

Off The Record



AAO

Archives Association of Ontario

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On the Cover

A wintry scene from the University of Toronto Archives titled "Skule's Chariot Race" depicting the Engineers' chariot team and cheerleaders in 1948. The photo is from the Walter F. Mackenzie fonds, identifier# WFM103-2. The race continues to be an annual event for Engineering students.

About Us

The Archives Association of Ontario (AAO) was established in 1993 as a



result of the amalgamation of the Ontario Association of Archivists and the Ontario Council of Archives. It is a network of archives and archivists providing programs, education, advocacy and shared knowledge, consisting of approximately 300 members.

The AAO promotes the development of a cooperative system of archives in Ontario by:

- Advocating on behalf of Ontario's archival community to the government of Ontario, local government and other provincial institutions in order to advance archival practice and promote the value of archives
- Promoting professional standards, procedures and practices among archival repositories
- Facilitating archival communication and cooperation among institutions, users and sponsors
- Providing leadership through communication and co-operation with individuals, groups and associations interested in the preservation and use of Ontario's documentary heritage

Additionally, the AAO offers a number of different services to its members. Please visit <http://aao-archivists.ca/Services> to learn more.

Message from the Editor

by Grant Hurley

Many thanks for opening this new issue of *Off the Record*, which is my first in the seat as Editor! It has been a delight joining the AAO board and connecting with the archival community here in Ontario. Thank you for being so welcoming to this newcomer in your midst. My last turn as an editor was a little different: in my high school days I started a student newspaper with some friends called *Memprobamate*. The name was selected by randomly picking a word from the dictionary (footnote: it's an anxiety-reducing medication), and the writing in it was as unfortunate as its name, including a war of words over the greatness of the band Radiohead, and various complaints about how terrible being in high school was (which wasn't totally inaccurate, I suppose). *Off the Record* is decidedly a step up. It has a strong history of readership and writing that I am proud to join. And I love being an archivist much more than a sixteen-year-old.

I am excited to bring a new look to the newsletter, which is intended to make it easier to read and navigate on your desktop or tablet. In addition to a fantastic slate of feature articles, there are two new series being launched in this issue: a spotlight on the incredible careers of our longtime members, and a new series of my own on archives and food that looks at how records can be tasty (indirectly, of course). I love food, and I love historical records, so when the two come together (as in the case of Benson's Strong Ale in this issue), I get pretty excited. Please let me know if you have recipes or food stories you'd like to share

from your archival collections – I would be happy to feature them. In the meantime, stay warm, grab a cup of tea (or something stronger as required) and happy reading!



Message from the President

By Marissa Paron

Greetings, members!

A new year is upon us, and with this new beginning comes a fresh new look for *Off the Record* (OTR), courtesy of our new Director-Without-Portfolio/OTR Editor, Grant Hurley! Grant succeeded Crystal Campitelli – to whom the other Board members and I had to bid a bittersweet farewell in November – in this role, and we were very fortunate to have him join us on the Board of Directors in the Fall.

In this first issue of OTR in 2016, I am delighted to share with you a few additional updates regarding the AAO team and on some of the great initiatives the AAO currently has underway. In January, we welcomed Emily Chicorli as our new Archeion Assistant thanks to funding from the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Documentary Heritage Communities Program (DHCP). Emily will support Amanda Hill, AAO Archeion Coordinator, by completing an Archeion needs assessment and identifying how we can best help our members to contribute holdings information to our archival information network. We also saw Rachel-Ann Pisani join us as our new Communications

and Advocacy Committee chairperson, who replaces Emily Monks-Leeson in this position. I look forward to working with Rachel-Ann in the future, and wish to express my sincere thanks to Emily for all of her contributions as Chair over the past year!

I would like to encourage all members to volunteer with the Association through one of the following three positions that will be up for election at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May: Vice-President/President Elect; Director-Without-Portfolio/OTR Editor; and Director-Without-Portfolio/Web Administrator. The 2016 Nominations Committee was struck at the Board's January 29th Board meeting, and whether you are looking to gain experience, or feel that your knowledge and experience would greatly benefit the AAO, please throw your hat in the ring!

I would like to thank those who shared their thoughts and suggestions via our online survey tool on the anticipated update to the Rules for Archival Description (RAD) being led by the Canadian Council of Archives' (CCA's) Canadian Committee on Archival Description (CCAD). Pursuant to the responses we received, the Board submitted a formal response to the CCA back in December on behalf of the AAO regarding the way forward for RAD. We expect that this feedback will inform ongoing discussions about the project.

Another way you can share your ideas with the AAO is through our upcoming annual conference we are delivering jointly with the Association for Manitoba Archives in Thunder Bay from May 11th to 13th. The call for submissions of poster proposals remains

open until March 31st, so please contact the AAO office at aao@aao-archivists.ca if you are a student, new professional, or seasoned professional who would like to prepare and present a poster on your exciting research endeavors to the community during a special "lightning round" session planned as part of the conference program. We want to hear from you! If finances are a concern, please be reminded of the Shirley Spragge Bursary available to AAO Student Members enrolled in a recognized archival program, AAO members who are recent graduates (within 1-3 years) of an archival program, and AAO members who are practicing (or volunteer) archivists in financial need. The bursary will be awarded to one applicant to provide for his or her free conference registration this year plus up to \$650 in travel reimbursement to attend the conference. For more information on this opportunity, please visit the AAO's website at <http://aao-archivists.ca/2015-shirley-spragge-bursary>. Please note that the application period for the Shirley Spragge Bursary will run from March 7th to March 18th this year.

In the meantime, we have Archives Awareness Week 2016 to look forward to starting April 4th until April 10th! Please continue to visit the AAO website for details on activities taking place across the province to help mark the event. I hope you all have some fun activities planned to help celebrate the occasion and to remind your communities of the role that archives and archival professionals play in preserving and providing access to Ontario's documentary heritage!



Member Spotlight: An Interview with Brian Beaven

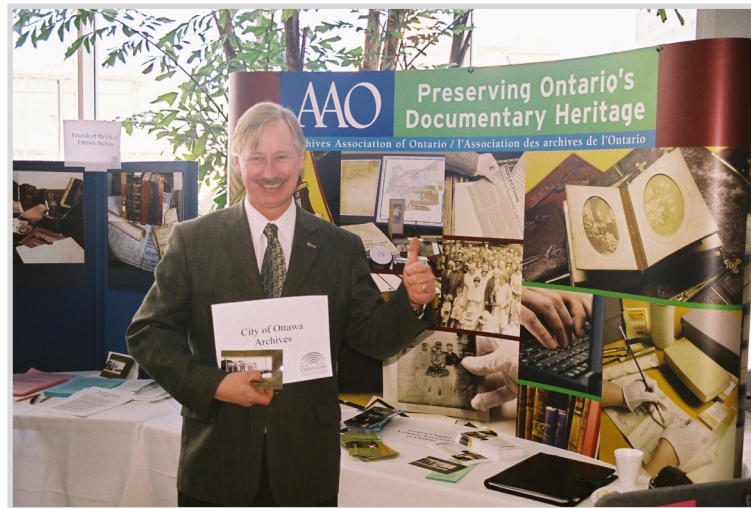
[OTR is pleased to launch a new column devoted to recognizing some of the AAO's long-time members. The column is an initiative of the AAO Fundraising Committee. This issue features Brian P. N. Beaven, recently retired Archivist with Library and Archives Canada. – Ed.]

Q: When and why did you first join the AAO?

I came to archives in 1989 at the age of 40 when I was awarded one of eight positions in a Canada-wide competition for Historical Researchers (HR) at the National Archives of Canada (NA). By 1993, I was looking for a reliable professional connection outside of my workplace and I attended the founding conference of the AAO, born of a merger of two antecedent organizations. Really, I was trying to find some solid ground in archival practice and a network through which to build my career. On the last day of the conference, I took my chance and volunteered to serve on the first AAO Executive.

My goal was to become President of the new organization ASAP and make the AAO into an active agent of professionalization. Much to my chagrin, I ended up with the Treasurer's portfolio at a time when there was no outside office management support. I personally had no knowledge of the basics of budget planning or double entry book-keeping. Still, in two years, I managed to help the AAO emerge with a \$40,000 surplus.

I was eventually recruited by Paul Henry to join the executive of the Eastern Chapter of the AAO. I continued to serve as either President or VP of the local Chapter through to 2008. In those years, I played a leading part



Brian Beaven at Heritage Day in Ottawa, 2007

in Chapter advocacy in defending the City of Ottawa Archives program at a time of severe fiscal austerity and I took on the Presidency of the Council of Heritage Organizations in Ottawa, which

I helped build into a very effective advocacy institution for local Museums and Archives. In the meantime, the AAO Awards Committee came to the problematic conclusion in 2006 that I deserved a Fraser Award for advancing the cause of Archives. In an effort to make myself a worthy recipient of the award, I joined the Awards Committee and acted as its Chair from 2007 to 2013.

Q: What benefits have you derived from your participation in the AAO over the years?

Throughout these many years, the focus of my professional work has been in addressing two of the three great challenges for archives over the last forty years. Those three challenges have been (1) how to rationalize the standards of archival description in anticipation of digital approaches to archival access, (2) how to acquire, process and preserve digital records, in particular the huge archives generated by modern government, and (3) how to rationalize archival appraisal into a more program effective methodology to cope with an age of information and records abundance.

Central to my sense of personal fulfillment has been my work with the Archives Association of Ontario, through the AAO and for the AAO. The AAO grounded my professional endeavours in sound practice, practical applications, and an appreciation of the versatile and open management approaches of its many institutional leaders. I learned much and I have gained much more than I contributed. Throughout my career, my association with the AAO gave me an immediate sense of a caring professional archival community, a professional home away from home.

Q: What do you see for the future of our profession?

I see a great, positive, and challenging future for the archival field in resolving the application of digital solutions to archival access and preservation and more systematic applications of appraisal methodology to cope with the super-abundance of infor-

mation in a digital age. I think the AAO will remain an important institutional pillar of the Canadian Archival Network for decades to come. It has been wonderful to see over the last ten years how a new generation of digitally skilled and critical professional archivists has emerged in Ontario and Canada as “old-timers” like me fade from the scene.

Q: What most occupies your time these days?

I am now about a year into my retirement. Just as my archival engagement started abruptly at the age of 40, so I am making a sharp break to engage in a new set of endeavours at the age of 66. I have sought to pursue a “purposeful” retirement. I am also working to improve my health after a difficult last five years of work at LAC. In three short years, I have become a grandfather with three lovely girls, Amelia, Madeleine and Victoria, to keep me sharp for many years to come. I am beginning a serious engagement in my own family history which, I think, will satisfy my research instincts for years to come.

As I said on the occasion of my retirement in November 2014, “I played the roles that I was dealt and I never meant any harm to anybody in my diatribes in the search for truth. It was anything but personal if any of you felt insulted. I was just doing my best as a player. It was all for your own good, and mine. I never insulted anybody that I didn’t respect.” And as is my usual professional closing, *Good-night Mrs. Davidson, wherever you are.*



Call For Posters

The Archives Association of Ontario (AAO) and the Association of Manitoba Archives (AMA) are pleased to announce its Call for Posters at the 2016 AAO/AMA Joint 2016 Conference to be held 11-13 May 2016 in Thunder Bay, Ontario.



The Conference Program

Committee invites poster proposals pertaining to all areas of archival theory and practice, as well as those that address the conference theme “Archives Confidential: Breaking Down the Barriers.” Examples of the conference theme may include topics that are often overlooked, are not addressed in an inclusive manner, or that create discomfort or discord in the relationships between practitioners, record creators, donors, users of archives, and the general public. Topics include, but are not limited to:

- Truth and Reconciliation.
- Professional failures and how we learn from them.
- How do we care for and represent records of trauma?
- What are we not effectively addressing as a profession?
- Representation of people/groups in archives and archival exhibits.
- How do we build or repair relationships with groups in the communities that we serve and foster trust in our institutions?
- What happens when we morally disagree with the appraisal and description of material held within our collections?
- How do we effectively acknowledge language, social custom, race, or gender barriers within both our collections and professional community?

Submissions of poster proposals are invited for a special lightning round dedicated to student scholarship, new professionals, and emerging research during the joint conference.* Individuals will have 5 minutes to present their poster followed by a question and answer period. Poster dimensions are to be 32” x 40”.

The poster proposals should be sent with a brief abstract of 250 words to:
AAO Office at aao@aao-archivists.ca

The deadline to submit poster proposals is March 31, 2016.

* Please note that the Conference Program Committee will not be able to provide complimentary registration to our presenters, and they will need to register and secure their own funding to attend the conference.

The University of Toronto Archives Celebrates its 50th Anniversary

By Loryl MacDonald
University of Toronto Archives

On November 10, the University of Toronto Archives held a reception to celebrate its golden anniversary. The event brought together over 125 individuals - donors, researchers, University officers, library colleagues, and former staff - who have supported the Archives over the years. We were



University of Toronto Anniversary Cake

especially honoured that former Chief Librarian Robert Blackburn, who in 1962 first proposed a University Archives, was in attendance. Chief Librarian of the University of Toronto Libraries, Larry Alford, welcomed guests and provided a history of the University Archives. Dr. Bruce Kidd, Vice-President of U of T and Principal of University of Toronto, Scarborough, spoke about the University Archives' vital role in the academic community and its impact on his students and his own research. And, of course, there was cake and magnets.

The archives officially opened in January

1965 within the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections with Helen Miles as the first University Archivist. When the University Archives moved into the Fisher Rare Book Library in 1972, it had 1,500 metres of materials. Today, the University Archives houses over 11,400 metres of archival records. It is now the largest university archives in Canada. The collection includes over 300,000 photographs; 39,000 print items; and thousands of audio/visual recordings, architectural drawings, and student records. The Archives also has the private papers of more than 1,000 individuals and groups affiliated with the University of Toronto such as Harold Innis, Claude Bissell, Ursula Franklin, and C.B. Macpherson, to name a few.

For further information about our history, see Harold Averill's *The University of Toronto Archives: a Potted History* at <http://utarms.library.utoronto.ca/university-toronto-archives-potted-history>.



News from SWOC

by Liz Mayville

*President, Southwestern
Ontario Chapter*

Greetings from Southwestern Ontario!

On November 14th, SWOC held its Annual General Meeting at the new Stratford-Perth Archives. A special thanks goes out to Betty Jo Belton, Archivist, who not only hosted the event, but provided a tour of their new facility. It's a fantastic space and I encourage everyone to try and stop in for a visit! Fol-

lowing the tour, we held our AGM, and then went for a lovely lunch afterwards in downtown Stratford.

After many years at the helm of SWOC, Theresa Regnier stepped down as President of the Chapter. I want to thank her for all her years of hard work, especially on the London Conference, and I wish her all the best in her future endeavours. I want to also thank Jessica Blackwell for volunteering for the position of Vice President and I look forward to working with her this year along with the remaining executive: Arthur McClelland and Gina Coady.

SWOC is planning a number of events over the next few months, including a workshop and our annual Winter Warmer/Spring Thaw, so make sure you keep an eye out on the listserv and the AAO Website. If you have any ideas for events or would like to host an event at your facility, please don't hesitate to contact myself or any other member of the SWOC Executive.



Diving Right in to Professional Development!

by the Professional Development Committee

The AAO professional development year started off with members of archives museums and other cultural institutions getting their hands dirty with a two-day Emergency Response and Salvage workshop held on October 26 & 27. Instructed by AAO Advisor

and conservator Iona McCraith, participants gained invaluable knowledge in disaster recovery, salvage procedures, and developing priorities and policies to manage catastrophes. The PDC extends a warm thank you to our host Paul Henry and the staff at the City of Ottawa Archives who provided a wonderful workshop setting, and to city conservator Silvia Kindl for offering tours of the archives' conservation lab. Lastly, thank you to the AAOEe Chapter for providing the coffee and tea! The PDC also would like to thank all participants for their continued support and interest in attending AAO workshops. Photos from this workshop can be accessed through the [AAO's Flickr site](#).

Upcoming PDC events:

[AAO Wikipedia for Archivists](#)

This workshop will introduce archivists to the principles and practicalities of editing Wikipedia and adding links to online archival resources to the site. It covers both theoretical and practical elements and will equip attendees with the confidence to make the most of Wikipedia as a tool for sharing archival materials.

Date: February 20 from 9 am to 12 pm at the Oshawa Community Museum

Instructors: AAO Archeion Coordinator Amanda Hill and archivist Danielle Robichaud

[AAO Wikipedia Edit-a-thon](#)

Ontario archivists (and champions of archives!) are invited to participate in an edit-a-thon focused on Ontario's archives and archival collections. New and experienced users are welcomed to contribute to the improvement or creation of pages related to [Ontario archives](#) and the people, events or organizations reflected in [Ontario's archival collections](#).

Date: February 20 from 1 pm to 4 pm at the Oshawa Community

Instructors: AAO Archeion Coordinator Amanda Hill and archivist Danielle Robichaud

Benjamin Brown: Architect

First-ever exhibition featuring Benjamin Brown, one of Toronto's most significant architects of the early 20th century

February 12, 2016—April 23, 2016

Urban Space Gallery, 401 Richmond Street, Toronto



The Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre (OJA) presents the work of Architect Benjamin Brown (1890-1974), whose career made a significant and lasting impact on Toronto's built heritage. Brown's buildings— including the Balfour and Tower Buildings, the Hermant Building, the Primrose Club, and Beth Jacob Synagogue—are exquisite examples of Brown's mastery of the *au courant* Art Deco styles while also incorporating the more traditional architectural tropes of the period. Brown's iconic loft-style buildings on lower Spadina Avenue express his signature style that characterized the garment district for much of the 20th century.

Benjamin Brown: Architect will feature original drawings, blueprints, watercolour presentation boards, historical photographs, and maps that capture the breadth of Brown's architectural accomplishments in the commercial, industrial, corporate, cultural, and residential landscape. They will provide insight into Brown's process of designing handsome yet utilitarian and enduring structures. These buildings will be explored within the context of Toronto's architectural heritage and the growth of the Jewish community that commissioned many of Brown's buildings in the 1920s and 30s.

A short documentary film, on view in the gallery, presents contemporary perspectives on Brown's buildings and how they stand as testaments to the past while re-purposed for today. Local architects Jack Diamond and Michael McClelland, architectural historian Marta O'Brien, and *Globe and Mail* architecture critic Alex Bozicovic are included in the film. And, local artist/urban geographer Daniel Rotsztein is creating an illustrated map of Toronto, richly animating the project and demonstrating how Brown's buildings span the Toronto landscape.

The OJA is fortunate to be the chosen repository for the extensive collection of Brown's architectural drawings. "The OJA is thrilled to showcase the life of this relatively unknown, yet brilliant, architect while providing a lens into the Jewish community during this time," says Dara Solomon, Director of the OJA.



Throughout the exhibition, the OJA will offer tours and school and public programs. Additionally, Heritage Toronto will unveil a historical plaque in front of Benjamin Brown's Hermant Building at 21 Dundas Square. More information is available [here](#).

Social Media, Outreach and Community Engagement at the City of Vaughan Archives

by Gillian Shaw

City of Vaughan Archives

At the City of Vaughan Archives, staff continually look for new and innovative ways to promote our collections and encourage donations. Through participating in Culture Days and Doors Open, creating new series for the [City of Vaughan's Blog](#) and designing [collaborative physical and online exhibitions](#), the Archives has been quite active over the past year. As such, we have significantly increased our presence in the community. Recently, the City Archives discovered that our outreach efforts had indeed been working for us when we received two APEX Awards for Publication Excellence.

Unbeknownst to archival staff, the City's Corporate Communications Department nominated several of our blog posts from 2014 and 2015 to Communication Concept's Awards for Publications Excellence Committee. In Fall of 2015, the Archives

learned that we had been awarded a 2015 APEX Grand Award for Social Media and a 2014 APEX Award of Excellence for the Best Single Blog Post.

The 2015 Grand Award recognized the Archives' Vaughan Retrospective Exhibition Blog Post, which consisted of a photo exhibition by Grade 12 students from St. Jean de Brebeuf Catholic High School. In collaboration with the City Archives, this project took place in the spring of 2013 and encouraged photography students to match historic images from the Archives with current day landscapes and locations. It took many attempts for the students to get their desired photos, but in the end they created incredible images that show the contrast between old and new in our growing City. In total, 26 images were captured and now reside in the City Archives' permanent collection. These images were exhibited both physically and virtually and can be found online [here](#). As a result of the positive response from this exhibition, a renewed partnership between the Archives and St. Jean de Brebeuf Catholic High School was established and a new photographic exhibit is expected to be launched later this year.

Similarly, the 2014 Award of Excellence recognized the City of Vaughan for having the



A sampling of images in the *Vaughan Retrospective* exhibition. From left to right: Maple Station, ca. 1900 by Eunice Minoza; Holy Trinity Church in Thornhill by Genice Chandra; and Keele Street looking south, showing Saint Stephen's Anglican Church, Maple, 1909 by Jessica Berena.

Best Single Blog Post: an interview conducted with Vaughan Veteran John Thompson. Thompson, who worked closely with the City Archives to produce our 2013 Remembrance Day Exhibition “Service and Sacrifice,” provided in-depth answers to questions regarding his time overseas during World War II as well as his personal life as a long-standing Vaughan resident. This blog post provided a more personal account of Thompson’s wartime service and experience and helped to further promote our physical exhibit (see the post [here](#)). The results of these successful social media endeavours have fostered additional archival exhibitions and outreach within the Archives, through employing community collaboration to further compliment the items housed in our collection. This past fall, a semi-permanent exhibit “Recollections of Rural Vaughan” was installed at the entrance to the Archives, and a Remembrance Day Display and interactive community Poppy Mural was displayed in City Hall. Both of these exhibits utilized social media and community outreach to encourage public participation and promote the awareness and use of the City’s archival holdings, as well as discover other items within the community. We are always excited to see the range of items



John Thompson pointing to an image of himself on display for the “Service and Sacrifice” exhibition at Vaughan City Hall.



A sampling of Thompson’s war memorabilia housed in the City Archives, including flying boots and gun belt currently on display.

that come into the collection through our social media solicitation and what personal stories and documents members of the community are willing to share.

In addition to our existing social media strategies via Facebook, Twitter and the Vaughan Blog, we also have a new-found partnership with the *Vaughan Citizen*, a local newspaper put out by the York Region Media Group. Beginning October 1st, 2015, the local paper has run a weekly “Vintage Vaughan” segment, publishing a historic Vaughan image of interest to the community. These images are available both online and in print and have targeted a new and more localized demographic. Since the launch of “Vintage Vaughan,” the Archives has experienced a greater response from local residents, who are willing to donate their archival materials, and who are interested utilizing

the archival resources available to them.

As the City Archives continues to embrace and seek out additional social media and outreach outlets, we are encouraged by the positive reception we have received over the past year. Reference and research requests are on the rise, accessions more steadily flowing, and our online statistics at an all-time high. The *APEX Awards*, along

with the positive feedback, increased traffic to the Archives and our growing collection, all go to show that social media and outreach do work – it’s just about finding what works within your community and how to promote your collection!

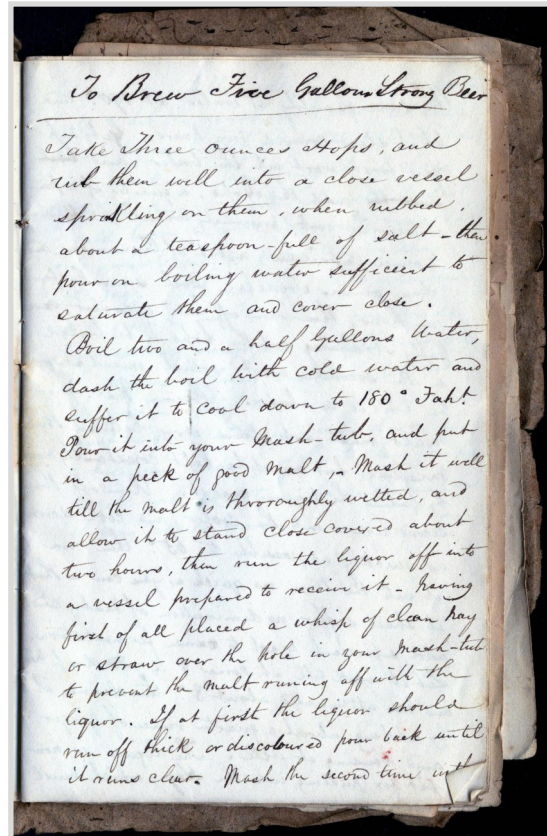


Food in the Archives: Benson’s Strong Ale

by Grant Hurley

[This article launches a new series for OTR that shows how archival records can bring us in touch with another of the senses: taste. Records documenting past food and drink products, recipes and preparations tell us much about our history, and as the popularity of heritage-based, local food and drink grows, it is worth reflecting on how our collections can respond.– Ed.]

The story of Benson’s Strong Ale goes back to a brief moment in the early 1800s when Thomas Benson jotted down a recipe for “Five Gallons Strong Beer” in a small notebook. Including “three ounces hops,” malt, and “a quarter of a pound of liquorice root (previously bruised) ... ¼ ounce Capsicum, a bit of Cinnamon, and three ounces Treacle,” little did he know that his recipe would find a new life almost 200 years later. Benson (1804-1857) is a notable figure in Ontario history: after his immigration to Kingston via New York in 1819, he began a career as a merchant before moving to Port Hope in 1832. He served in the Rebellion of 1837 at Niagara, settled in Peterborough in 1845,



The first page of Thomas Benson’s original notebook. From the Archives of Ontario, Benson Family fonds (F507-3).

and became the town’s first mayor five years later. In 1853 he returned to Port Hope to become the Secretary-Treasurer of the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton Railway, one of the many railways being developed in Ontario at the time. That he would leave a notebook of beer recipes among the papers that comprise the Benson Family fonds at the Archives of Ontario is not surprising. Home brewing was a common practice in nineteenth century Ontario. If you wanted a nice glass of beer after a long day (and didn’t feel like heading down to the tavern), you made it yourself. Or, as a merchant, Benson may have had an interest in selling it too.

Benson’s recipe was noted in 2009 by then-

Archives of Ontario archivist Andrew Morrison while he was processing the fonds. As a hobby brewer, he made a batch for himself that turned out well, so he passed it on to the Black Creek Historic Brewery. They made some small batches of the beer at their premises as part of the Black Creek Pioneer Village near the Archives of Ontario in Toronto. Black Creek is a unique operation even in the context of the incredible variety of craft brewing operations now taking off in Ontario: they brew beer on site using only historical methods and recipes. They too found the result of Benson's recipe pleasing and worked with Trafalgar Brewery Meadery Distillery, which is based out of Oakville, to make a larger-scale batch for commercial distribution.



Tasting of Benson's beer at Black Creek Pioneer Village, December 2015. From left to right are Wendy Rowney (Black Creek Pioneer Village), Mike Arnold (CEO, Trafalgar Brewery) and John Roberts (Chief Privacy Officer and Archivist of Ontario, Archives of Ontario). Photo courtesy of the Archives of Ontario.

I asked Trafalgar's head brewer and distiller Dave Jamieson about the process of transforming Benson's recipe into a reality. In addition to adapting the original recipe to modern methods, he had to consider what kinds of ingredients would have been available to Benson at the time. For example,

Jamieson noted, "Malt today is air dried in a computer controlled kiln. In Benson's time malt would have been dried in a fire heated oast house. So we need to duplicate the smoky, toasted flavours developed over a hardwood fire. In addition to the barley malt, we use small amounts of other historic Ontario growing grains, like red Dhuram wheat and heritage rye, to reflect the reality of early Ontario grain stores." In contrast to the hop-heavy beers that are popular today, "The hops growing in Ontario at the time would have been very low in bittering and flavouring compounds by today's standards. So we need to find hops that will lend an authentic character without taking over the flavor profile." The resulting beer is unique by modern tastes, particularly with its deep toasty, malty flavour and hint of hot spice (from cayenne pepper!) used in the recipe. Is the beer the same as what Benson would have tasted in 19th-century Ontario? Yes and no. Jamieson says: "The singularly best and worst thing about beer, is that it doesn't last. No one will ever know what Benson's beers were really like." But, as he says, that is the real appeal of beer: it is meant to be enjoyed in the here and now. And in this case, it has the power to connect the drinker with the important records of the past that archives hold. The unique transition from archival record to a realized consumer product is a great example of how new supporters can be led to archives via novel methods - in this case one's taste buds. And it is symbolic that Benson's notes have survived to be appreciated at a time when small-scale craft brewing is now experiencing an incredible revival that reconnects us with a part of the culture of Benson's time. Consumers are interested in the direct relationship between products like

beer and their communities through locally grown ingredients and recipes passed between neighbours and friends, all of which happened as a matter of course in the past. With the growing diversity of beers now available to consumers, as Jamieson says of his translation of the recipe, “wherever Benson is now, he'd approve of what we are doing.”



Thunder Bay's First World War Centennial Project

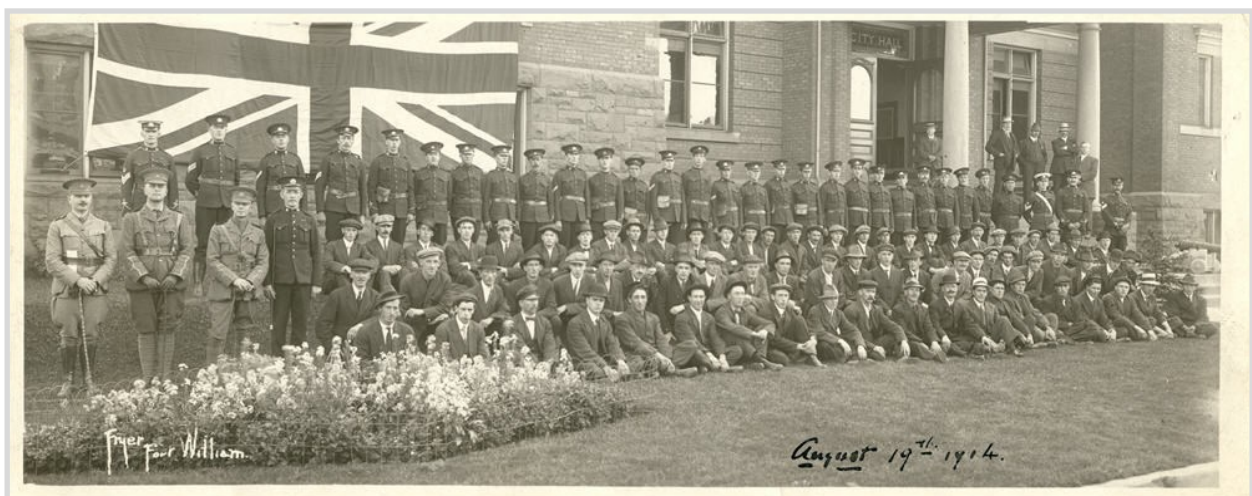
by Sarah Janes

City of Thunder Bay Archives

In early 2014, several local heritage institutions planned to produce small exhibits to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the start of the First World War. Only weeks after the City of Thunder Bay Archives learned that we would not be able to fund a

student position, and our planned exhibit development would need to be postponed, the Thunder Bay Public Library put out a call inviting other organizations to contribute photos to their planned online and physical exhibits. The discussions that arose quickly showed how much interest and material there was locally. It seemed clear that one large, collaborative exhibit would be better than several small, separate ones. A partnership formed between several organizations and quickly expanded to include more: the partnership consists of the City of Thunder Bay Archives, City of Thunder Bay Heritage Advisory Committee, Lakehead University Department of History, Northwestern Ontario Aviation Heritage Centre, Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame, Thunder Bay Military Museum, Thunder Bay Museum, and Thunder Bay Public Library.

Contributions of material and writing from so many organizations meant that we were able to launch the web exhibit on August 5, 2014, nearly matching the anniversary of Canada's entering the war. Since then, we have also taken in photos and stories from members of the public, who in some cases have also donated materials to project part-



Lake Superior Regiment, August 1914 from the City of Thunder Bay Archives. [Source in link.](#)

ners. The initial framework of the site has been filled in over the past several years with new stories, photographs, and links.

Four major themes have emerged from the work we are doing: *collaboration*, *growth*, *detail*, and *one piece of many*:

Collaboration: Records and other materials held in various institutions are able to be brought together in one exhibit. Documents from one source are able to give context to another, and the whole picture is much strengthened. It goes beyond mixing and matching the collections, though: we are also simultaneously providing support and context to each other's research and writing. For instance, in preparing timeline pages, often the local news will report on the same issues that City Council is discussing, so resources from multiple institutions will combine to let us tell a better story.

Growth: The exhibit will run over four and a half years, with new content being added throughout. The initial launch was of a fairly small site, but the site has grown consistently since then. We've been careful to make sure that the overall structure still works, that internal navigation remains intact, and that newly added materials are highlighted regularly: there's risk of the site becoming unwieldy as it grows. Three years from now, we expect that it will be even more comprehen-

sive, and probably more complex. It will be important to manage that growth carefully while still proudly showcasing the records that have become newly available to the public.

Detail: Building the exhibit over an extended period of time has also allowed us to focus on the details of life during the war: not just the big picture, but the day-to-day realities faced by the soldiers and the people at home. The focus of the exhibit has never been to present a conveniently packaged single story of the war. Instead, we want to showcase stories from a variety of perspectives. Sources to date include family stories submitted by members of the public, museum artifacts, City Council records, local newspapers, burial records from the Commonwealth Graves Commission, and military records accessed through Library and Archives Canada. The stories they tell relate to local support for the troops, recruiting and training in Northwestern Ontario, the lives and sometimes deaths of soldiers from



Group photo including Maj. Hal C. Fryer of the 52nd Battalion (New Ontario), CEF from a photo contained in a family scrapbook contributed to the World War One Thunder Bay Centennial Project. [Source in link.](#)

this area, arts, culture, and sports that entertained despite the hard times, and efforts to memorialize and commemorate the war and those lost.

One piece of many: This collaborative exhibit was started by a few of us working at local heritage institutions, but since then there have been other major commemorative activities planned. The City is planning infrastructure projects that will commemorate the anniversary of the war, there will be a major exhibit at the local art gallery in 2017, and a book is in production, with support of the City, the Thunder Bay Historical Museum, and Lakehead University. The work done to date on the web exhibit has benefited the committee's efforts, and helped argue for financial support for these projects. The project partnership has also taken part in the annual Military History Symposium organized by Lakehead University. One project or one group shouldn't be fully responsible for commemorating a major centenary, and like the collaborations between institutions in creating this exhibit, there will be positive connections made between various memorial efforts.

As of December 2015, our exhibit has had tens of thousands of visits, and has filled in nicely. The "People and Stories" section features nineteen individuals, many of which were community contributions; the "Timeline & Local Obituaries" section sets out each month in detail; the "Military" and "Industry" sections have also grown significantly. Site traffic has been increasing consistently as the year has gone on.

What's next for this partnership project? We're continuing to grow the exhibit, with

new contributions from our institutions and from the public. We plan to include educational resources that can be used by teachers to bring a local element into their lessons. We also plan to produce a physical resource based on the research and records presented in the exhibit. We are throughout keeping in mind that our work can be a complement, not a competition, to the projects run by other groups.

We'd love to hear about what other communities are doing to commemorate the First World War over the next few years! Get in touch with us at ww1project@tbpl.ca and visit the project website at <http://www.tbpl.ca/worldwarone>.



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Applications will run from March 7th to March 18th this year. More information and application available at: <http://aao-archivists.ca/2015-shirley-spragge-bursary>.

Submissions

Off the Record is published four times per year in electronic format in Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall installments.

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All submissions, including letters to the editor, should be accompanied by the sender's name, address and phone number.

Articles should be short: under 2 pages (or about 1000 words). The editor reserves the right to edit for clarity and length. Authors will be contacted for major re-writes.

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Images submitted for the newsletter cover, to accompany articles, or for other uses may be

edited or altered at the discretion of the editor.

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Custom layouts should be scaled to fit a one-quarter, one-half or full page (based on 8.5 x 11 inch page with 1 inch margins).

Submission Deadlines

The following dates are the submission deadlines for *Off the Record*:

March 25 for Spring issue
June 27 for Summer issue
September 25 for Fall issue
December 31 for Winter issue

Please send submissions to:

Grant Hurley
director2@aao-archivists.ca

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