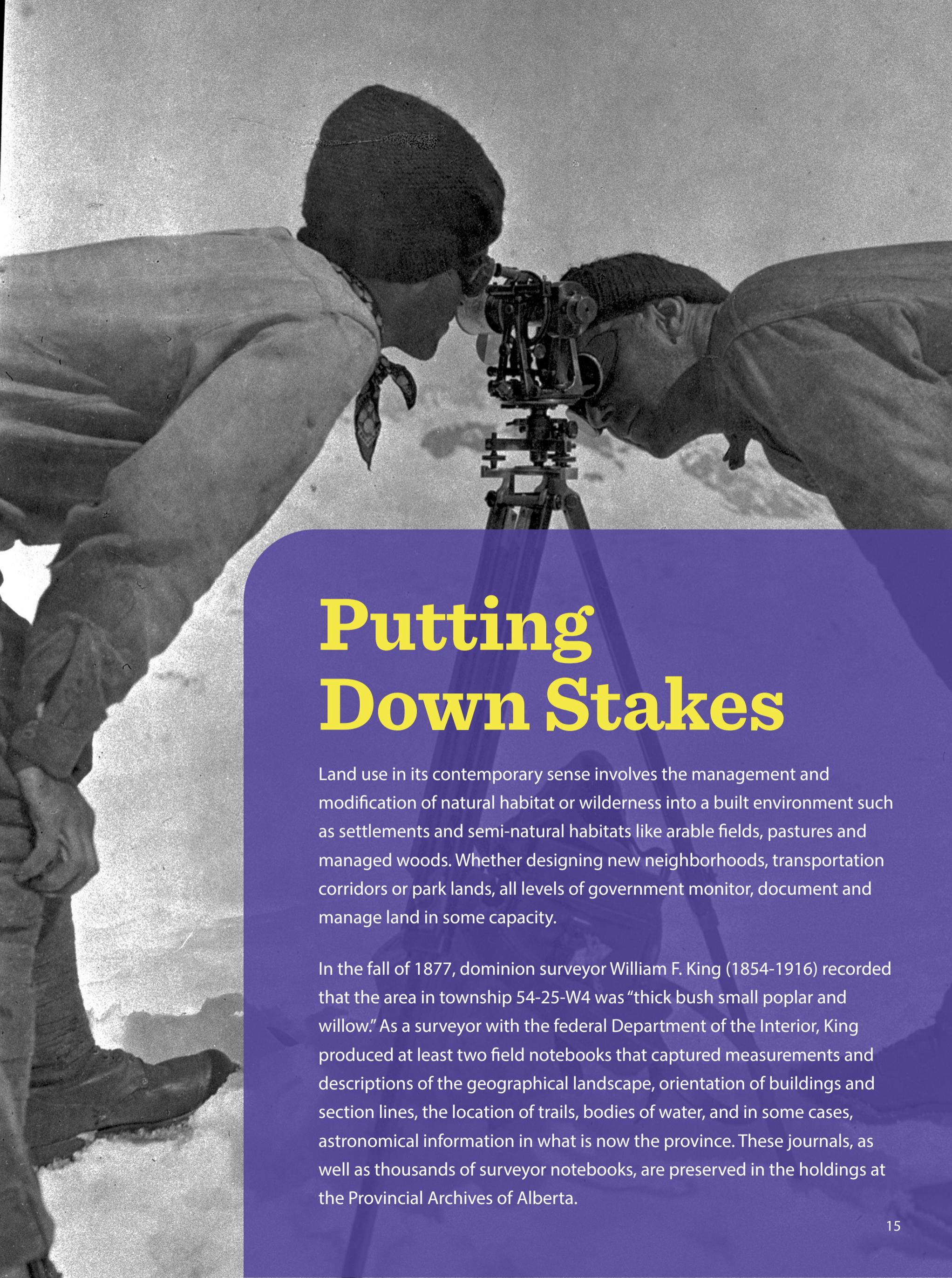
These range from land use and development records created by the county and municipality, to journals and parish histories by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, to local history books and newspapers of localities throughout the province.

Eduard looked through these resources that documented significant activities of his community of Lac La Biche and discovered information regarding the Francophone origin of his community. Eduard also used government

records from the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry, responsible for policies, legislation and services that impact Alberta's agriculture, and Municipal Affairs, which supports and advises municipalities, to learn even more about his community of Lac La Biche.

After using records found at the Archives, Eduard was able to establish the history of an historic site in Lac La Biche and present his findings by using local histories, government and private records, and images found at this facility.





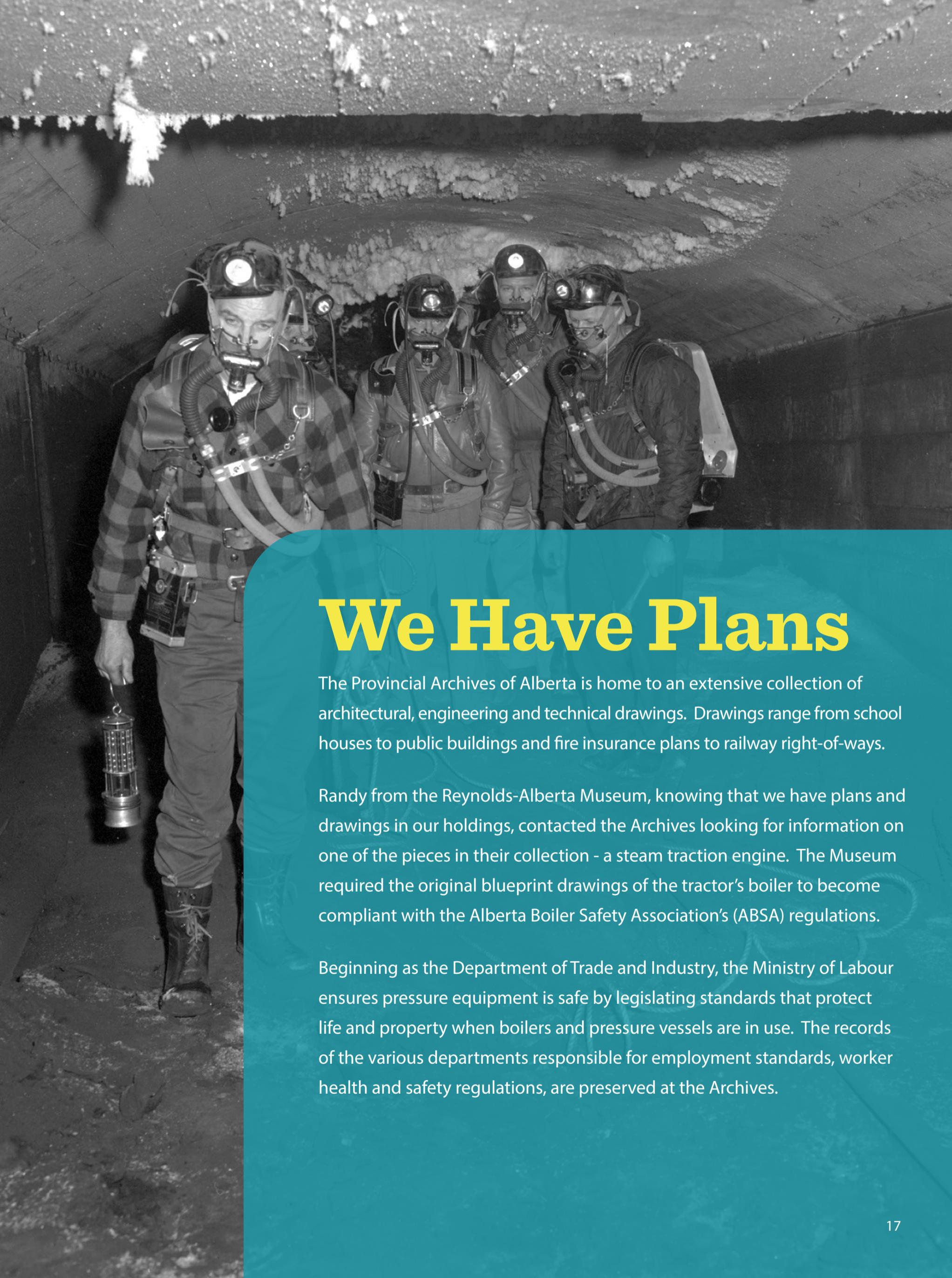
Putting Down Stakes

Land use in its contemporary sense involves the management and modification of natural habitat or wilderness into a built environment such as settlements and semi-natural habitats like arable fields, pastures and managed woods. Whether designing new neighborhoods, transportation corridors or park lands, all levels of government monitor, document and manage land in some capacity.

In the fall of 1877, dominion surveyor William F. King (1854-1916) recorded that the area in township 54-25-W4 was “thick bush small poplar and willow.” As a surveyor with the federal Department of the Interior, King produced at least two field notebooks that captured measurements and descriptions of the geographical landscape, orientation of buildings and section lines, the location of trails, bodies of water, and in some cases, astronomical information in what is now the province. These journals, as well as thousands of surveyor notebooks, are preserved in the holdings at the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

We have land and land use records dating back to the late 1800s, transferred to us from the Departments of Energy and Natural Resources, Land and Forests, and Sustainable Resource Development. These include notebooks and survey correspondence; topographical, surveying, small and large scale sectional and township maps; fire insurance plans; photographs; homestead records for patents issued; grazing leases; surface material licenses; rights of entry issuance; township registers; and much more.





We Have Plans

The Provincial Archives of Alberta is home to an extensive collection of architectural, engineering and technical drawings. Drawings range from school houses to public buildings and fire insurance plans to railway right-of-ways.

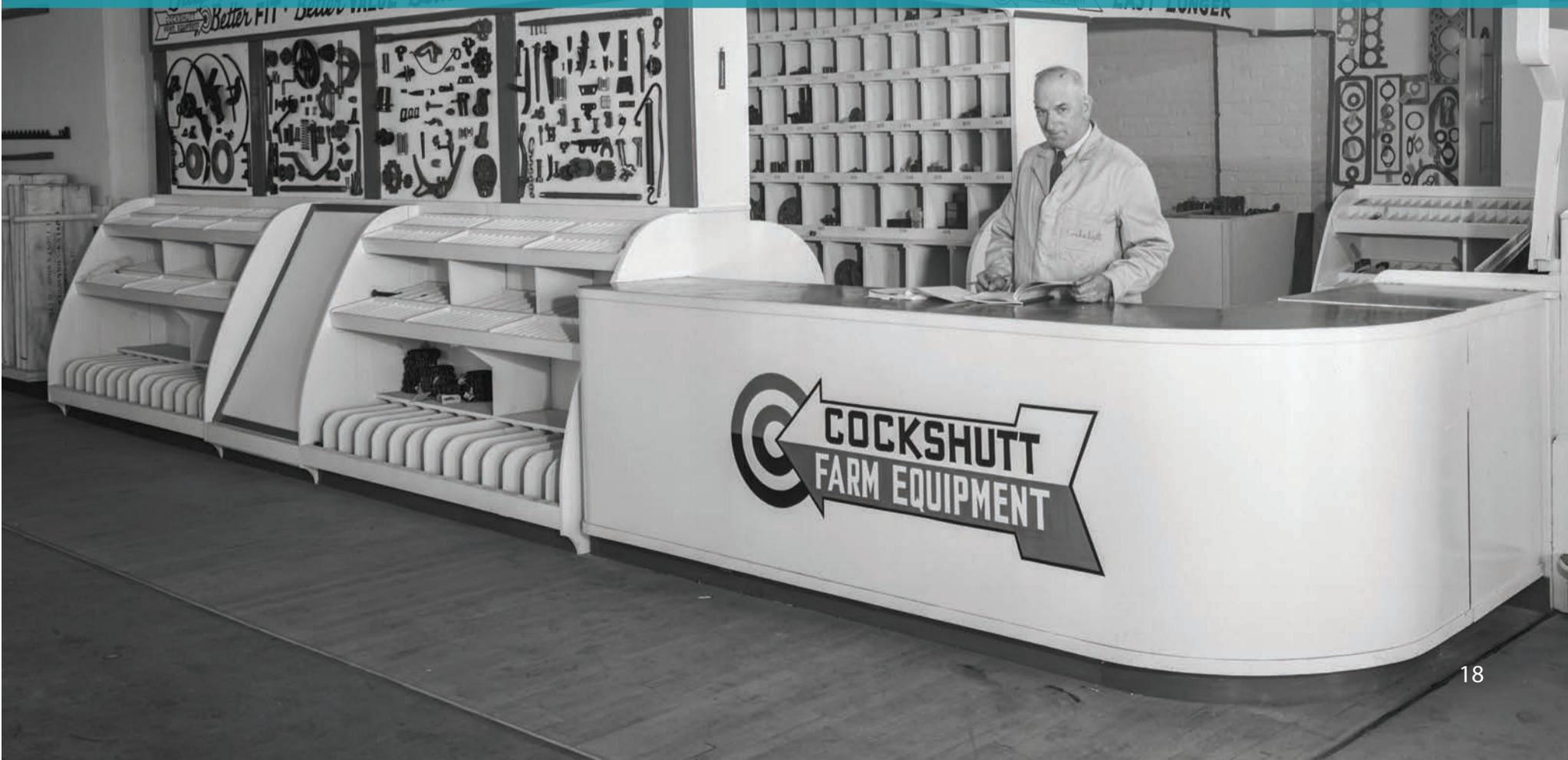
Randy from the Reynolds-Alberta Museum, knowing that we have plans and drawings in our holdings, contacted the Archives looking for information on one of the pieces in their collection - a steam traction engine. The Museum required the original blueprint drawings of the tractor's boiler to become compliant with the Alberta Boiler Safety Association's (ABSA) regulations.

Beginning as the Department of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Labour ensures pressure equipment is safe by legislating standards that protect life and property when boilers and pressure vessels are in use. The records of the various departments responsible for employment standards, worker health and safety regulations, are preserved at the Archives.



Randy visited us and learned that the departmental predecessors to Labour, Trade and Industry contained the Chief Inspector of Boilers' records, and that Labour had transferred those records to the Archives through the Government's records management process. These included boiler drawings and specifications and approvals used in turn of the century Alberta boilers and pressure vessels. These supporting plans, drawings, reports and photographs of workers operating the machinery were all used to assist in the development of the historical project at Reynolds.

The Heritage Division of Alberta Culture and Tourism supports and administers an array of programs and facilities that help preserve, protect and promote Alberta's rich history. This is accomplished through the operation of historic sites, interpretive centres, and museums, as well as the Archives. We support our sister sites by providing scans of records, photographs, drawings and plans drawn from all ministries for use in research, exhibitions and promotional materials. In this case, the Reynolds-Alberta Museum was able to operate the steam engine tractor at special events and to plow fields at their annual Harvest Festival.





We Preserve

Air Photo Distribution, a business unit within Environment and Parks, manages a public reference collection of over 1.5 million aerial photographs. Although the majority of the images were taken from 1949 to 2012, some date from the 1920s and the collection includes black and white, colour and false colour images in film negative formats as well as positive photographic prints. The business area contacted the Provincial Archives of Alberta with concerns about the safe, long-term access and storage of the material.

The Archives has a mandate to acquire, preserve and make records accessible, but it also has a role to play in the preservation of Alberta's documentary heritage beyond the walls of its facility. The Archives provides support to institutions throughout the province in the form of regular environmental and collection reviews and advice in emergency situations.

The Archives' conservation staff members use specialized equipment in assessing situations and making recommendations related to the preservation of records. Using an environmental monitor, the conservation team checks light levels, temperature and relative humidity in the storage

and access locations. With experience in assessment of storage materials and facilities, conservation staff can predict factors that are most likely to impact a set of records and identify those items that are most at risk.

Through discussions with the Air Photo Distribution business area and analysis of their storage facilities, the Archives' conservation staff evaluated current practices and storage conditions, and provided a preservation assessment and recommendation report. The report included remedial steps to avoid imminent harm to the records as well as long-term storage and treatment recommendations. This approach provided the business unit withpractical short-term solutions, as well as guidance in managing ongoing risks to their active records.

The Archives has conservators with expertise in the preservation and conservation of textual and audiovisual records who can provide you with preservation assessments of your department's records. The conservators can also help with salvaging contaminated or damaged records by identifying appropriate equipment and processes for restoring these materials.



We welcome comments or feedback on what you have read.

You can contact us at:

Provincial Archives of Alberta

8555 Roper Road Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5W1

or email us at: paa@gov.ab.ca or telephone us at 780-427-1750

you can also visit us on     

Photos used in this publication include PAA stock images as well as the following photos from the collection:

Page 2: BL1579.1; Page 3: A724; Page 4: A719; PA 2632.1; Page 5: PA42.1; PA3057.7; Page 6: PA3026.1; PA3057.4; A11262; B1865; BL2511.20; Page 7: GR1989.0516.0740_4; Page 8: GR1989.0516.0740_2; PA6980.2; PA6980.4; Page 9: B858; Page 10: BB879; J2354/3; PA365.2; J1955; Page 11: A11259; Page 12: PA3037.1; GR1989.0516.0401_1; GR1989.0516.1983_1; Page 13: A3434(1); Page 14: A3738; OB9190; Page 15: A10727; Page 16: A10723; A10725; A2251; Page 17: PA3480.2; Page 18: BL944.3; GR1975.0499.MasseySawyer L320.0001

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