

# NEWSLETTER

## Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society



Hands Up! Who want to join? The seasons are changing and so too is The Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society (FPAAS). While we continue to work with the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA), the board is looking for new members as all the board positions are up for election. Please consider joining the FPAAS Board and attending our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on June 2, 2022.

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Photo: RP331.5 South Edmonton 'Y' Camp (August 26, 1958)

<b>FPAAS Board 2020/2022</b>	President: Linda Borys	Treasurer: Karen Hesson
	Vice-President: Candice Laycraft	Secretary: Tanya Nguyen
		Director-at-Large: Judy Kovacs

By Erin Sekulich, Archives Retail and Service Coordinator

## Increased Interest in Genealogy During COVID-19



At the beginning of the COVID-19 closures, there was a noticeable increase in interest towards Spanish Flu records, from both the media and the general public. Taking advantage of this interest, the PAA implemented two rounds of humorous merchandise, drawing on this paralleled interest. These items have done very well! Two sets of tea towels featuring 'miracle cures' of the Spanish Flu sold out within a week and were restocked. And a mug featuring a young girl getting her polio shot, with the caption "Getting Real Sick of Being A Part of This Historical Moment," also sold out in a matter of days.

Time in insolation also inspired people's interest in genealogy and history. So much so that when conservation services were paused for a time, a hearty waiting list accumulated. When services resumed, many new clients had their first experience with the PAA. Many of these people have since become repeat customers.

Also, upon re-opening, there has been an increase in curiosity from the public as to how to gain the ability to do research, both virtually and in-person. In response to this interest, the PAA produced a variety of videos in collaboration with *Historic Festival and Doors Open* in 2020 and 2021. These in-depth tutorials covered topics such as storage techniques, photograph preservation and research. Resources such as these, have allowed clients to continue their exploration of the PAA virtually and prepare them for a future visit, when they feel comfortable to do so. To see for yourself, check out our [YouTube](#) Videos!

There has also been a spike in preservation material purchases and inquiries as how to best store or categorize their loved one's memories. Many clients have turned to our genealogy starter kits as a fun family activity and discussion initiator on preserving photographs and precious items. We had one client who started off with a kit and got completely hooked – returning for 1000 envelopes for her photo collection and commenting on how much our [Family Preservation \(Part 1&2\)](#) videos helped her in figuring out where to start!

Vital Statistic requests have more than doubled since before the pandemic, further showing how there has been a resurgence in interest for familial history. I have found more and more people contacting me as the pandemic progresses, interested in finding out the services we provide and how they can apply it to their own lives and interests. I think we may even have a few future volunteers coming out of the whole experience...



## Point of Interest: Atlantic No. 3

Atlantic No. 3 Oil well near Devon proved very lucrative for tycoon Frank MacMahon on January 15, 1948 when drilling forced oil out of the ground at a height of 150 feet! The oil gushed at a flow rate of 15 million cubic feet per day. This immense pressure led to fracturing of the ground in the surrounding area. Between March and September, Atlantic No. 3 recovered over one million barrels of oil.

The well ran wild until September 6, 1948 when a spark ignited a massive fire with flames reaching more than 100 feet in the air and billows of smoke, that could be seen over 100 miles away. Known as one of the most spectacular blowouts in Alberta history, it changed the face of the petroleum industry. Worldwide exposure resulted in international investment and better regulatory industry standards.

By Katherine Epp, Public Receptionist



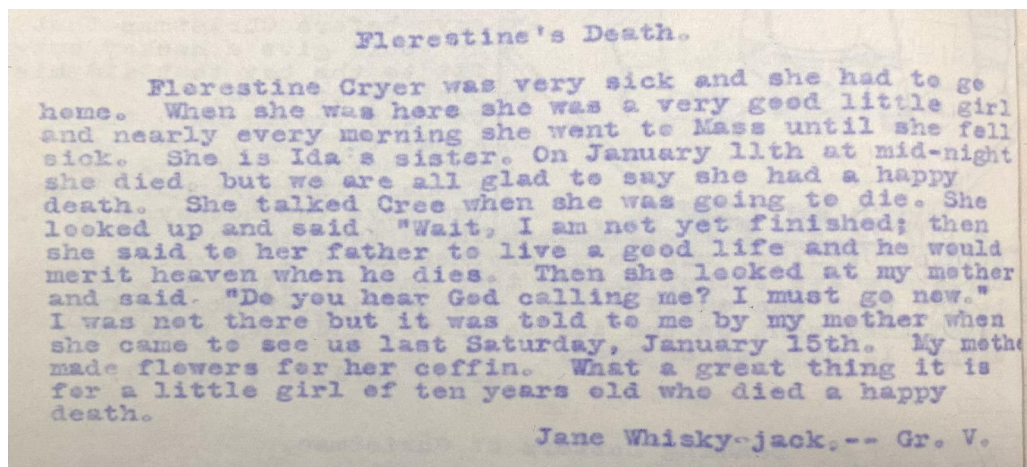
Image: C343 "Motion Picture Camera man in center of bubbling oil and natural gas at Atlantic No. 3, Leduc field before it caught fire [1940's]"

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## YCW Intern Reflections:

The Friends were able to hire five Interns through the Young Canada Works program for the Provincial Archives Indian Residential School project, to identify names of students within the archival records at the PAA. From September 2021 until March 2022, four researchers, Jack, Linnea, Marjory and Vienna, have been working their way through the residential school records of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a missionary society that was responsible for a number of residential schools in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Another intern, Morgan, has been digitizing these records to make them better available to the public.

- Tom Anderson, Private Records Manager



## YCW Intern Reflections:

By **Vienna Doell**

I am a research intern for the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) research project. For a six-month period, along with the other interns, I have been combing through Indian Residential School (IRS) files donated by the largest Roman Catholic missionary school operation in Canada, the OMI. Each intern has been assigned several schools and has been inputting the name and/or mention of each child into an excel spread sheet. Together, we have a goal of creating an accessible list of all the students' names in the OMI IRS files, along with digitized copies of where the names are mentioned. Accessibility to IRS files is part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (#69), which empowers Indigenous peoples in Canada to access their history, access their rights through genealogical evidence and access the truth with regards to the human rights violations committed at IRS.

My task of reading these files and finding names of children started off slowly. Reading late 19<sup>th</sup> century cursive was difficult and confusing at times. As the weeks went on, it became easier to read and understand what information was relevant to this research project. What never became easier was coming across colonial atrocities, perpetuated by the OMI personnel, the province and federal governments, and other individuals and organizations. It was surprising to see organizations like the Glee Club, Girl Guides, 4H Club, Cadets and others be involved in cultural erasure and state propaganda in IRS institutions. It only goes to show how this project not only impacts Indigenous people and their communities, but also non-Indigenous people. Accessing and learning about Canada's colonial histories is crucial to our political, economical, and social betterment.

By **Jack Kelly**

Since September, I have been working to read documents once in the possession of the OMI in order to help the public find information about residential schools. This work has the potential to help some achieve personal closure and to allow for an accessible resource to expand public understanding of the IRS system.

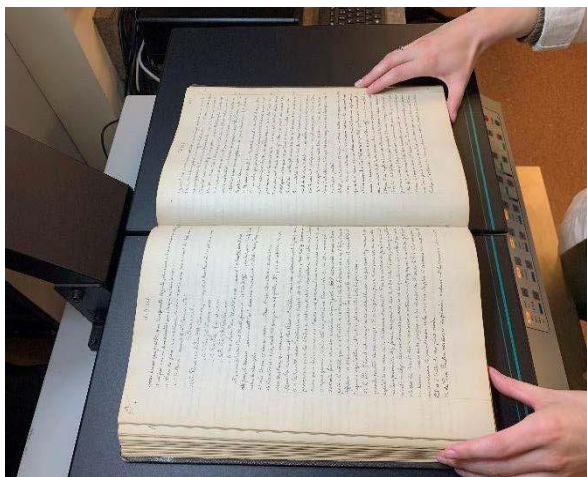
Files were written in English and French (and even once or twice in Latin), and covered schools across Alberta and into parts of Saskatchewan. I looked at files related to the schools of Duck Lake (St. Michael's) Residential School near Duck Lake, Sask., and Blue Quills (Notre Dame des Victoires or Sacred Heart) Residential School in St. Paul, Alberta. Many of these files are administrative, involving attendance, admission, and payroll, but there are also files from the students themselves, such as school newsletters and signed drawings.

Often, these files have shown the daily presence of death and illness in these schools. A segment in Blue Quills' February 1938 newsletter was written by a fifth grade student named Jane Whisky-jack about her classmate Florestine Cryer, who also wrote a segment in the same newsletter about a classmate going to the hospital for typhoid fever. While these schools had opportunities for the kids to express themselves, they also filtered student's perspectives through the motivations of the teachers and administrators, and through the

thesis of the newsletter itself, which aimed to calm down parents and to assure them that everything was well at these schools. These newsletters show the diversity and sometimes complexity in materials that the team has seen in the thousands of files related to residential schools. Quarterly inspector's reports and admission/discharge logs also note the absence of children for a variety of reasons, including running away, being illegally taken home by their parents, going to the hospital, and dying at school or at home.

By **Morgan Overend**

I am the digitization assistant intern for the IRS research and digitization project at the PAA. As part of this project, I digitize relevant records related to the various Indian Residential Schools in Alberta and Saskatchewan from within the large Oblates of Mary Immaculate collection. In addition to digitization, I am responsible for preparing the new digital copies of the records to be ready for public access and sending them to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in Winnipeg. Since starting this project in September of 2021, I have scanned tens of thousands of pages relating to several Residential Schools including Blue Quills, Brocket, Delmas, Hobbema, and Cluny. Records have included various correspondence between schools, priests and faculty, parents, and government institutions; attendance lists; records of examinations; school newsletters; and yearbooks. I use a variety of scanners to scan the different documents. When scanning loose-leaf files, I use a large high-speed scanner, the Exela Intelliscan XDS, with which I am able to scan hundreds of pages, both front and back, in mere minutes. When scanning bound documents, such as books and pamphlets, I use a book scanner, the Indus Book Scanner 5002. Some documents take several hours to scan and can be difficult to scan, such as a book with a stiff spine that refuses to lay flat, but overall this project is extremely rewarding. The documents I have scanned contain very important information about Residential Schools. Information not only about students at the time, but also about faculty and alumni. I believe that making these records available to the public will be very beneficial to survivors of Residential Schools or to those who know someone who attended these schools. Because of this, I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to work on this project and to help the PAA make these records available to the public.



Scanning a large Codex Historicus at the book scanner, page by page.

0474 ✓	Mary Jane Pattlesnake	16	"	"	"	7-6-16	"	VII	Dead
488 ✓	Lawrence Panny	15	"	"	"	7-6-20	"	III	"
633 ✓	J. B. Whitebear	11	"	"	"	4-10-27	"	IX	"

One of many student names identified is that of 11-year-old Jean-Baptiste Whitebear, who was a student at Hobbema residential school since he was 7 years old. Jean-Baptiste was admitted to Erminskin in 1933. He was “discharged” in 1938, having died. – Wayne Murdoch, Director of Collections Management.

2	Simon Okeymow	11	"	"	"	198	Joe. R. Heasel	Annie Paul	"
3	Jean Baptiste Whitebear	7	"	"	Ermineskin	210	William Whitebear	Marie R. Mekanaw	"
4	Victor Mekanaw Cutarm	7	"	"	"	175	Sam Cutarm	Jeannette Mekanaw	"

**By Linnea Bell**

Since September, I have been reviewing the records of two residential schools, St. Mary’s school on the Blood Reserve (also called Immaculate Conception Boarding School), and Crowfoot school (also called St. Joseph’s, first located at Blackfoot Crossing then at Cluny). From these two schools, I have reviewed about 400 records and have documented over 28,700 mentions of names and information of students.

While the school records that I have reviewed have not made explicit reference to abuse being committed by school staff, these records should not act to confirm that abuse occurred. Asking for confirmation from textual records created by the operators of IRS schools is a method of questioning the stories and experiences of IRS survivors who have shared their experiences of suffering and abuse. Some of the school records, from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, also illustrate how children were forcibly taken from their families and communities. Some were even actively stolen by school personnel while parents were away. This knowledge is not new.

Indigenous communities have shared histories of how parents and communities knew of the violence being committed at schools. In 1895, prior to the opening of St. Mary’s, parents on the Blood Reserve hid their children to try to protect them from being stolen into the IRS system. Then in 1899, police were used to enforce students’ attendance at St. Mary’s. In 1916, Crowfoot staff requested police intervention to take children from their families to schools. Into the 1960s, at both Crowfoot and St. Mary’s, police and RCMP were mandated with removing more children. The IRS system relied on violence by school staff, police, and the RCMP to enforce attendance. The knowledge of this practice is not new. Use of force to ensure students’ attendance at IRS intuitions established state-sanctioned violence as being consistent from the first interactions between the IRS system and Indigenous communities.

There is much to be learned from the IRS records created by OMI institutions in Alberta. For non-Indigenous Canadians, this learning should not only be about the extent of abuses carried about by the IRS system, nor should it only be about the number of students impacted by this system. I hope that Canadians review the information from these records and understand how violence against Indigenous children and communities formed the roots of the colonial nation-state called Canada.

By **Marjory Olsen**

So far, I have reviewed records from five schools, identifying 49689 names in 468 unique files.

In correspondence files, the context in which a child is mentioned may vary throughout the file. Several types of files, however, include the same child multiple times in very similar contexts. When this occurs, we “roll up” the mentions into a single entry. Most commonly, this “rolling up” method is applied to quarterly reports and attendance lists. Quarterly reports were submitted by the school to the Department of Indian Affairs at the end of each quarter (March, June, September and December) and listed each student at the school.



Image: Clockwise from top left – Jack Kelly, Linnea Bell, Vienna Doell, Marjory Olsen

These reports were also revised several times to report different information, including student names, numbers, ages, birthdates, and band numbers. Additionally, newsletters, newspapers, and yearbooks allow us to identify numerous names. These records often include brief articles written by students about events at the school, illustrations done by students, and photographs of school activities.

One of the more unusual records, the Dunbow Book of the Sick, was created at St. Joseph’s (Dunbow) Industrial School in southern Alberta, about 20km northeast of Okotoks, that operated from 1884 to 1922. This book listed the diagnoses and treatments of the children at the school, including measles vaccinations, amputations, and numerous cases of consumption. It also recorded outbreaks of several diseases, including measles in 1886 and 1898, chickenpox, diphtheria, and influenza in late 1918. In total, the school’s records identify 81 known deaths either at the school or after discharge. Correspondence related to building maintenance, student admission, Oblate business, and a variety of other topics are also part of the school’s files.

I also looked at files relating to Delmas School, which mainly record the admission and discharge of students. Delmas Residential School was located on the Thunderchild Reserve about 40km northwest of North Battleford in present-day Saskatchewan. It opened in 1901, and burnt down in 1948. It did not reopen, and many of the students were transferred to Onion Lake Residential School, about 26km north of Lloydminster to the east of the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. The transfer is alluded to in correspondence between the two schools, the Department of Indian Affairs, and provincial Oblate administration. While Delmas and Onion Lake Residential Schools were located in Saskatchewan, their records are at the PAA because the administrative region included both Alberta and portions of Saskatchewan.

## Point of Interest: Robert Gonsett

Robert Gonsett's early career began in Edmonton when he set up a laboratory in 1914. He was later nicknamed the "Ukrainian Edison," because Gonsett registered over 100 patents in his name during his 60 years of life. His inventions ranged from domestic items such as electric shears, a combination phonograph/radio/lamp, and a telephone answering machine, to inventions in cinematography. During World War II, Gonsett patented inventions that contributed to the US Navy in the fields of radar telephonics and electronics. He even received a Letter of Commendation for his scientific inventions. The fonds consists of various letters of patent, diagrams, descriptions, correspondence, manuals and specifications of various Gonsett Company inventions. The Gonsett Family fonds also contain information about some of the inventions, and are under accession PR0681. In addition, some of Robert R. Gonsett's inventions are located at the Royal Alberta Museum under accession H 68.121.

By Katherine Epp, Public Receptionist



1920 - FIRST COMBINATION PHONOGRAPH, RADIO AND LAMP

Information available in the Gonsett family fonds (PAA-6986) and the *Robert R. and Faust R. Gonsett* fonds (PR0680)

## FPAAS Staff Spotlight: Lindsay Sission

Lindsay Sission is a Friends-funded Assistant Conservator in the textual conservation lab at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA). Her job involves the assessment, documentation, and treatment of paper and photographic materials in the PAA's holdings. 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.

Recently, Lindsay has been rehousing objects including several artworks, documents, and photographic materials. This work has consisted of measuring an object, then creating a custom four-flap folder to its specified size, as well as matting to protect any friable material from abrasion. Four-flap folders are created by cutting a t-shape out of a large piece of folder stock, and then folding the edges in to cover the top and sides of an object.

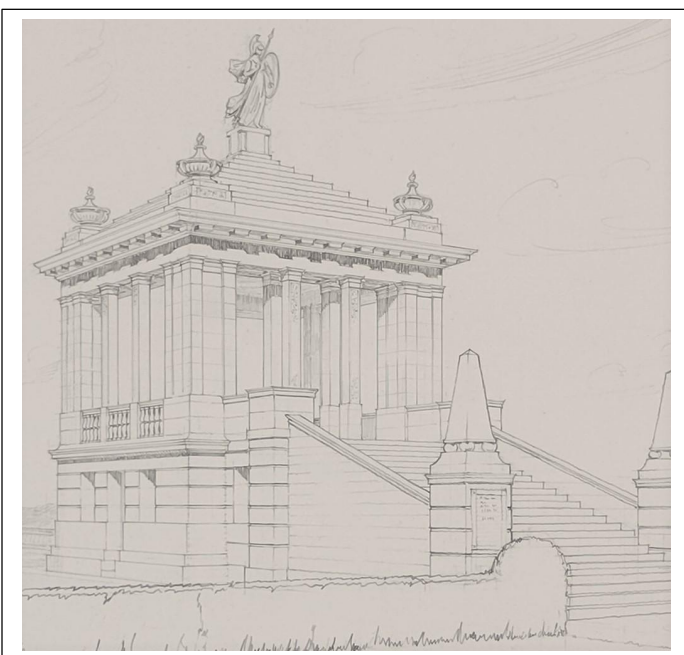
This conservation technique was taught by Lindsay and Cassidy Kingston, the Young Canada Works Conservation Intern, at an enclosures workshop. Participants learned how to create three common rehousing enclosures – a mylar encapsulation, four-flap folder, and portfolio. Also covered, was an overview of collections care and conservation at the PAA.

Lindsay's most recent project has been to survey a collection of architectural sketches by C.S. Burgess, who was an architect and town planner active in Edmonton between 1913 and 1960. His Edmonton work included many buildings for the University of Alberta, where he worked as the Professor of Architecture until his retirement in 1940. This collection also includes many sketches from his time as a lecturer at McGill University; plans and elevations for the Canadian Battlefields Memorial competitions; a public library in Dumfries and Maxwelltown; plans for a Lancashire Town Hall, as well as various other architectural sites in North America and Europe.

From the Burgess' fonds, Lindsay has surveyed over 100 objects that she collected identifying information such as size, media or process used to create the drawing in addition to their condition and treatment recommendations. Moving forward, this information can be used to assign treatment priorities to the objects in this accession.

In addition, Lindsay has worked on several textual and artistic works including a pastel drawing on sandpaper by Nicholas de Grandmaison, etchings by George Brown, and a government crime report from 1928. Many of these treatments involved the removal of pressure-sensitive tape or backings, stabilization and repair of tears, and the infilling of losses with toned paper. She looks forward to the remaining parts of her projects and extends her appreciation for all the opportunities the Friends have made possible for her!

Canadian Battlefields Memorial  
by C.S. Burgess/ nd. (PR2978)



Lindsay Sisson: Assistant Conservator

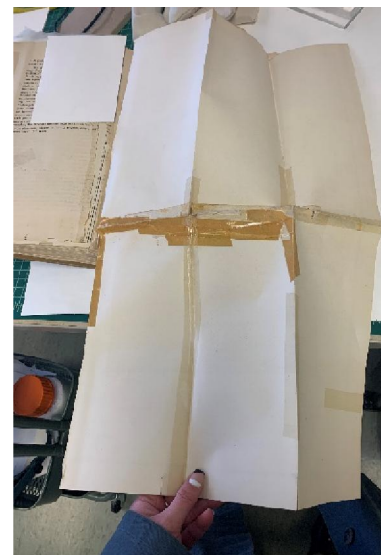
## FPAAS Staff Spotlight: Kassidy Kingston



The largest and most time-consuming project I have been working on, during my contract period at the PAA, is the repair of the 'Descriptions and Plans of Certain Indian Reserves in the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories' from 1889. This book contains foldout maps outlining different Treaty territories, followed by a detailed description about the residing Band and land traits. Many of the maps and pages, especially in the second half of the book, have been torn. Attempted repairs have been made over the years using different types of tape with multiple carrier and adhesive types. This combination of different adhesives increased the level of damage on the pages. Age has also made these pages very brittle from acidification and the paper has degraded. This has contributed to an increased susceptibility to page tears and made it even more difficult to remove the tape.

By: **Kassidy Kingston**, Conservation intern

I began the treatment by documenting the condition of the book and taking pre-treatment photographs (seen right). Next, I moved onto tear repair, which has consumed the majority of my treatment time thus far. The differing levels of tape that had been applied were all in varying levels of adhesive degradation and failure. In some areas, the adhesive had failed enough that the tape/ carrier could



be peeled off without the need for heat to soften the adhesive. These areas were highly yellowed and stained from the adhesive. In other areas, the adhesive was still very tacky and heat was required to remove the carrier, along with a scalpel and tweezers. Some of the newer tape could be removed smoothly with heat alone while others showed some resistance. This tape caused minimal discoloration and the residue was fully removed. The heat that I used to remove the tape was initially applied with a scalpel heated by a tacking iron that allowed the scalpel to glide more easily through the adhesive as it was softened.

Eventually I moved to a heated air pen, which proved to be a quicker and more efficient method to soften the adhesive and cut the tape off with a scalpel.

For the removal of the majority of adhesive residue, I used a rubber cement eraser. For areas with extra tacky adhesive, I also used cellulose powder as a coating, to make the adhesive easier to pill with the eraser and scrape off. This reduced the strain on the paper during the removal process. On some other areas, ethanol reduced the adhesive residue, when the surrounding area was highly brittle and further damage was likely to occur through the use of an eraser. However, the use of ethanol is a risk for its potential to cause tidelines from the yellow adhesive residue.

Once the tape has been fully removed, I de-acidify with Bookkeeper to provide strength. I also begin the tear repair process with Lascaux heat set tissue. Lascaux tissue is used in instances where moisture should not be introduced to the object, such as in the presence of soluble media, and the potential for cockling or planar distortion from large scale repairs exists. The adhesive on the tissue can be re-activated through the application of heat or ethanol with either of these options possible for this book. Ethanol is more beneficial than heat for spot activation of the adhesive when piecing together small map fragments. To further stabilize these fragments, I plan to line the back of each detached quadrant of the map with Lascaux tissue, then hinge them together and tip any loose pages back into the book. Due to the larger scale of the lining, the use of wheat starch paste would not be ideal and could cause too much planar distortion that would hinder the alignment of the pieces. Hinging these pieces together, rather than a complete repair along the tear line, would allow for easier re-folding of the maps along the original fold lines without adding additional bulk to the book's binding.

If there is time, I will also provide toned fills of Japanese tissue paper to the areas of loss on the pages and maps. As well as conduct in-painting for a more seamless appearance. It has been an interesting journey repairing this book!

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## Point of Interest: Diverse Beauty Pageants



The 1970s saw more diverse beauty pageants and competitions, including those sponsored by Indigenous and cultural organizations. In 1977, Regie Nicolas became Miss Philippine Queen. Revisit Queen Regie's reign at [Prairie Royalty](#), the PAA's latest exhibit.

Image: J3273/1 Philippine Banyanihan Association of Alberta Miss Philippine Queen Contest, 1977.

## Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society Membership Application/Renewal and Donation Form

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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.

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### Membership Categories and Rates

- |  |  |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual annual membership – \$20<br><input type="checkbox"/> Senior (60+) annual membership – \$15<br><input type="checkbox"/> Senior (60+) lifetime membership – \$50<br><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: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Student (with valid ID) – \$15<br><input type="checkbox"/> Family (2 adults & children under 18) – \$30<br><input type="checkbox"/> Organization annual membership – \$50 |
|--|--|

(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: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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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