



The Archives Re-Past

December

2008

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PPresident's Message

Dear colleagues,

Greetings to you all during this holiday season.

Our fourth annual Archives Week is a little over a month away. I think it's fair to say it will be the busiest yet, with film nights, "celebrity reader" events, exhibits, open houses, lectures and more being planned across the province (including an event sponsored by one of our newest members). If you are planning an event that the SCAA office doesn't know about yet, please send us the details so that we can include the information on our website and, where possible, in releases being sent to various media outlets. And in planning the publicity for your Archives Week activities, don't forget about our Public Awareness Toolkit, available on the website.

Of course, the holiday season is also grant application season, with visions of extra funding dancing in our heads. I certainly hope to see NADP applications from many of our institutional members. It's worth reminding you that thanks to our funding from the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund, most of Saskatchewan's NADP allocation is available for institutional projects – think big!

In other news, the SCAA is making plans to issue a new edition of the *Directory of Archives in Saskatchewan*. Is your membership current? Institutions need to be 2008/09 members to be listed in the directory. There is also now an online version of the directory on our website (replacing the basic list of institutional members), making it easier to browse the listing by community, region, thematic area and repository type.

Best wishes for the holidays.

Tim Hutchinson
SCAA President

Archives Week 2009

Calendar of Events:

The fourth annual Archives Week in Saskatchewan will be celebrated **February 2–8, 2009**.

Province-wide

- Monday, February 2
 - Radio phone-in program about archives, with SCAA Archives Advisor Carey Isaak and City of Saskatoon Archivist Jeff O'Brien.
 - CBC Radio Saskatchewan, 1:00 p.m.

Humboldt

- Thursday, February 5
 - Archives of the Humboldt and District Museum and Gallery – Open House, time TBA (in the afternoon)

La Ronge

- Wednesday, February 4
 - "Do You Know These People?" – archival photograph display at the Northern Saskatchewan Archives, Pahkisimon Nuye?áh Library building, 108 Avro Place, Air Ronge. Date TBA

Regina

- Tuesday, February 3
 - Spotlight on the Past: Celebrity Readings from Archives in Saskatchewan. Regina Public Library Film Theatre, 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 4
 - "Out of the Shadows: A New Look at Archives" – Well-known archival educator Dr. Thomas Nesmith (University of Manitoba) will speak about the nature and value of records and archives. Location: RIC 119, Research and Innovation Centre (between the Lab Building and College West), University of Regina, 4:00 p.m., reception to follow

- Friday, February 6
 - A Night in Paradise: Short films from (and using) the holdings of Saskatchewan archival repositories, at Regina's Paradise Cinemas, 1011 Devonshire Drive, 7:00–9:00 p.m.

Saskatoon

- Tuesday, February 3
 - Spotlight on the Past: Celebrity Readings from Archives in Saskatchewan. Saskatoon Public Library (Frances Morrison Branch), 7:30 p.m.
- Thursday, February 5
 - Night at the Roxy. An evening of education and entertainment featuring several short films taken from the holdings of various archives in Saskatoon, with commentary provided by Bill Waiser, Professor of History at the University of Saskatchewan. At Saskatoon's historic Roxy Theatre, 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, February 8
 - Archives Pavilion at the Saskatoon Heritage Festival, Western Development Museum, 12:00 noon–5:00 p.m

Shaunavon

- Public reading of local stories from the Grand Coteau Heritage & Cultural Centre "Virtual Volunteers" project – Grand Coteau Heritage & Cultural Centre, 440 Centre Street. Date TBA

(Events confirmed as of December 18, 2009)

All events are free of charge – everyone welcome! For more information on Archives Week, please e-mail us at scaa@sasktel.net Also, if there are any Archives Week events that you are organizing/sponsoring, please send the details to the SCAA office so we can help 'get the word out'.

Our Legacy:

Digitizing aboriginal content in Saskatchewan

Submitted by University of Saskatchewan Archives and Northern Saskatchewan Archives

The “Our Legacy” site is a database of archival and published material relating to First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, found in Saskatchewan cultural and heritage collections. It is primarily intended to increase the information normally available for archival material by providing access to descriptions of material at a file or item level.

The site is a partnership among several of Saskatchewan’s archival repositories – there are currently nine represented – coordinated by the University of Saskatchewan Archives, University of Saskatchewan Library, and the Northern Saskatchewan Archives at Pahkisimon Nuye?ah Library System. “Our Legacy” currently includes more than 4,300 descriptive records with over 81,000 digital items, including photographs, pages of diaries, reports, correspondence,

minutes, graduate theses, books, pamphlets and other published material; and a selection of audio recordings, videos, and artifacts.



One of a series of photos of Napthelie McKenzie of Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan, showing how a fish can be cooked upwanask style over an open fire, without a frying pan, using sticks to hold it. *Department of Northern Saskatchewan Academic Education Branch fonds, Northern Saskatchewan Archives*

Phase Two of Our Legacy, currently underway, is being funded by additional financial support from the National Archival Development Program (Canadian Council of Archives

and Library & Archives Canada) and the Multitype Library Board through the Provincial Library. Material being added to the site during this phase includes:

- Photographs and documents at the Prince Albert Historical Society;
- Transcripts of public hearings conducted as part of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples – a rare set of documents found in the Native Law Centre fonds at the University of Saskatchewan Archives;
- The Larry Hewitt Collection at the Northern Saskatchewan Archives – interviews, photographs and more relating to the Dene people of Northern Saskatchewan;
- The Don Neilson 4H Collection at the Northern Saskatchewan Archives – over 700 photographs taken in the 1950s and 1960s of 4H Clubs in 12 northern communities.



Cadets marching at Muskoday Reserve Pow Wow, near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, August 2003. *Hans Dommasch fonds, University of Saskatchewan Archives*

Visit “Our Legacy” at <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/>.

Beatty Trek

Submitted by Gailmarie Anderson

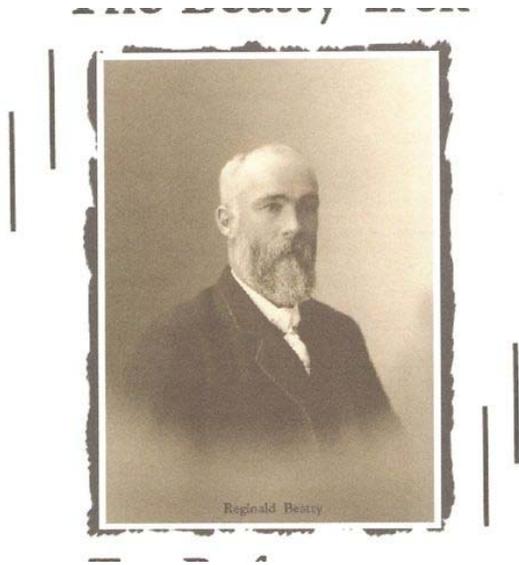


Photo courtesy of Melfort and District Museum

Melfort & District Museum and Melfort Amateur Dramatics presented the premiere performance of **THE BEATTY TREK** in March of 2008. This is a multi-media presentation: the powerpoint, both pictorial and audio, is interspersed with a live performance by an actress and with a voice-over by a local resident whose family had connections with the Beatty family.

THE BEATTY TREK is based upon a letter, written by Reginald Beatty, the founder of Melfort, to his wife, Mary. Beatty made a 300 mile long trek in February of 1886 from this area down to the Qu'Appelle Valley to pick up grain. Some years later, in May of 1925, he recounted the tale of this adventure in a letter to his wife. The tale includes a story about Beatty's encounter with Jack Round. This original letter was donated to our museum by Bob Blakely whose grandmother had been a nanny to the Beatty children. It is indeed a treasure and the local dramatics group brought this piece of history alive with their wonderful multi-media presentation.



Photo courtesy of Melfort and District Museum

Northern Saskatchewan Archives: Providing a safe home for northern history

Submitted by Graham Guest, Archival Historian

Northern Saskatchewan Archives was set up in La Ronge in 2002 by Pahkisimon Nuyeh?áh Library System to provide a safe home for documents and images relating to the north.

It began with the donation of the valuable Department of Northern Saskatchewan collection, and now has materials dating back over 50 years from many other agencies and people. Today the archives houses 90,000 photographs, 2,000 audio and video tapes, and 10,000 periodicals, reports, and books on Aboriginal and Northern topics.

The Department of Northern Saskatchewan collection of photographs, tapes, and publications features many northern people, communities, and events in the 1970s, and also records the traditional Cree and Dene lifestyles. Skills such as making tikunagans or baby cradles, cooking fish upwanask style, preparing moose and

caribou meat and hides, and making birch syrup are all recorded in detail in the photographs. Articles in the popular *Denosa* magazine and taped interviews with elders feature many northern people and places, from Kinoosao and Camsell Portage in the north down to Green Lake and Cumberland House.

Other collections include historic photographs and films taken by northern resource officer Chick Terry in the 1950s, Robert Tanner's photographs from his time working at the Island Falls hydro-electric station in the 1950s, photographs by Don Neilson of 4H gardening programs in the 1950s and 60s in 12 northern communities, Mel Jamieson's photographs and films of his trapping experiences at Wollaston Lake in the 1960s and 70s, and John Finch's photographs, tapes, and films that trace the early history of aviation in the north.

Other items include Gordon Koshinsky's collection of studies and reports relating to commercial fishing, videos and photographs taken by Saskatchewan Education staff in the 1980s and 90s of Elders Gatherings and Cultural Camps, and memorabilia collected by two long-time northern teachers, Julie Nagy and Jody Hanson. A recent donation from The Northerner newspaper consists of over 20,000 photographs from the 1970s onwards.

Archival Historian Graham Guest provides tours and slide presentations for school classes and other interested groups, organizes an annual Open House during Archives Week in February, and has responded to many requests for research, information, and photographs. During a recent project with the University of Saskatchewan, Northern Saskatchewan Archives digitized over 1,000 slides, print materials, and audio and video tapes relating to the north's Aboriginal people for inclusion in the 'Our Legacy' website at <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy>



For more information please contact Graham Guest, Archival Historian, at (306) 425-6646 or archives@pnls.lib.sk.ca or Audrey Mark, Director, Pahkisimon Nye?áh Library System, at (306) 425-4525 or ae.mark@pnls.lib.sk.ca

ACA Conference coming to Calgary

Submitted by Janet McMaster, member,
ACA Conference 2009 Host Committee

The Association of Canadian Archivists' annual conference will be held in Calgary, Alberta, from May 14th–17th, 2009. The conference is held in different locations throughout Canada each year, and this is the first time that it will be held in Calgary.

The theme for the conference is Rights, Responsibilities, Trust: Archives and Public Affairs. The Program Committee has been busy bringing together an interesting and thought-provoking slate of national and international speakers, developing 4 plenary and 21 concurrent sessions from among over 60 submissions received. The sessions include traditional presentations as well as panel sessions, focused debates, and round tables. Topics to be discussed include the role of archives in the search for truth and reconciliation in Canada; archives, sexuality and public policy; preserving the

environmental record; accountability and archival description; the effect of access and privacy legislation on archives in the 21st century; policy issues related to digitization, outreach, and advocacy; archives and human rights around the world; and the role and future of the archival profession in an environment of changing public priorities. Speakers have been invited from across Canada and from England, Australia, Scotland, the Netherlands, South Africa, the United States, Sweden, and the South Pacific.

The opening reception on May 14th will be held at the CPR Railway Pavilion, preceded by a reception for first-time attendees in the Penthouse Suite. Other social events will include the traditional baseball game, the dinner and dance on the final evening, as well as special events highlighting some of our local Alberta treasures. Two local

historians will conduct walking tours of Calgary's eclectic downtown area.

All conference sessions take place at the Fairmont Palliser Hotel, conveniently located in downtown Calgary and recently voted the top Calgary hotel in the Calgary Herald's Reader Choice Awards. A special ACA group rate is available for conference delegates.

A pre-conference tour to Blackfoot Crossing is planned for Wednesday, May 13, 2008. Located only an hour away from Calgary and a designated national Heritage Site, Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park is a world-renowned cultural, educational and entertainment

centre of historical and archaeological significance, which promotes and preserves the language, culture and traditions of the Siksika Nation.

Additional information about the conference can be found on the ACA's web site: <http://archivists.ca>. Check this web site regularly, as new material is being added as soon as it becomes available.

Mark your calendars now for May 14th-17th, 2009 and plan to attend the ACA conference in Calgary!



Ask the Expert!

Featuring Tim Novak

Tim Novak has been with the Saskatchewan Archives Board since 1983. Principally involved as a photographs archivist, he has been responsible for acquiring, preserving and describing photographs that are of historical significance to the province. He currently works as a Reference and Outreach archivist in the Regina office. He is frequently consulted on issues involving photographic research, description and preservation.

Question: While cleaning out my basement recently, I came across several shoeboxes full of old family photographs that had once belonged to my grandparents. What should I do to “archive” them?

Answer: The first thing to do is to make sure they are all identified. Most family photo collections have never been properly recorded. It is common to turn over an image hoping to see who is in the photo and be confronted with blank paper – no names and no dates are provided. People

often assume that someone will remember who is in those treasured photos as long as there are family and relatives around. However, as people grow older, lose their memory or die, the chances that your photos will remain unidentified increases. There is no time like the present to pass the photos around and get relatives to help you out.

An archivist may tell you that an unidentified family photo is probably not worth keeping. Its “evidential value,” or how it serves as evidence of someone or something, may be lost. Its “informational value” or what it tells us about how people lived, dressed, worked and played is all that is left. If that is good enough for you to keep it with the family records, then by all means preserve it. Of course there is always the possibility that a relative you haven’t seen in years comes along and can put names to faces. Then you will not regret having thrown them out. The information can be recorded on the backs of the photos but write with a soft pencil only and don’t press too hard or you’ll end up embossing the image on the

front. Special archival quality photo crayons are available for writing on contemporary RC or resin-coated prints. Resist the temptation to write names with arrows pointing to people on the image itself.

Keep the information brief and try to provide the basic identifiers:

- name(s)
- date
- location
- event

e.g. Bill and Mary Walker, Christmas party, Swift Current, 1964

It is not a good idea to compose an essay on the back of each print. If you have to record more information about the photos, you might want to create a descriptive log where you can include notes and comments. This can be done on a computer database, a Word document or in a notebook or ledger.

By doing this you will quickly discover that you need to give each photo a reference number. This will link the image to any

description or information you have recorded. A simple system of numbering the photo in sequential order is usually sufficient, i.e. 1, 2, 3, and so on. Some people get creative with numbering photos by using the year date as a starting point:

e.g. Photo number 1997-23-4 represents photo number 4 in the 23rd roll of film taken in 1997.

The same system will work for digital photos. It does not work if you have many undated photos.

Dating old photographs can be a challenge. Much has been written about the subject and there are plenty of books and articles available. A photo's format is a determining factor. Nineteenth century photographs such as the daguerreotype, the ambrotype, tintype, stereo cards, carte-des-visites, cabinet cards and glass lantern slides are all characteristic of the early decades of photography. However, few people are fortunate enough to have such rare treasures in their family collections. Most of us have

prints of varying antiquity, size and appearance. Amateur colour photography did not become widespread until the 1960's. Clothing and hair are good indicators of when a photo might have been taken as styles have characteristically changed over the course of decades. License plates, automobile makes and models, interior decor and household artifacts often help to determine the period in which a photo was taken. Since the 1930's many photo labs have been conveniently putting the date of processing on either the front or backs of prints and slides.

Photographs are susceptible to damage and deterioration. The important thing is to get them out of the basement, out of the attic and away from any strong light. Basements tend to be too humid, especially in the summertime, while attics are too hot. Photographs are adversely affected by humid and warm conditions. Any frequent fluctuations in temperature and humidity are definitely not good for them. A cool, dry and dark part of the house is

recommended. Storage closets serve this purpose well. By keeping them away from light, you can minimize the fading that often occurs in colour photographs and the yellowing that sometimes appears in poorly developed black and white prints. Certain colour processes, especially slides, prints and negatives from the 1950's to the 1970's, show significant colour "shifting" or fading if they have been exposed to light. This can even happen to some colour materials despite being kept in the dark. It is recommended that if you want to frame any family photographs, have copies made and store the originals away. Never discard negatives; they are the original working record of what was taken and, if properly processed, they will last a long time.

The shoebox method of storing photos, while convenient for casual browsing, is not encouraged. Fingerprints, scratches, tears and creases can be avoided by placing prints in archival quality albums. This allows for easy browsing and provides some protection from

dust, grime and other pollutants. It also serves as a convenient way to organize and label your photographs. Most photo albums on the market today are described as being “archival safe.” That means that the papers are acid-free and the plastics are free from PVC (polyvinyl chloride) and plasticizers that can be harmful to photo emulsions. Avoid the “magnetic” or self-adhesive albums that were so popular in the 1970’s. The tacky glue used to secure the photos to each page can be harmful to fibre base prints. It can also become difficult to remove them from the album. This often results in the tearing of the paper fibres on the backs of prints. Placing photos in individual plastic Mylar sleeves is an alternative but these products can be expensive, especially if you have a large collection. Slides can be stored in archival quality polyethylene pages which allow for easy viewing without touching the image or mount. Always choose archival quality storage boxes and containers to help protect the collection.

It is always a good idea to wear cotton gloves when handling

photo prints and negatives. Natural oils and acids on our fingers can leave finger prints and smudges. If not properly removed these will eventually dry and become etched on the photo emulsions. Avoid the use of mending tapes and glues unless they are described as acid-free or pH neutral and are suitable for archival records. With a little extra effort and expense your family photo collection will be in better condition than it has been in a long time.

Some Reminders:

The application date for SCAA Institutional members to apply to the NATIONAL ARCHIVAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (NADP) is **January 7, 2009** (no later than 5:00 pm). Five (5) copies of the application are to be mailed to:

**Saskatchewan Council for
Archives and Archivists (SCAA)
202-2080 Broad Street
Regina, SK S4P 1Y3**

Please also send an electronic copy of your application – including any of the Excel calculators used (available as part of the SCAA's NADP workbooks) – either by including a CD in your package, or e-mailing it to scaa@sasktel.net

Also, for Archives Week in Saskatchewan celebrations, the SCAA has created some promotional material (buttons, bookmarks, postcards and posters) that will be available for all SCAA members by mid-January 2009. If you would like an SCAA Archives Week 2009 'Poster Blank' (a poster template with space available to advertise your specific Archives Week event), please contact the SCAA office

Let's make this Archives Week in Saskatchewan the best yet!

The SCAA would like to welcome new members and thank them for their support.

Institutional Members:

**Sisters of Mission Service
Grand Coteau Heritage & Cultural Centre
Allen Sapp Gallery**



WORKING TO PRESERVE THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE OF SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan Council for Archives & Archivists
Executive Committee and Staff
extend to all our members

Season's Greetings



*Best Wishes
for the New Year!*

