

NEWSLETTER

Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society

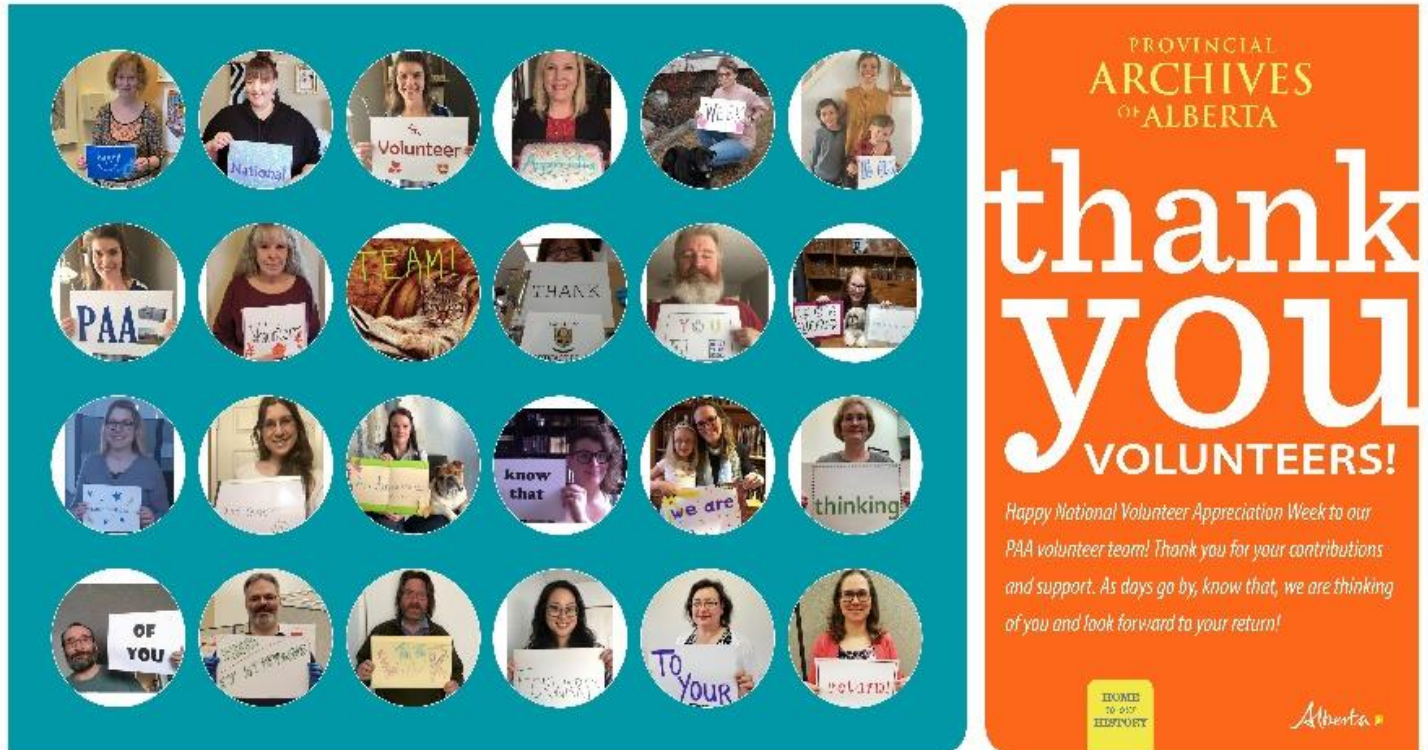


OCH1988: Not identified [A couple walking down 107 Street past Templeman Bros]. [1953]

What a year it has been!!! The Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society (FPAAS) continues its work with the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) during this difficult time. The 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM) has been delayed due to the pandemic. We hope to be able to schedule the AGM in the Spring of 2021.

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Program & Volunteer Coordination

By Jaclyn Landry, Program and Volunteer Coordinator

Prior to the restrictions resulting from COVID-19, the Provincial Archives of Alberta had a longstanding and thriving volunteer program, with 45 active weekly volunteers. In 2019-2020, nearly 7200 volunteer hours contributed to projects that preserved and improved access to the archival records in our collection. Projects varied in scope but primarily involved processing and rehousing records, creating file lists, and finding aids, as well as translation and transcription initiatives. Other activities included researching and writing social media content, providing *Ancestry.ca* tutorials in the Reading Room, and processing digitized microfilm.

On March 16, 2020, we received direction that the operation of our volunteer program would be paused. At this time, I wanted to ensure that each of our volunteers continued to feel supported and connected to the PAA team. As a part of my planning, I drafted a volunteer engagement strategy, outlining several initiatives for ongoing communication and connection. This strategy was designed to prioritize and honor our valued relationships with our volunteer team.

Communication with volunteers over the past nine months has involved multiple telephone and email check-ins. During these connections, I shared critical operational updates as well as some fun and interesting resources to pass the time. In April, staff at the PAA came together to create an e-card for National Volunteer Week. We also hosted virtual coffee dates with volunteers via Zoom. More recently, we put a call out for favorite recipes, to create a collection that will be shared with volunteers in the new year.

In addition to this, we sent two mail-outs with volunteer appreciation gifts, kindly sponsored by the Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society. The first gift was a voucher for cookies from Confetti Sweets. The second mail-out contained a face mask with a PAA archival image.

I want to personally thank the Friends for their generous financial support of these gifts, that would not otherwise have been possible in this time of government fiscal restraint.

I know there have been many questions from our volunteers regarding the future of the Volunteer Program and when it can resume. Safety for all is of paramount concern and we continue to prioritize the Volunteer Program as we plan and adjust to this evolving situation. Return to volunteerism at the PAA is identified in stage 3 of the relaunch strategy. However, this will only occur when we are confident that volunteers can safely be reintroduced into the PAA space. Until then, I will continue to stay apprised of what is happening in the voluntary sector, to ensure that our program is in the best position to resume when we are able.

In the meantime, we have had to get creative. A small group of volunteers indicated some interest in transcribing file listings from home. This is currently being trialed with the handwritten sections of the vital statistics indexes, that are available on the PAA website. These transcribed listings will produce a comprehensive keyword searchable listing. I am also giving much thought and consideration to other opportunities that could occur at home, but as you can imagine, this is tricky with primary collections limited to on-site access.

In addition to traditional projects, I also want to highlight the success of a community project that came together quickly and beautifully. It resulted in 1000 holiday greeting cards, that were handwritten in both English and French, by volunteers and staff. These cards were enthusiastically received by eighteen long-term seniors care facilities across the province, primarily in rural communities. These thoughtful and touching cards received praise from Minister Leela Aheer, who recognized that some of these seniors are particularly isolated this holiday season. I am grateful that these opportunities are being embraced by our team as we strive to stay connected in this unprecedented time.



As I close, I would like to thank the volunteers for their continued enthusiasm and support. On behalf of my colleagues, I want to share that we really miss seeing the volunteers at the Provincial Archives of Alberta each day. We look forward to when they can safely return and send our many wishes for a brighter new year!

New at the Archives Store

By Erin Sekulich, Archives Retail Coordinator

The Archives Store is always getting in new and exciting stock! Although, you would not know it from how quickly our staff and volunteers seem to snatch it up – thank you for all your support. This year has seen many new items come into the store that highlight elements of different PAA collections, as well as reflect upon the mandate of the Archives itself.

Promptly Journals:

Whether you're writing for yourself or for a loved one, the prompts inside these journals will help you record the story you don't want to forget. The journal is divided into sections to highlight the different stages of life. We currently have in stock the Autobiography and Childhood versions. This is the perfect present for a loved one to record their oral history, or a means of working through one's life using genealogical research.

Tea Towels:

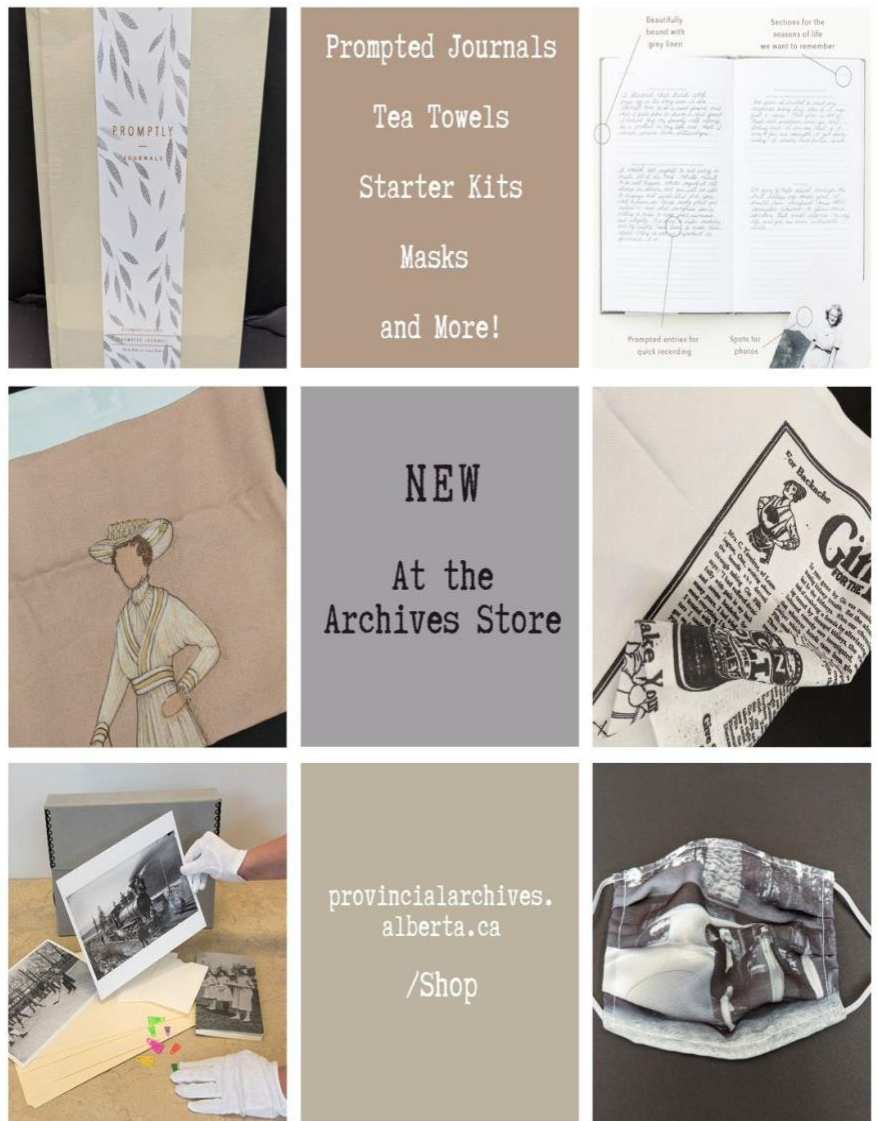
It has been a rough year, but humour is often the best way to get through. From the Archive's microfilm collection, we have curated several tea towels featuring "miracle cures" for the 1918-1919 Spanish Flu.

If you are looking for a bit of colour, we also have a collection of tea towels featuring beautiful costume sketches from the Citadel Theater production of Pygmalion (My Fair Lady).

Each of these unique tea towels are made in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Masks:

We have an assortment of masks available at the Archives Store, to get you through this pandemic in historical style! From our logo to maps, handwriting samples to historical photos, we have you covered through a variety of different styles. Mask options include nose pieces, buff style and light weight, or double knits. Grab one (or one of each) and show off your unique mask wherever you go!



More from the Archives Store

Archival and Genealogy Starter Kits:

Interested in preserving your family's memories, but don't know where to start? We have two types of starter kits to help you get going!

Archival Starter Kits help you take that first step in preserving the maps and textiles of your family's history. Each kit comes with your choice of clamshell box, white cotton gloves, a notebook, as well as five sheets each of unbuffered and buffered tissue paper.

Genealogy Starter Kits can help you start preserving the records of your family's history. Each kit comes with your choice of a document box, thirty file folders, ten photo negative envelopes, thirty Plastiklips, a pair of white gloves, and a notebook. These kits come in four sizes: 2" legal size box, 5" legal size box, 2" letter size box, or 5" letter size box.

Socks:

Keep your feet fashionable with one-of-a-kind Provincial Archives of Alberta socks! These crew socks feature image GR1970.0337.0003, "A Guest of the Province" sticker, advertising tourism in Alberta c.1940. Or GR1970.0337.0001, a "Sunny Alberta" sticker, advertising tourism in Alberta c.1960. Show off your vintage Alberta style wherever your adventures take you! Check out the Archives Store for these and many other great items! <https://atms.alberta.ca/paa/Store/default.aspx>

FPAAS Staff Spotlight

Anne Steil is the Vital Statistics Public Access Project Coordinator at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Her position is financially supported through Casino funds.

Anne has been working at the Provincial Archives of Alberta since January 2019. Before this, Anne worked in museum collections, most recently at the Royal Alberta Museum, helping to transfer all of the artifacts from the old location in Glenora to the new RAM building in downtown Edmonton. It was here that Anne met her now wife. They live together in a little house in North Edmonton with their four cats. Anne spends a lot of her time trying to keep her furry kids off the kitchen counters while she enjoys her favourite pastime of trying new recipes.



Day-to-day Anne responds to all of the vital statistics requests that come into the PAA and makes sure that these records are made available to the public. Anne also helps clients navigate the Vital Statistics indexes and liaises with the Vital Statistics office to make available historical records which have not yet made their way to the PAA.

Recently, Anne has been working on a project to convert all of the online vital statistics death indexes from typed PDF files to Excel spreadsheets making them more easily searchable for clients. These documents can also be manipulated by categories such as name or location, making them useful for all types of demographic research. Hopefully in the future when this project is complete, clients will no longer be required to search through long alphabetical indexes to find the records they are looking for, but will be able to simply keyword search them.

Top Three Reference Topics at the PAA

By Natalia Pietrzykowski, PAA Reference Archivist

Genealogy

It may not come as a surprise that folks regularly visit the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) to explore their family history. Vital Statistics provide birth, marriage, and death registrations. Church records are used to locate ancestors and have information on baptisms, marriages, and burials. Vital statistics and some faith records become public only after certain periods have passed. Records of the Missionary Oblates are used to trace Indigenous genealogy. The priests that ran these missions were meticulous note keepers, but many of their records are in their native French. Court records are referenced for probate, divorce records, and records from civil and criminal courts.

Homesteads, Land, and Locations

Another popular research topic is homesteading, or land and locations in Alberta. Beginning in the 1880s, Dominion Land Surveyors subdivided Western Canada into a township system. Creating a grid of homesteads and designating rail, school, and Hudson's Bay Company lands. The PAA holds diaries, field notebooks, correspondence, sketches, and maps related to this project. Additionally, Métis scrip records document past interactions between the federal government and the Métis people with regard to land, treaty, and rights.

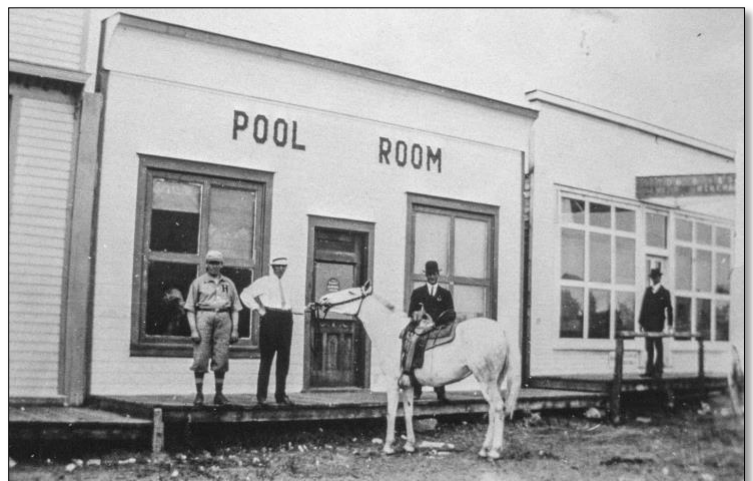
Government and Politics

The final most popular research topic are Government of Alberta (GoA) records. The GoA categorizes and schedules its records according to a provincial records and information management program. This renders all records inactive at some point, but only those with enduring value to the province are eventually transferred to the PAA. These records span all ministries, as well as departments, agencies, boards, and commissions.

Point of Interest: Pool Rooms

By Kathy Epp, Public Receptionist, PAA

At one time, pool halls were a common fixture in many cities and towns across Alberta. This is the exterior of the "Pool Room" in the village of Hughenden, Alberta - taken in the early 1900s. The building was built by Joe Martineau, and it was run by Club Irish. In 1932, the Pool Room was destroyed by a fire that destroyed several other businesses in town, and claimed one life.



A7330 – "Pool Room, Hughenden, Alberta, n.d."

Summer Students: The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

By Tom Anderson, Manager Private Records, PAA

The Provincial Archives of Alberta was very happy that the Friends were able to once again support the PAA this year. Working in conjunction with the Canadian Council of Archives and the Young Canada Works program, the Friends were able to hire three “summer students” in October! These students are currently on site at the PAA until March 2021.

Kara, Yuxian, and Morgan were hired to work on the physical processing of a number of donated boxes containing text and photographs created by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a religious congregation of missionaries. They have already completed nearly 200 boxes of material, putting the records into acid free folders, boxes, and archival sleeves!

Their work is interesting, varied, and of significant importance to the history of western Canada. These are the operational and administrative records of the Oblates. The material the Young Canada Works students are processing helps to document the organization's activities, actions, and their perspectives on social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of life in western Canada. In total, the material comes in all records formats, and dates from the 1840s to the present day. The records are a unique perspective on the people, land, and the history of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories. These organizational records offer a wealth of text and audiovisual imagery related to life in the 19th and the 20th centuries. Thank you to the Friends who made this work possible!

Point of Interest: Mite Building Edmonton

By Kathy Epp, Public Receptionist, PAA

Here is a tiny piece of Edmonton's past. The Mite Block was once proclaimed by *Ripley's Believe It Or Not* to be the smallest two-storey building on Earth.

This curious little brick building was built by real estate agent Arthur Bloomer in 1913, and it was approximately 2.7 m wide.

The Mite was located at 9701 Jasper Avenue in Edmonton, and housed various businesses over the years until its destruction in the early 1960s. How is that for tight quarters?

B4388 – “The Mite, smallest block in town on Jasper Avenue facing 97 street, n.d.



Plotting the Course of the Pandemic

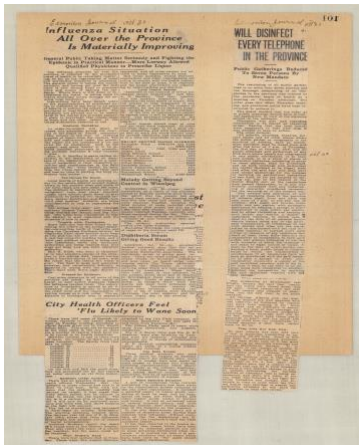
By Michael Gourlie, Government Records Archivist

Decades from now, when historians look back at society during the COVID-19 pandemic, what will they see? Artifacts, documents, and various media will tell how we dealt with and reacted to this historic event. With the pandemic at the forefront of everyone's thoughts, it seems timely to examine the holdings at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) that document other public health crises.

Alberta has experienced pandemics before, such as the 1918-1919 worldwide flu pandemic, often referred to as the Spanish gripe or Spanish flu epidemic. Additionally, a series of localized poliomyelitis epidemics in Alberta occurred in 1927 and 1953. While history books tell one authors' version of these events, what do the original archival records tell researchers about other widespread outbreaks of disease in the twentieth century? And can this information inform our current circumstances?

1918-1919 Pandemic Resources at the PAA

For reasons that are unclear, few records from the Department of Public Health have survived prior to the 1940s. However, one incredible survivor of that era is a scrapbook, created by Public Health.



It contains newspaper articles tracking the progress of the pandemic across Canada, with a special focus on developments in Alberta. The articles detail the number of cases, the preventative measures (including the closures of schools and restrictions on public gatherings), announcements from medical officers of health, and the death toll.

While an overarching and comprehensive information resource, the scrapbook does not provide the entire story of the Government of Alberta's response to the pandemic or the impact on Alberta's citizens. So, without other records of the Department of Public Health, where can that story be found in the PAA?

Research trickery comes into play when you think about the other people and organizations involved in the events of the 1918-1919 pandemic. A few examples include:

- **Records of the Attorney General.** Responsible for the *Public Health Act*, these files contain numerous letters from government departments and citizens. The letters detail local boards of health, compensation for financial losses incurred by businesses, and the use of masks in communities. One notable letter pleaded for a loosening of liquor laws, so that druggist would not have to turn to the local bootlegger, for a supply of alcohol to prescribe to desperate patients.
- **Records of the courts.** Criminal case files document the arrests of individuals for contravening public health regulations, such as breaking quarantine or refusing to wear masks in public. The court could impose a fine or sentence someone to one month's imprisonment. The court's probate files for the estates of deceased individuals also register a significant increase in volume.

- **Annual Reports of Government Departments.** Most government departments commented on the effects of the pandemic on their operations. For example, the annual report for the Alberta Provincial Police outlined how officers, “served as doctors, nurses, undertakers, and gravediggers, and this work was done unselfishly and with an utter disregard of the danger.” Regional reports from police divisions provided further details about local efforts to address the pandemic.
- **Records donated by private individuals.** It can sometimes be difficult to determine the extent of the records that people have donated to the PAA about their experience with the pandemic. There are some photographs showing people wearing masks and oral histories touching upon people’s experiences. It seems likely that any diaries, correspondence, or photograph albums dating from October 1918-1919 will have at least fleeting references to such a dramatic, all-consuming event in the province’s history.



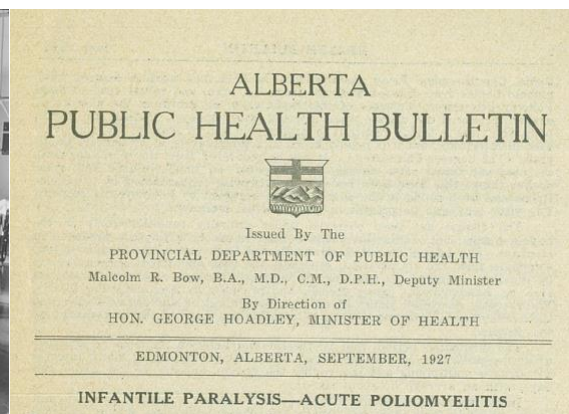
** Other resources include **Records of the Executive Council** and **Records of the Vital Statistics Branch.**

Epidemic Resources

While the 1918-1919 pandemic is the most direct parallel to COVID-19, Alberta also faced more localized, smaller scale epidemics that were no less devastating. For example, poliomyelitis epidemics struck Alberta in 1927. Then again between 1952-1953, as part of larger regional outbreaks.

Can the strategy of widening the search to include other people and organizations work for researching Alberta’s polio epidemics?

As it turns out, this approach provides some unexpected resources. In addition to the Department of Public Health’s annual report, photographs of polio wards and an Alberta Public Health Bulletin, highlight elements of the 1927 epidemic. Similarly, the passage of the *Poliomyelitis Sufferers’ Act* in 1938 sheds light on approaches to treating the disease as well as academic and vocational training for those who had contracted the disease.



As it was the largest outbreak, the 1952-1953 epidemic has perhaps the largest volume of records. While the annual report again provides an overview of the epidemic, the Executive Council records include orders-in-council directing the closure of theatres and public pools.



Although the files are inconsistent, the records of the Department of Public Health discuss issues surrounding polio throughout the period of the 1950s epidemic up until the 1960s. There are numerous photographs from a variety of sources, including the Government's Publicity Bureau as well as private photographers.

The holdings even include an oral history of a doctor active during this epidemic. As well as records related to historian Tony Cashman's research into the history of the University of Alberta Hospital, which housed an after-treatment polio hospital starting in 1927.

The Current Pandemic

The events of the past have some obvious parallels to the situation that Alberta currently finds itself. So, what might this also say about the documentation at the PAA that could be accessible to researchers a hundred years from now?

Well, future researchers can expect to find a large volume of government records from a variety of sources. Executive Council and Health will have numerous files about the Government of Alberta's response to the pandemic, including public notices from medical officials, announcements about support programs that assisted individuals and families, and the guidelines under which the Relaunch Strategy reopened the Alberta economy. These researchers will have the benefit of new media, such as television and web content, to provide further layers of understanding to the story from the perspective of the Government of Alberta and those living in the province.

The portion that may be missing from the PAA's holdings are the records of individuals, businesses, organizations, and families that tell the more personal side of the pandemic. Letters, emails, journals, photographs, minutes of meetings, artworks, and other records created during this unique international event will tell Alberta's part of the COVID-19 story.

Archives play an important role in collecting and caring for records that document the day-to-day events in our societies. Archives also ensure that future generations can look back on and learn from records created from a variety of perspectives. Every Albertan has a story and can add important context and details to the memory of our shared history.

When considering the records you have created during this unusual time, please think of an archival program that can preserve them for future researchers. In fact, you might be tempted to sort through a box of photographs or documents as a quarantine project. Before you throw them away, consider what stories they tell and whether an archival institution, such as the PAA or your local archival program, might make a good home for them.

FPAAS Staff

The Friends were able to secure funding to hire 10 employees at the Provincial Archives of Alberta: a casino-funded position (see article on page 5), three Young Canada Works summer (YCW) student positions (see article on page 7), three six-month YCW intern positions and three positions under a service agreement with the PAA.

YCW Interns:

Emily Guthrie-Plouffe is the current Young Canada Works (YCW)/FPAAS Archivist Intern at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA), and has been working here since September 2019. Emily is a fourth-generation resident of amiskwaciywāskahikan (Edmonton, Alberta), and holds a Master of Archival Studies Degree from the University of British Columbia. When working on-site, you will find Emily processing AV records of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, including photographs, negatives, slides, cassette tapes, VHS tapes and floppy disks. Much of the material is related to Indigenous languages, primarily Dene but also Cree and Tlicho, and includes translated biblical passages and hymns. When remote, Emily works to increase online access to PAA holdings through arranging, describing and updating various fonds and uploading them to the archives' online database, HeRMIS. Emily is passionate about archival accessibility, diversity and reconciliation



Raven Smyth, is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Project Archivist intern at the PAA, funded through a YCW grant. The objective of this internship is to honour the TRC Calls to Action. Action #69 and 70 highlight archives as fundamental to ensuring that history is documented and made accessible in a way that is respectful to Indigenous worldviews. The TRC calls on Archives to identify, safeguard, and make available record holdings that relate to the Residential School system. Guided by these calls, it is Raven's responsibility to assist in improving access to records at the PAA that are related to Indigenous peoples, communities, and Residential Schools.

One of her projects is to create six posts for the PAA Facebook in conjunction with Indigenous community groups and members. Working with communities in this way ensures that the content developed is accurate and relevant for Indigenous researchers and celebrates the expertise and knowledge of Indigenous communities. Currently Raven is also working on a photo project to identify photo holdings related to Residential Schools within the Roman Catholic Oblates of Mary Immaculate records. She is systematically going through files and photo albums donated by priests to find photos of students so they can be added to existing school record guides. So far Raven has gone through 107 photo files of 1260 photos and identified 22 files of loose photos and 8 photo albums from Alberta and neighboring provinces and territories.

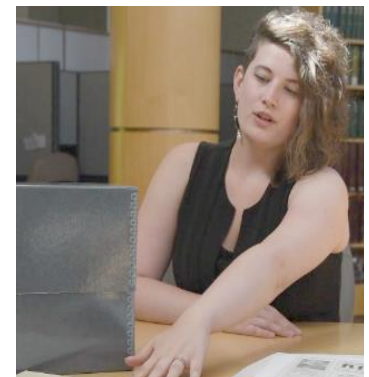
Lindsay Sisson, is a YCW Conservator Intern in the textual conservation lab at PAA. Her job includes assessment, documentation, and treatment of paper and photographic materials. The goals of conservation are to identify and mitigate agents of deterioration for long-term preservation on both a collection-wide and individual object basis. These actions allow collections to be accessible for reference by the PAA, researchers, and the public. Since beginning with the PAA in October, Lindsay has been working primarily on textual objects within the Oblates of Mary Immaculate fonds, which has involved tape removal, stabilization of delicate paper edges, and tear repair. (Continues on page 12)



Other projects have included the consolidation and reassembly of water-damaged photographs, humidification and stretching of parchment diplomas, and an introduction to book binding. Additionally, she has been involved in the digitization of coloured 16 mm motion picture films from the 1960s. She will be learning to assess, treat, and digitize magnetic video and audio materials in the collection in the coming months. Lindsay looks forward to other exciting projects in the upcoming months."

Service Agreement Employees:

Erin Sekulich just completed her first year with the FPAAS as the Archives Retail and Services Coordinator for the PAA. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology with a minor in history, but has grown up in the wonderful world of history since she started volunteering at the Reynolds Alberta Museum at eight years old. Among the many projects she has been working, updating photo copyrights has been the most interesting. There are 21,000 plus photos in the collection and she is about 1/3 complete the project. There are many new photos becoming available due to copyright expirations and other factors, which is very exciting, as it opens up new avenues of photos accessibility for publication. Also, there is endless entertainment in the notes and letters sent by archivists in the 60's and 70's.



Lorraine Butchart, is a Private Records Archival Technician. A graduate of MacEwan University's Library and Information Technology program, Lorraine has been a Friends employee with the PAA for the past 5 years. She would normally spend her days accessioning new donations from individuals and companies or processing private records accessions that have been appraised and described by the archivists. However, these are far from normal times, and as a result, she has spent much of the past 10 months working from home transcribing old pre-computer-era file lists into Excel. While under normal conditions, this work would not be considered a priority, it will nevertheless make the file lists easier to use and search, potentially even from the PAA's web site.

(Photo: Lorraine with PAA Retrieval Aide, Connie Yaroshuk) Although she would prefer to be in the office with her colleagues, Lorraine does admit that working from home has its perks, not least of which is the opportunity to spend a lot more time with her cats, Plato and Pascal, who seem equally happy to have her home so much, and most interested in "helping" her with her work.

Yesan Ham is the Photographic Technician at the PAA. Her responsibilities include digitizing and reproducing materials such as photographs, maps, blueprints, and text documents. She plays an important role in preserving the archive's collections through digitization, which involves scanning and photographing items. She uses her technical and artistic photography skills to create images that are visually pleasing and contain as much information and detail as possible. Additionally, Yesan completes public orders, archives service centre orders, and various requests from her colleagues at the PAA. When she is not assisting clients or colleagues with image requests, she focuses on preservation scanning. Her current project is scanning the Oliver Studios photo collection, which contains over five thousand 4x5 negatives.



Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society

Membership Application/Renewal and Donation Form

The Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society is an incorporated, non-profit organization created in 1991 to support the ongoing work of the Provincial Archives of Alberta by

- assisting the Provincial Archives of Alberta in acquiring, preserving and making its collections accessible;
- promoting and supporting programs and services at the Provincial Archives of Alberta; and
- fostering an awareness and appreciation of the Provincial Archives of Alberta and the documentary heritage it preserves.

Our membership is an integral part of the success of our organization. Members may serve on the board of directors and are also welcome to assist with fundraising projects such as casinos or in various capacities at the Archives and in the community. Some of the other benefits of membership include

- receiving an annual newsletter
- being notified of upcoming events, exhibits, and projects at the Archives
- receiving a 10% discount on products at the Archives Store (excludes organizational members)

Become a member of the Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society and help us to preserve Alberta's history for future generations! Annual memberships run from April 1 to March 31.

Note: The Society maintains a membership list as required by the Societies Act. The list is made available to the Board of Directors and Society members only when it is necessary for Society business, or if legislation requires the disclosure of this information. The Society does not sell or make available its membership list for other distribution or marketing purposes.

Membership Categories and Rates

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual annual membership – \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student (with valid ID) – \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (60+) annual membership – \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family (2 adults & children under 18) – \$30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (60+) lifetime membership – \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization annual membership – \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please accept my donation to help the Society with its programmes and projects in support of the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Donation amount: _____ | |

(All donations of \$10 or more will be acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes)

Total amount enclosed \$_____ (Make cheque payable to *Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society*)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

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Send cheque and form to: Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society
c/o Provincial Archives of Alberta
8555 Roper Road NW, Edmonton, AB T6E 5W1

Thank you for your
generous support!

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Email: FriendsPAAinfo@gmail.com*