

# NEWSLETTER

## Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society



It is that time again...The Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society (FPAAS) Annual General Meeting will take place on September 11, 2019 at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. The AGM will provide an update on the activities of the FPAAS over the 2018 – 2019 fiscal year as well as a special presentation by a guest speaker (to be announced over the summer).

Spring 2019	
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The board of the Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society would like to extend a huge thank-you to all the volunteers and Provincial Archives of Alberta staff who worked our casino on December 5 and 6, 2018. The funds from the casino are dedicated to funding positions that support the FPAAS work to promote and extend the reach of the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

# Thank-you!

## New Donations: The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

By Cristian Udma, Francophone Project Archivist

In 1841, the Bishop of Montreal invited the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), a Roman Catholic religious congregation of men, to come to Canada. They arrived in 1842. By 1845, they had missionaries in the St. Boniface area and soon after, travelled throughout Western and Northern Canada, into strategic areas that served as central points from which to conduct missionary work for First Nations, Métis and Francophone communities.

The Oblates kept meticulous records including those with a parish focus but also weather-, nature- and geographical-related notes, in writing as well as by taking photographs or recording voices or images.

In 2018, OMI Lacombe Canada decided to donate all their records to the Provincial Archives of Alberta. The over 40 years' worth of Oblate donations include nearly 341 metres of textual records, 173000 images, about 3000 audio and video recordings, and 1200 maps and architectural plans. These records document the administrative and missionary activities of the Oblates, are primarily in French, and cover the period of 1704-2003.

Amongst the records is administrative material that reflects the organization of the Oblates. This consists of the administration and histories of missions and parishes, printing companies, radio, and hospitals, as well as policies, reports, records of properties, mineral rights, correspondence, wills and inheritance, debts and loans. The administrative records on institutions relate to schools, novitiates, seminaries, publishing companies and retreat houses. Also included are personal papers of individual Oblates.



OB1710

Arrival of Bishop Grandin at St. Albert, October 1886.



OB1734

View of St. Albert, probably late 1890s.



OB1708

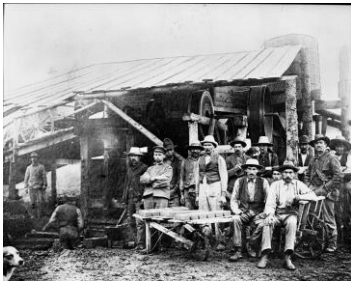
St. Albert, view of the bishopric.  
(The bishopric is marked on the photograph, which we strongly recommend NOT to do. Notes on photographs should be made separately.)

There is photographic material that documents a range of subjects and activities such as individual laity and religious administrators, ordained clergy, brothers and religious women, buildings such as churches, seminaries, hospitals, schools and religious homes, as well as community and First Nations activities, and rural and urban domestic and work life.

The sound recordings include audio reels, vinyl discs and cassettes. The recordings capture information on First Nation's culture and languages such as Cree, Chipewyan, Blackfoot, Saulteux, Loucheux, Slave and Inuit. Specifically, they include personal memoirs, musical theatre and concerts in Indian Residential Schools, theatrical plays, lectures, sermons and commentaries on the Gospel, masses and ceremonies recorded in a number of Oblate missions, programs broadcast from Residential Schools and the Charles Camsell Hospital on radio station CHFA, religious songs and Christmas carols, traditional Indigenous songs, and "Les Gais Troubadours", the choir of Collège Saint-Jean.

There are also architectural drawings and plans are blueprints or original drawings of buildings constructed, owned or maintained by the Oblates such as churches, schools, residences and other religious edifices.

Together, all the OMI records now make up one of the largest and most-used non-governmental collection at the PAA. Many materials are already available, while proper re-housing continues.



OB1956

Fleury Péron's brickyard, St. Albert. Notes on the back of the photograph (originally in French): "We tried to use the bricks from Péron to build the basement of the St. Albert cathedral, but we stopped, for they were not of a good enough quality. For details, Daily journal (petits calepins) of Bishop Legal."

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## PAA Staff Spotlight

My name is Yesan Ham and I am the Friends-funded Photographic Technician at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. I digitize and reproduce documents and photographs for preservation purposes and for public access. I use a variety of equipment including flatbed scanners, a book scanner, a large format roll scanner, a digital SLR camera and EPSON printers.

In addition to providing scans and prints to public clients, I also assist my colleagues with their projects. Most recently, I scanned and printed photographs for the PAA's upcoming lobby exhibit on Food & Community. I am also digitizing Oblate records related to residential schools for an ongoing preservation project.

When I am not assisting with projects such as these, I turn my attention to scanning the extensive photo collection we have at the Archives. I just completed scanning the Fotocraft collection, which is a small collection of about 250 negatives, originally created in the late 1960s. I enjoy poking around in our vaults, picking out a stack of negatives and seeing what kind of interesting images I can discover. It is fascinating to see how much the towns and cities have grown, how much fashion and technology has changed, and how far we have come as a province in terms of diversity.

My name is Lorraine Butchart and I am one of two archives technicians working primarily with private records at the PAA; my position is funded by the Friends.

When we accession a donation, we assign it a number and determine the extent of the donation by counting and measuring its contents. Once a donation has been accessioned and a private-records archivist has decided it fits our mandate and should be added to our holdings, it comes back to the technicians for processing. We then rehouse the records in acid-free archival file folders and containers, remove any contaminants such as rusty paper clips, and send any items that require specialized conservation to our conservator for treatment.

Most recently, I have been processing records donated by Claudette and Denis Tardif. Before Mme Tardif was a Canadian senator, she was the Dean of Campus St-Jean of the University of Alberta, and before that a professor at St-Jean—but what makes processing her records of particular interest to me is the fact that I took a couple of courses from her when I was a student at St-Jean many years ago. It's always fun when a part of my past intersects with the present and I get a glimpse into the lives of people I used to know!

## Food & Community Exhibit Merchandise in the Archives Store

By Sarah Flowers Eggert, Friends-funded Archives Retail Services Coordinator

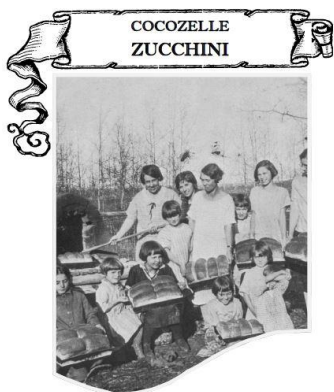
The Archives Store is getting ready for both a new exhibit and a new season with the latest arrival of products. Inspired by the upcoming "Food & Community" exhibit – curated by reference archivist Karen Simonson – the Archives Store is featuring three new items.

To highlight the "food" aspect of the exhibit, the Archives Store is carrying a variety of seeds from The Cottage Gardener, an heirloom seedhouse and plant nursery from southern Ontario. This season, the store will feature Bountiful Bean, Chantenay Carrot, and Cocozelle Zucchini seeds. Each of these heirloom seed varieties is sure to produce a delicious harvest that will be perfect for a local gardener to share with other members of the community!

A lined notebook featuring an archival photograph from the Provincial Archives of Alberta collection – titled *Field Day, Picnic*, taken by a photographer from the Department of Public Health in 1928 – is perfect for planning and documenting the garden's growth all season long. To entice gardeners to enjoy the bounty of their produce, the notebook's front page has a recipe for strawberry ice cream from the F. Mae Deans fonds that correlates with the delicious looking ice cream cones held by the women in the cover image. On an index card tucked into the front of the notebook, Archives Store clients will be delighted to find the complete recipe for strawberry ice cream.

The third item that rounds out the merchandise offerings for the "Food & Community" exhibit is a sturdy canvas tote bag. Featuring an archival photograph from 1947 taken by a photographer from the Garneau Studio on one side (which depicts young women working in a school kitchen), this tote bag will be perfect for carrying to the farmers' market or for taking produce from the garden to share with family and friends. On the other side of the bag, the buyer will discover another delectable recipe from the F. Mae Deans fonds – this time, for blueberry banana muffins. The complete recipe is on an index card found inside the bag, which makes it perfect for whipping up upon returning from the garden or market.

As the Archives Retail Services Coordinator, I hope that these new items will entice gardeners, cooks and farmers' markets enthusiasts alike to visit the Store this spring and summer. With the ten percent discount on Archives Store merchandise offered to all members of the Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society, this is the perfect opportunity to share some food with the community!



Cocozelle Zucchini Seeds,  
\$2.50 per packet



Notebook with lined pages,  
\$11.95



Tote bag, \$19.95



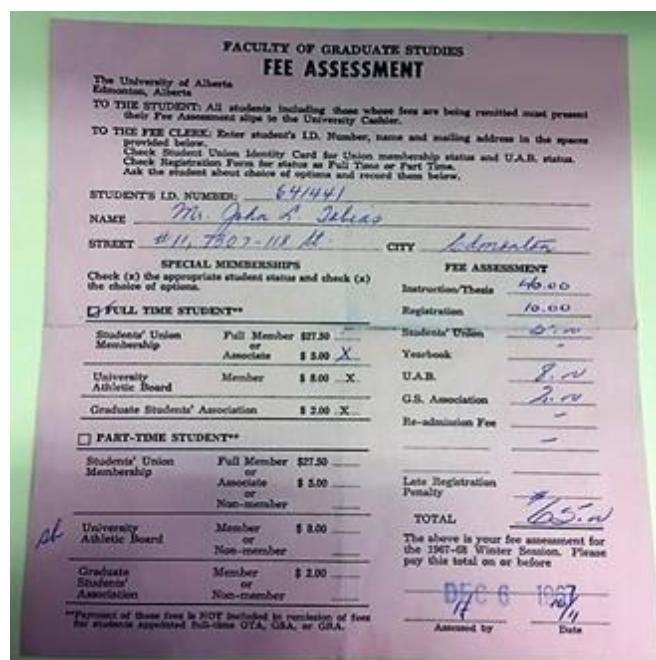
## The Price of Education

By Alyssa Hyduk, Friends' Special Projects Archivist

As the Friends' Special Projects Archivist at the PAA, I often get to work with donations that are varied and intriguing, with a little mix of bizarre in-between. My job is to work on the backlog of donations that have come into the PAA: I appraise, re-house, and make available to the public those donations that have come to us from a variety of sources over the years. This means that I have a unique window through which to view the history and the lives of every-day Albertans.

Recently, I have been processing the records of Dr. Jonathan Tobias, a researcher, historian and professor at Red Deer College. Dr. Tobias obtained his post-graduate degrees from the University of Alberta in German political history. He then went on to work for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians as a research consultant, and it was here that Dr. Tobias became engrossed in the lives of Alberta's Indigenous peoples. His dedication to research led to the discovery of information that would be crucial in establishing the validity of land claims and disputes, and he became a highly sought-out subject matter expert in court cases. Even today, his papers are still quoted in First Nations-related historical research.

While his work is of interest to historians and researchers, there was one piece of paper that I came across in my preservation work that highlighted the gap between today's society and that in which Dr. Tobias lived. Amongst his papers, was a receipt for Winter Term tuition expenses, dated December 6, 1967. (See photo below). The total amount Dr. Tobias needed to pay for instruction, for one term as a full-time graduate student, was \$65.00. Compare that to 2019, where graduate students are expected to pay an approximate \$5635 per year at the University of Alberta. This is a 4,335% increase over a period of 52 years. (For the math people in the crowd, that's a rate increase of 83.4% per year). This small piece of paper shows changes our society has gone through over the past 50 years, and how the value of education, particularly at a university level, has changed dramatically.



The things you can find in the records!

## PAA Staff Spotlight

My name Alyssa Hyduk and my Friends' role is that of Special Projects Archivist. It is my responsibility to appraise, arrange, describe and provide access to some of the backlog of private records donations that have come to the Provincial Archives of Alberta. These could be records of organizations, individuals, families or businesses. Recently, this has included the Alberta Federation of Nursing Research, Senator Stan Waters, and Professor John Tobias. The material is always diverse and engaging. To take a donation from its initial intake to fully processed and available to the public, requires many steps. I appraise a donation to determine what is of archival value and worthy of permanent preservation at the archives. I then take the records from the boxes, bags or other containers they came in, ensure there's no rusty paperclips or tape or other materials that will further damage them, and re-house the records in acid-free folders and boxes. As I do this, I create a file list that describes the contents of each folder. Once re-housed and I have created a fonds-level finding aid describing the creator of the records and the file list, these records are available for research! This finding aid is available through the Archives' Sandra Thompson Reading Room, and online through the Heritage Resource Information System (HeRMIS: <https://hermis.alberta.ca/paa/>), to aid researchers in their work.

## The Vital Statistics Code

By Anne Penner, Archival Technician

Last year, the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) received over 9300 requests for vital statistics (birth, marriage and death) records, making these the most requested records at the PAA. To ensure that clients receive these records as quickly and efficiently as possible, their location is divided among all of the technicians working at the PAA. Each week, PAA technicians Lorraine Butchart, Adam Wisheu, Meg Stewart, Meghan Leschert and I take turns monitoring and fulfilling the vital statistics requests that are received through the online request form while Connie Yaroshuk retrieves those received directly in the Reading Room. Some days, only a handful of requests are received but other days, there can be over a hundred.

For each online request, the technician verifies the accuracy of the information the client has provided, retrieves the original document, photocopies it, and then refiles the record. In theory, this is a very simple task. However, the vital statistics at the PAA come with decades of tweaks to recordkeeping practices, changes in policies, and handwritten ledgers that may be difficult to read due to the various individuals' unique handwriting style. Because of these intricacies, learning to work with the vital stats can be like learning to decipher a code. At least, this is what it felt like in early January 2019, when I spent my second day of my new job at the PAA shadowing another technician as we covered his day of vital statistics retrievals.

We started with the emailed vital statistics requests. For each one, my co-worker looked at the information provided by the client and decided whether or not we had enough details to find the request. As emails whizzed by, registration numbers like "1863," "201-365" and "004-884" were all deemed accurate, while others like "01129740" were found to be incorrect and escalated to be dealt with by my manager. "All of these numbers are formatted differently, how do you just know which are right," I asked. "I just know. You'll see when we get into the vault. It'll make more sense then," he replied. The years listed were more obvious. I knew the ranges of the years we had that were available under the *Vital Statistics Act*, so when my co-worker escalated a request for a birth record from the 1950s, I understood the reasoning. Then, an email came through with the year listed as "P". "Okay," I thought, "that's clearly wrong." Not so, P stands for 1912. I'm lost again.

Eventually, we made it to the vault, where hundreds of identical archival boxes sit on shelves. I'm guided through these to locate the records. My co-worker was right. This made more sense. I was starting to notice the quirks. The first couple of decades of death records have straight numerical numbers; that's easy! A couple decades on, these numbers switch to hyphenated ones (201-365), but the number matches what is on the box. "I'm getting it," I thought. Then, I discovered that sometimes death records were two pages (e.g., a death registration and medical certificate of death) and other times, one, with this information combined. Also, marriage registrations after 1917 are separated by location (Edmonton, Calgary, Small Cities and Rural), meaning that the same number may be used four times. And, for about a period of over 20 years between 1923 to 1945, Indigenous records were separated as well, so the same registration number could be used up to 5 times for any particular year. It was a sharp learning curve to say the least.

After many mental notes and a few solo practice rounds, I broke the code and was able to decipher requests and retrieve documents with the efficiency and accuracy of my colleagues. Vital statistics retrieval is one of the most straightforward ways technicians provide access to archival material and with each puzzle solved, this important role becomes more second nature, more enjoyable, and more distant to my bewilderment on that first day. "I just know."

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## Justifiable Homicide: Records at the PAA of Persons Sentenced to Death

By Michael Gourlie, Government Records Archivist, Provincial Archives of Alberta

Events at the PAA have a funny way of inspiring new directions in research. At this year's Family Day event, the conversation started with a genealogy question, continued through murder and capital punishment, and ended with a spreadsheet.

Some further explanation is probably necessary.

The genealogy question related to a researcher whose relative who had been sentenced to death in Alberta for committing murder. The researcher indicated that nothing could be found about the case other than an entry in a finding aid at the reference desk titled *Persons Sentenced to Death in Canada, 1867-1976: An Inventory of Case Files in the Fonds of the Department of Justice*, produced by Library and Archives Canada (LAC) in 1994. Given that court records are usually easy to find, I decided to look for the case file myself.

But in looking for that case, I realized that there was more involved to the overall process than just the court case file. In various government records transferred over the years, there would be prosecution files, appeal files, prison records, inquest records, as well as death registrations for persons who had been executed. Each stage of the process would contain unique information of interest to a researcher. Files about persons sentenced to death have a continuing fascination with researchers, but the material is scattered throughout the PAA's holdings. So, building on the list of Albertans provided by LAC's 1994 finding aid, I decided to create a spreadsheet tying together all PAA holdings related to persons in Alberta who had been sentenced to death.

The spreadsheet is divided into two tabs. The first tab explains the contents of the spreadsheet and provides some explanations about what records were (or were not) found. The second tab lists the name of the person sentenced to death, their victim(s), the judicial district in which the trial took place, and the year of conviction, followed by PAA reference numbers to criminal case files, investigation files, prosecutor's files, appeals, death registrations (which used the phrase "justifiable homicide" as cause of death at least once), prison records, and inquests. It also indicates the final resolution of the sentence, which may have been execution, commutation or reduction of the sentence, or even a new trial. Filters have been applied to all columns on the spreadsheet so that the view can be limited to a particular individual, a judicial district, a year, or the outcome of the sentence. Of the 127 persons sentenced to death in Alberta, only 9 court case files are missing in their entirety, and most of those have some additional documentation, such as a prosecution or appeal file, located somewhere else. Unfortunately, one of the missing case files was related to the original question that inspired the research. However, should any new discoveries arise, the spreadsheet will be updated.

The research to find the records provided some interesting discoveries and observations. Given their age, most of the records listed on the spreadsheet are open for research with the exception of most of the prosecution files as well the sheriff's files regarding the executions themselves. Oddly enough, many of the prosecution records for early cases were found on the inquest files for the murder victims, possibly because the government lawyers required access to the inquest evidence to prosecute the case. But researchers should not assume that every single record related to persons sentenced to death was located; in particular, only prison admittance ledgers were examined in detail, and additional references can be found in the effects ledgers, warden's correspondence files or Alberta Provincial Police annual reports – there are still interesting discoveries to be made. There are possibly references in the records of the Office of the Premier, and extensive coverage in local newspapers provides yet another source for research.

The spreadsheet is available through the reference desk in the Sandra Thomson Reading Room and can be provided to or emailed to any researcher upon request. Although its contents can be gruesome and sometimes disturbing given the notorious nature of the individuals involved and their crimes, the information contained in the spreadsheet highlights a darker era in the history of the province's justice system that will be the subject of research for many years to come. With this new tool, the PAA reference room now will be able to answer those research questions more comprehensively.