

Off The Record



AAO

Archives Association of Ontario

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On the Cover

Cropped from “Dancing on Railway Platform in Oscar, Ontario,” photo number #19 from the Thunder Bay Finnish Canadian Historical Society Collection, Lakehead University Archives. Photo submitted by Sara Janes.

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 co-operative 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

During my first year in Toronto, I've had the pleasure and privilege of walking to work. My path takes me up Bathurst Street through Alexandria Park, past Kensington Market, up Spadina Street through Chinatown, and then on to College Street by the University of Toronto and Queen's Park. For someone still new to the city, walking has become a good way to get to know the place on a human scale. Over the winter and spring, I often passed by an old storefront under renovation at the corner of Nassau and Spadina Streets. A few weeks into the

renovation, the contractors had removed plywood covering a set of old painted glass signs that spelled out "Cut-Rate Drugs." The signs caught my attention, and I wondered what they revealed about the store's past. Not long after, someone posted up a photo on the shop window. [The photo](#) depicts the store as it was in the early 1900s: E.E. Rutherford's drug store, with Rutherford and his assistants in rolled-up shirtsleeves, plus a lolling dog, posing out front. The Hebrew lettering above the front door identifies it as a business belonging to the Jewish community that was established in the neighbourhood at the time. The photo stayed up for a

few weeks more before being taken down. And sadly, the old painted windows were removed too. Now in the place of "cut-rate drugs" they read "donuts" and "coffee," which I suppose is entirely appropriate, as the building is now home to an American chain donut shop trying its second run at the Canadian market. These moments of

connection between past and present, records and place, are why I love archives. The covering, recovering, remembering and erasure of histories is something which we encounter as professionals every day. It is what makes our jobs challenging, but also very exciting, as we create and manage the organizations and infrastructures that enable such discoveries. This issue of *Off the Record* has plenty which speaks to this

idea, including the second part of John Smart's articles on the history of the OAA, Sara Janes's description of the revival of the Lakehead University Archives, the launch of new student-focused content including student work profiles and the 'Ask an Archivist' series, and much more! I hope you enjoy this rather full issue as part of a well-deserved break—whether a trip to a cottage, or a sunny afternoon on the back porch. And many thanks to the fantastic contributors that continue to make *Off the Record* the excellent publication it is!



Message from the President

by Dana Thorne

I am currently perched on my back deck with a laptop on a hot summer day, and this seems like a great way to write my very first Message from the President! I am excited to be taking the reins as AAO President for the 2016-2017 term, and I could not do this job without our Board of Directors. I'd like to welcome our new Vice President, Tracey Krause, and a new Director Without Portfolio, Nick Richbell. I'd also like to thank returning Board members Jodi Aoki, Grant Hurley, Sarah Ferencz, and our Past President, Marissa Paron, who accomplished so much last year. It has been a pleasure to work with outgoing Board members Ned Struthers and Danielle Robichaud. Danielle will continue in her capacity as Web Administrator for the next six months, and at that time we will be looking for a new volunteer for this position.

In other Board-related news, at the 2016 Annual General Meeting a new Board position was approved called the Chapter Stakeholder. This individual will liaise between the Board and the local Chapters, strengthening communication and collaboration across the province. We are pleased to welcome Jennifer Weymark to this brand new Board position!

I would also like to acknowledge Russ McMillen, the new Chair of the Preservation Committee, and thank the previous Chair, Peter Houston, for his service. In March a call was put out for volunteers to join four of our Standing Committees, and I thank eve-

ryone who responded to that request! While three of the committees had excellent responses, the Fundraising Committee continues to look for additional members. Please contact me at president@aao-archivists.ca if you are interested in volunteering with the Fundraising Committee. I promise that this committee is more fun than the name lets on!

"Archives Confidential: Breaking Down the Barriers" was a huge success! We were so fortunate that the Association of Manitoba Archivists (AMA) agreed to partner with the AAO. It was a real treat to travel to Thunder Bay (it was my first time seeing the Sleeping Giant!) and the turnout of conference attendees was very high. The conference presented many challenging sessions and opportunities to talk openly and honestly about the many issues we face as archivists. The Local Arrangements Committee and Program Committee worked tirelessly to present a seamless conference, and I want to thank Matt Szybalski, Christina Wakefield, and Emma Prescott from the AMA in particular for their contributions.

One of the most exciting developments to come out of the 2016 Conference was approval of the draft Provincial Acquisition Strategy (PAS) at the Annual General Meeting. The Institutional Development Committee and the PAS Working Group have committed so much time and effort into making this vision a reality. The PAS provides a framework for collaboration in acquisitions between archives across the province. For more information about this exciting initiative and information about how your archives can participate, visit the [PAS webpage](#).

If you're looking for support with Archeion, you will notice some changes! Our former Archeion Coordinator, Amanda Hill, has moved into a new position as Archivist at the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County. Thanks to Amanda for her years of service! We welcome aboard Lisa Snider as our new Archeion Coordinator, and have already been inspired by the energy and enthusiasm that she brings to this position. Additionally, the AAO was successful in its application for funding through Library and Archives Canada's Documentary Heritage Communities Program to continue the project Advancing Archeion. Building on the work done by Emily Chicorli in January-March 2016, the second phase of Advancing Archeion involves onsite training with member institutions to increase their capability to contribute to Archeion. We welcome Niloufar Ameli to the AAO team as the new Archeion Assistant, and anticipate that many of our members will have a chance to meet her as she travels throughout Ontario offering this training!

The Organizational History Committee continues to solicit input as writing gets underway for this exciting project. Contact Committee Chair Paul Henry if you are interested in contributing (paul.henry@ottawa.ca).

The 2015-2020 Strategic Plan continues to guide the association's activities, and we look forward to building on the momentum of some of the exciting projects that are currently underway. If you have any questions or suggestions for the next year, please contact me at president@aao-archivists.ca. I'll be out here in the sunshine waiting for those e-mails!



Member Spotlight: An Interview with Carol Radford-Grant

When and why did you first join the AAO?

I joined the AAO in the mid-1990s when I was a student at Algonquin in the Archives' Technician Program. I really had no idea at the time what I was getting into, but John Smart was an excellent teacher and I was gaining confidence that archives would be the right profession for me. One day John had Jim Burant come and speak to our class about all great benefits of getting involved with the AAO. Jim had such an energy and enthusiasm that was contagious – and so I signed up!

What is your fondest memory from your involvement with the AAO?

I have so many fond memories – of people, meetings, and events. One of my fondest is of conversations that I had with David Bullcock who was the City Archivist of Ottawa at the time. He was very involved with the AAO and a recipient of the Alexander Fraser Award. He always encouraged me by chatting with me at chapter events about the various challenges the profession faced, patiently explaining how the City of Ottawa Archives operated, and even helped me put together a proposal for a session for the AAO conference! It was a gift that I have never forgotten and I strive to provide time for students considering the profession because of the time he spent encouraging me.

Reflecting on your career so far, what are you the most proud of accomplishing?

This is a very difficult question for me. I look back and I have enjoyed all of my volunteer

and work experiences, and am very proud to have been part of various projects and teams. It is hard to put one accomplishment above the rest. Certainly, being President of the AAO was a wonderful opportunity and I was very proud to serve our profession in that capacity. I found the work to be very rewarding, and was gratified that my fellow board members were so hardworking and committed to furthering the mandate and vision of the AAO. I will always remember that time with pride.

What do you think the AAO can offer young professionals who are just starting their careers? What do you think the AAO can offer veterans who have experience in the profession?

The AAO offers an opportunity for young professionals to network and learn from other colleagues, and to get involved with committees and chapters that will add to their knowledge and skills which can be applied in their workplaces. I think it is essential for those who are new to the profession, especially if they are working on their own in small archives. The support of colleagues in the AAO can make all the difference.

I think many experienced professionals can be inspired by those who are new to archives to look at innovative ways to approach our programming. Veterans can also give back to the community by meeting and

encouraging new professionals seeking to make their way in archives.

What is the most rewarding part of your work?

The most rewarding part is working with the staff at the City of Toronto Archives. I am continually impressed with their dedication, their depth of knowledge, their skills, expertise and commitment to providing engaging programs to the public. I have learned so much from them – from exhibits, reference, appraisal work, to their initiative to embark on new social media programs. All of them bring expertise that contributes to our team. It is a privilege for me to work with them.



Carol Radford-Grant (Submitted Photo).

What do you see for the future of our profession?

I see a lot of potential. The changing technological environment creates challenges in long-term preservation of electronic records, but also allows for incredible opportunities for outreach that were never envisioned when I first started out in archives. I see this as a very exciting time for our profession and predict that archives will be forced to evolve in ways that will keep us all on our toes!



Ontario now has a Provincial Acquisition Strategy!

It is a great pleasure to announce that the membership of the Archives Association of Ontario unanimously endorsed the AAO-sponsored Provincial Acquisition Strategy at its recent Annual General Meeting in Thunder Bay on May 12th. Along with this support came an endorsement of the vision and direction of the Private Acquisition Strategy Working Group, whose members include Charlotte Chaffey (ROM), Sarah Ferencz (Whitby Archives), Aaron Hope (Archives of Ontario), Sean Smith (Archives of Ontario) and Charlotte Woodley (Region of Waterloo Archives).

The upcoming year is going to be an exciting one for the archival community in Ontario, as it will be used to share and implement the Strategy and enable AAO members to start thinking about the next steps in building a truly collaborative and comprehensive archival network, including the possibility of developing a documentation strategy for the province. The Working Group has developed a suite of tools designed to help ease the implementation of the Strategy and to increase its impact. These tools were created not only to support the Strategy, but also to support existing AAO programs. All of these tools and documents have been posted on the Institutional Development Committee's section of the AAO website (<http://aao-archivists.ca/provincial-acquisition-strategy>). Special attention should be drawn to our new Archeion-linked map of archives in Ontario (<http://aao-archivists.ca/archives-in-ontario/>), which you should check out if you haven't already.

To assist with the implementation of the Strategy we are asking AAO members and AAO member institutions to:

- Complete or update your institutional profile in Archeion to include information about your acquisitions policy (mandate, geographic and/or thematic scope etc.);
- Share the Strategy with memory institutions in your regions who many not be affiliated with the AAO, noting that it is open to all institutions in the province. Ask them to create an institutional profile in Archeion to increase their visibility and so that we can put them on our map;
- Contribute to the Ontario Archival Accessions Register (OAAR) on an annual basis (about which more will be said later in the year); and
- Start thinking about how we, as a province, can meet the challenges and fill in the gaps of our shared documentary heritage.

We've had some great discussions with members all over the province in the course of developing the strategy over the past 9 months and want to thank everyone who contributed their thoughts, concerns and ideas. As always, please feel free to get in touch with the Working Group if you want to share any feedback, comments or suggestions, or if you have any questions. The Working Group as a whole can be reached via the Institutional Development Committee chair's email address: fdc@aao-archivists.ca.

The Dr. Edwin Seaborn fonds

by **Anne Daniel**
Western Archives

The Dr. Seaborn was a Western University alumnus, faculty member and Commanding Officer of the No. 10 Canadian Stationary Hospital. He also was the author of *The March of Medicine in Western Ontario* (a valuable source of information about medical history in Ontario). Western Archives



Lisa Lawlis with the Seaborn fonds boxes
(Submitted Photo).

holds the Dr. Edwin Seaborn fonds. From January to April 2016 we had Lisa Lawlis, a co-op student from the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (Western University), who worked on the arrangement and description of this fonds. The fonds consists of 9.97 metres of textual and photographic records. The records document the history of Western's medical school, medicine in southwestern Ontario, and Ontario history on a broader scale. The material is also linked to our No. 10 Canadian Stationary Hospital fonds as well as Edwin Seaborn

records held at London Public Library. As a result of this project we now have a [completed finding aid](#) and item level description for all of the photographs in the fonds. All of this is also available via our [Minisis OPAC](#).



taag Update

by **James Roussain**
taag President

taag

What the chapter has been up to since our April 2016 update...

Annual General Meeting 2016

taag held its 2016 Annual General Meeting and Dinner on the 21st of April and, breaking with tradition a bit, hosted the jam-packed event in a private room at the Bedford Academy. John Roberts, Chief Privacy Officer and Archivist of Ontario, welcomed guests with a reflective talk highlighting key events in his time with the Archives of Ontario so far that have shaped his view of the Canadian archival landscape and the role that our archivists play, both in Ontario and across Canada. Keeping a casual tone, John spoke to his first six months on the job, including remarks on his visit to the opening of the Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County where he was greatly impressed with the role of community building and the committed role of local archivists.

Down to business, the AGM itself was a busy one! We bid a reluctant goodbye to two

members of the executive committee: Treasurer, Beverley Darville, and Secretary, Juanita Rossiter. We sincerely thank Beverley and Juanita for their time and commitment these past three years and wish them well. Celia Schmidt will be carrying on in her role as Member-at-Large, Julia Holland, Tys Klumpenhauer and James Roussain are moving to the roles of Past-President, Secretary, and President, respectively. We are pleased to introduce Emily Sommers in the role of Vice-President, Katey Watson as Treasurer, and finally Jessica Haskell, Maegan Ayre, and Amanda Tomé as Members-at-Large.

After the AGM, guests enjoyed a variety of catered entrées, lively discussion, and a relaxed atmosphere amongst friends and colleagues.



President James Roussain (left) and Treasurer Katey Watson (right) are pleased to present 2016 winner Jillian Harkness (centre) with her spoils. Photograph by Kathleen O'Brien, iSchool, University of Toronto.

taag chapter award at the iSchool, University of Toronto

The annual iSchool convocation taag award is given to one full-time or part-time graduate with the highest academic achievement

in the Archives and Records Management concentration of the MI program in the Faculty of Information, University of Toronto. It was our distinct pleasure to present this year's award to Jillian Harkness – please join me in congratulating her on the award and her continued success!

Upcoming chapter events as of OTR deadline include:

The taag executive is hard at work this summer bringing new members up to speed and planning a full season of fall and winter events. Enjoy the summer and stay tuned for updates as details are finalized!

Keep current with upcoming events and taag affairs by following us on Facebook or visiting [our page on the AAO website](#).

Please make sure when you renew that AAO membership or newly join the AAO that the AAO Office knows your chapter affiliation is taag!

If you need to reach us, please be in touch!

TAAG EXECUTIVE 2016-2018

- James Roussain, President
taag.chapter@gmail.com
- Emily Sommers, Vice-President
- Tys Klumpenhauer, Secretary
- Katey Watson, Treasurer
- Celia Schmidt, Member-at-Large (Communications/Social Media)
- Jessica Haskell, Member-at-Large
- Maegan Ayre, Member-at-Large
- Amanda Tomé, Member-at-Large (Chapter—Stakeholder Contact)
- Julia Holland, Past-President



The 2016 AAO Award Recipients

by **Brian Masschaele**

AAO Awards Committee Chair

Congratulations to the 2016 AAO Award Recipients!

On behalf of the AAO Awards Committee, it is my pleasure to announce the 2016 recipients of AAO Awards:

Alexander Fraser Award

The Alexander Fraser Award is given to individuals who have contributed in a significant way to the advancement of the archival community in Ontario.

Jean Dryden has demonstrated a strong commitment to volunteer work, generously sharing her knowledge and expertise with archival col-



leagues in a variety of ways: committee and board work; through her numerous articles, conference papers, handbooks, and reports; professional workshops; and as General Editor of *Archivaria*. Two particular areas in which Jean has shown tremendous leadership and advanced the archival community are descriptive standards and copyright. Recently she has emerged as a leading copyright expert and has strongly represented the interests of the archival community. Jean received the James J. Talman

Award from the AAO in 2001. Her exceptional service to the archival community throughout her career and her contributions in these areas make her an equally deserving recipient of the Alexander Fraser Award.

Loryl MacDonald started her career in archives in 1997. She has worked at the University of Toronto Archives and Records Management Services for many years and was appointed



University Archivist in 2012. Loryl has been an active and influential member of the archival community, holding numerous positions: president of TAAG; vice-president and president of AAO; and director without portfolio, vice-president and president of the ACA. She has served on several committees at the provincial and national level, was part of the 2010 ACA Conference Program Committee, edited the ACA Bulletin, and in 2014 co-chaired the Organizing Committee of the Canadian Archives Summit with Ian Wilson. Loryl also lectures at the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto, preparing and mentoring many new professionals for the realities of archival work in Canada. Loryl is an extremely dedicated and accomplished archival professional and role model for new professionals who fully deserves the Alexander Fraser award.

Theresa Regnier is being recognized for her long-standing and exceptional service to the AAO, and for the impact she has made on

the broader archival and historical communities. She has been an active member of the AAO and its predecessors without pause for some 30 years. Theresa has also been actively involved at the chapter level in Southwestern Ontario throughout this time and has served multiple, multi-year terms as President. Indeed, it is hard to remember a time when Theresa was not a member of the local executive. At the provincial level, Theresa served three years on the AAO Board and has been instrumental in the planning of three AAO conferences. Moreover, she has been a staunch advocate for professional education, regularly supporting students who are undertaking graduate programs at Western and encouraging them to join the AAO with great success. Theresa's long standing service to the AAO and her contributions to countless researchers and students make her richly deserving of the Alexander Fraser Award.



Corporate Award – Université De Hearst



The Corporate Award is given for outstanding support to archives and the ar-

chival community in Ontario, including organizations that have provided significant support to the activities of a particular institution. Le Centre d'archives de la Grande Zone argileuse was established in 2010. Before that time, no institution had the mandate to preserve and protect the archives of the Great Clay Belt of Northern Ontario. It is to bridge that important gap that l'Université de Hearst worked at setting-up an archives center. The building, which formerly served as the bishop's residence, was renovated at a cost of \$1.3 million. In addition to funding this work, l'Université de Hearst has also supported the maintenance of the archives center along with the archivist, a university employee. L'Université de Hearst has not only been extremely active in promoting the preservation of the archives but has also implemented important research support mechanisms. Its financial contribution and professional support has been crucial in the operation and success of the archives which make the university completely worthy of this award.

Institutional Award Winner – Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives

The Institutional Award is given to institutions that have contributed significantly to the advancement of the archival community in Ontario,



and for having demonstrated a significant level of innovation and imagination. The Ca-

nadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) was founded in 1973. It was originally run entirely by volunteers. Since that time it has changed its name and its location several times, before settling into its permanent headquarters at 34 Isabella Street in 2009. The facility features a large reading room, a gallery, and meeting rooms. Since its inception, the CLGA has built its archival, library, and museum collections, established a robust volunteer program, and has worked with local colleges and universities to provide educational and training opportunities for students, interns, and emerging heritage professionals. It now boasts a full-time executive director. The CLGA serves as a significant resource and catalyst for those who strive for a future world where lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people are accepted, valued, and celebrated. It is currently the largest independent LGBTQ archives in the world. It is for this reason that the CLGA is being honoured today with the AAO Institutional Award.

Congratulations to all the recipients!

All photographs submitted by the author.



Reopening the Archives at Lakehead University

by Sara Janes
Lakehead University

Having the doors to your reading room physically open makes an amazing difference, I'm discovering. After dusting, moving furni-

ture, running a HEPA filter, and getting some actual fresh air in here, the Archives feels ready for visitors, researchers, and discoveries.

It's been a long time since Lakehead University had an archivist. I started work in March this year; before, it had been several years since the library employed an archivist, and they'd also never had anyone responsible for the archives full-time. This has meant that there's an awful lot of work to do catching up, but also that I've been able to take advantage of some pretty quick wins in getting the archives basically functioning again.

You can trace the archives' history in the types of records acquired, and the types of descriptions performed. The collections started in the 1960s, when Lakehead acquired its University status, its new campus, and had money to spend. A Friends of the Library group raised money and solicited donations from around the country: much of this relates to local history, but also resulted in a significant collection of Interesting Historical Ephemera such as a newspaper clipping announcing the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte, a letter signed by Rudyard Kipling, and several maps of Scotland from the 1700s.

Somewhat later, as practices were more established and professionalized, the archives became the repository for a variety of university records, faculty papers, and records of community groups. Arrangement and description through this period seems to have been done extremely particularly, or not at all: item inventories were created for some fonds, but the backlog was already building. More recently, RAD was adopted, and arrangement and contextual infor-

mation. This year so far, we've worked hard at incorporating all of the existing descriptions into an AtoM database and getting control over the backlog.

Most of our collections relate to one of four major subject areas: Lakehead University itself; ecology, forestry, and natural re-

sources; labour, politics, and activist work; and the experiences and lives of Finnish immigrants to Thunder Bay. This last was very much formed by the work of the Thunder

Bay Finnish Canadian Historical Society, who collected a wide array of records and research materials and donated them to Lakehead, leading others to follow suit. Our strong Finnish-Canadian research collection includes monographs, periodicals, personal records, and records of organized labour, businesses, and social organizations.

Less well known, though are the records relating to local and faculty research into the natural environment: probably since many of these fonds have not been fully described! The fonds and collections cover a range, including logging and the forest products industry; policy development around logging, crown land, and wilderness parks; observations and research on plants, birds, fish, and insects, and water quality, in some

instances as far back as the 1920s. These have the potential of being an excellent resource for researchers to do a longitudinal study of how this region's wildlife has changed over the years.

Probably the biggest challenge I'm facing right now is prioritization: with nearly 1000

boxes of unprocessed records representing about 40 fonds (and a few hundred more that have been inventoried but not fully described), where should we start? Factors I'm con-

sidering include: volume, apparent original order, language (processing a collection in Finnish or German is more challenging for me than one in English), and my best guess at what may see the most use. Out of our first few research requests, the majority have been related to the university's history, but it's difficult to know how much that has to do with the lower profile of our other collections so far.

Somehow, fortunately, there is an actual workforce to take these projects on: hosting two student workers (Lakehead History and Mohawk College Library Tech) and harnessing evening circulation staff to do data entry during quiet hours means that we can boast of genuine progress. This next phase depends on hard work and can't be rushed.



"First Delivery Truck in Port Arthur," photo number #27 from the Thunder Bay Finnish Canadian Historical Society Collection, Lakehead University Archives.

We are all learning more about the records we hold every day, and improved public access is following, slowly but surely.

Lakehead University's Archives is better supported now than it ever has been. It's time that we were able to share some of these fantastic collections with the public. Learn more and watch for updates at: archives.lakeheadu.ca.



Grey County Historic Community Mapping Project Now Online!

by Sarina Ryan

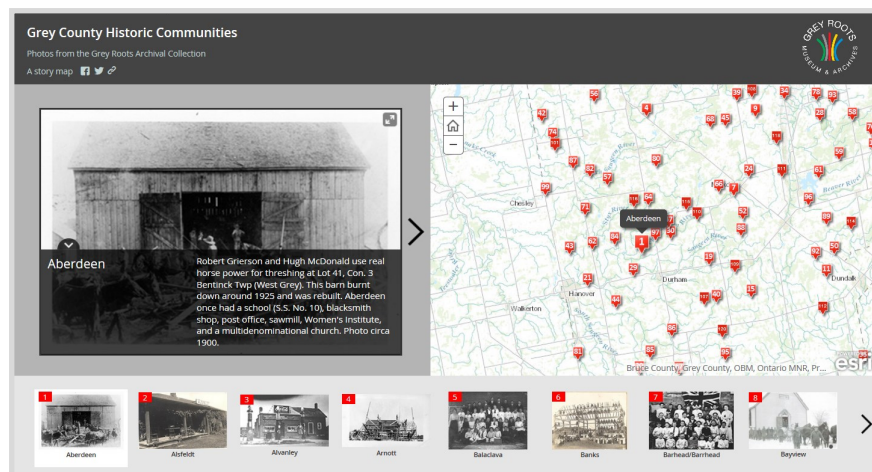
Grey Roots Museum & Archives

The Archives, in collaboration with Grey County's IT department, is pleased to unveil the Grey County Historic Communities online mapping project. The project is a second stage of the Grey County Historic Community signage project, which saw brown signs going up on County roads last summer to mark smaller and/or lesser-known historic communities throughout Grey County. Communities chosen for this project were established, but never grew, and are not recognized as settlement areas in the County's Official Plan. The online mapping project identifies and maps the smaller historic commu-

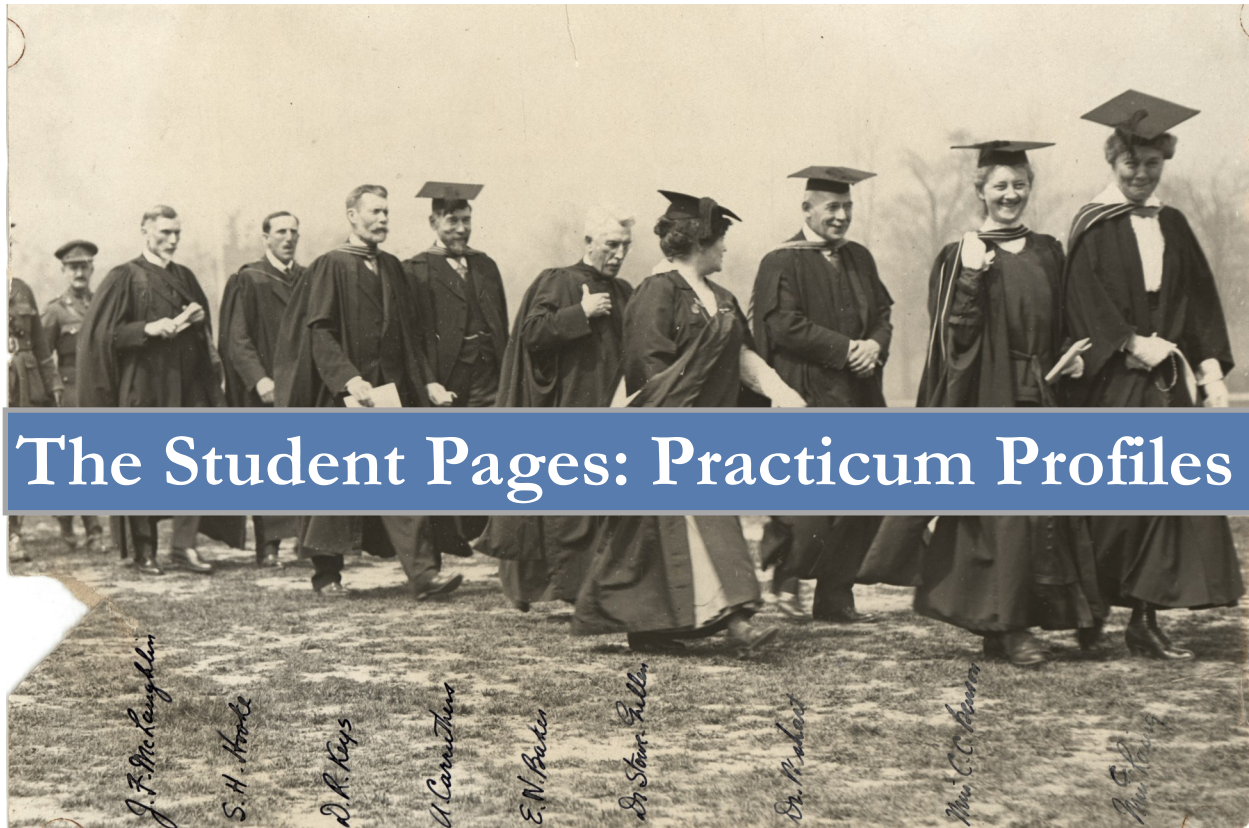
nities on both County and lower-tier roads, and includes an historic image and description for each location. The purpose of the project is to make this information available online to Archives researchers, the general public, and "genealogical tourists" interested in tracing their ancestor's roots back to Grey County's early settlements. Archives staff and volunteers researched to determine which communities should be included in the project based on evidence that they meet at least two of the following criteria:

General store	Mill	Blacksmith shop
School	Post Office	Hotel/Tavern
Cemetery/cenotaph	Church or other religious meeting house	Structure housing fraternal organization (i.e. Orange Lodge Masons)

You can find the Grey County Historic Communities online mapping project at the Grey County Maps Portal, <https://geo.grey.ca>, as well as through Grey Roots Museum & Archives' website, greyroots.com.



A screen capture of the Grey Roots Historic Communities portal (Submitted Photo).



The Student Pages: Practicum Profiles

Working with Russell at McMaster

by **Emily Tyschenko**

“Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a great ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair.” – Bertrand Russell, “Prologue,” *Autobiography*, 1950.

I began my first day working in McMaster’s archives reading the above quotation found on the department pamphlet. It commenced my immersion into Bertrand Russell’s pa-

pers. The gravitas of Russell’s self-proclaimed passions in life affected the lens with which I viewed Russell and his papers. My co-op began on an intriguing and inspiring note.

Co-op, as many readers will likely know, is an option for MLIS student at UWO. My co-op took place in two different departments and consisted of three different projects. I worked on improving digitization workflows in the library and archives for the first four months in the Sherman Centre for Digital Scholarship. For the next four months in the William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections I created series level descriptions from available print finding aids of the Bertrand Russell archives. I spent a lot of time pouring over the holdings in the

Above photo courtesy of the University of Toronto Archives, 2006-2-1MS.

stacks, and conducted a website audit for the Bertrand Russell archives website.

I had a full-bodied and varied work experience during my co-op. The first half of my position was research-oriented, and I learned an immense amount about digitization standards, issues, and processes as I was documenting and constructing workflows. The second half consisted of more 'traditional' archives work as I aided in the completion of the Bertrand Russell finding aid and learned a lot about the everyday work of archives.



Emily Tyschenko working with the Russell papers (Submitted Photo).

For some reason, I was not expecting the 'magic' that I experienced while working with Russell's papers in the archives. I did not expect to be affected by or think about papers even after I left work. I did not expect to recall obscure references in letter A to reappear in letter B and to remember it. I did not expect to find myself amused by a line written in one letter and empathetic about a reflection in another letter. I began to understand Russell, the man, rather than perceiving him solely as a stale historical figure. He began to grow into a ghost of a person.

The magic of working with archives has carried over even as I complete descriptions and arrangement of new archives and accruals at McMaster's archives. I don't think

that this sense of fulfillment I'm referring to comes from the history, the age, or the significance of the documents, but rather from what feels like a serendipitous meeting of a memory. I feel a continued respect for the

private papers that donors have handed over to the archives, and it has made abstract privacy theory learned in the classroom into a real and active concern as I proceed in my career as a new archivist. I knew I liked archives work before I began my co-op, but I didn't imagine that I would grow so fond of the people behind the papers.

So what has this experience has added to my career, life, and personal growth? I can say that I feel fuller and better formed as a new archivist. I feel more invested in what archives themselves are doing. I am more concerned about my professional community. And I am able to understand archival theory in a manner more critically and independently-minded than I was capable of before this experience. I have felt a sense of collegial camaraderie and experienced strong mentorship from my coworkers (as well as from others in the archival community). I have been able to glimpse the depth and breadth of the profession and have felt fulfilled by the work I have done.



Summer at the Lakehead University Archives

by Nicholas Duplessis

I started working as the Archives and Special Collections Assistant for the Lakehead University Archives on May 4th, 2016. Hired as a student through Lakehead's Summer Work Program, the mandate for my job was primarily focused on both digitizing the graphic contents of the archives and increasing access to the collection online. At first, I was overwhelmed. Lakehead's Archives had been generally untouched for several years, and although Sara, Lakehead's Archivist, had made substantial progress in her few months of employment, the work ahead in the archives and the amount of photographs was daunting.

The most practical approach to digitizing the contents was to work on one collection at a time. Through this approach, to date, I have worked with the Thunder Bay Finnish Canadian Historical Society Collection (TBFCHS), the Oscar Styffe Collection, and the Finlandia Club Collection, as well as with some photographs from the General Archives Series. Aside from digitizing, I have also worked on inventories and arrangements.

As a summer student, the learning potential within the Lakehead University Archives is limitless. In regards to archival theory, I have developed a much stronger sense of both arrangement and description, and outreach and access. Furthermore, I have an increased knowledge of some of the copyright, legal, and monetary factors that are associated with archives not only at Lakehead, but across Canada and international-



Nicholas Duplessis at the Lakehead University Archives (Submitted Photo).

ly. Archival theory is not the only one aspect that I have gained a deeper understanding and knowledge of throughout my first month at the Lakehead University Archives. Through examining several collections, most notably those of Finnish origin, and combining them with my prior knowledge of past and contemporary Thunder Bay, Ontario, I have been able to develop a much deeper understanding of the cultural, political and economic heritage of the city. I have also dealt with many of the University's records, which has had the same effect on my knowledge. In short, the Archives has taught me a lot about both Thunder Bay and Lakehead University.

After one month of working at the Archives, I have already seen several instances of personal growth and understanding. That growth similarly correlates to the archives, which has been improving and growing each and every day. Although I am only here for a summer work program, I am very excited to see what the future holds for the Lakehead University Archives.



The Student Pages: Ask an Archivist

Dear Archivist, Since graduation, I have been working in a records management contract position for a little while. While records management can be very engaging, I miss the interaction with historical records and the public that more traditional archival work brings. In the meantime, I worry that I am losing archives-specific skills and experience that would help me find a permanent place in the field. I know that the two areas are closely linked, but sometimes they seem worlds apart. What advice can you give to keep me in the archives game? Is it possible to bridge between the two down the road?

Sincerely,

Archivist-in-Waiting

Hi Archivist-In-Waiting: Your concern is completely understandable. The education system and job market being what they are, archivists have normalized this narrative that records management is a fallback, something that we can always do until we get a real job in a real archives.

It's hard to predict where your career will go from here. You will be moving on to new things: any semi-reliable thinkpiece will tell you people are staying at any job a few years on average, and you may work at a dozen or more places in your career. You might move back into solely archival work, you might find that records management is your perfect fit after all, or you could move into another sphere altogether. My first two jobs after graduation were in records management, and then I spent years in a split RM/archives role, and now I'm working mostly with archives but also providing RM advice and trying to learn to be a librarian as well.

But for now, you're worried about keeping your archival skills sharp. What strategies you try will really depend on the rest of your situation: not everyone has a lot of reading time, access to journals, the opportunity to volunteer, or the funding to go to conferences. (If you can, I mean, there's an answer!). Choose to try something that you can reasonably do, and do it, even if that's one hour a week reading open-access articles. There are a lot of resources available at no cost – usually the challenge is finding time to absorb it all. You might be best off picking some of the most important current issues that you don't want to fall behind on, such as new techniques and tools for working with electronic records or discussions about inclusion and diversity in the archival record.

Most importantly, though, recognize that being a good records manager makes you a much stronger archivist. In your work now, you're watching as new technology is implemented and used to create records, and you're working with a variety of records crea-

tors with different behaviours, priorities, and ideas about the relationship of recorded information to their work. Above all you're doing appraisal work, all the time, at both macro- and micro- levels. As a records manager, you're thinking constantly about immediate use, longer-term requirements, and potential historical value of a broad swath of documentation. You're developing a comfort with identifying those values, and also a comfort with being able to destroy documents that aren't needed. It's a lot harder to build that experience working with established archival collections.

Keep in mind that your records management work is strengthening your archival skills, learn from that experience consciously, and bring all that proudly to your next job interview, wherever it may be!

Sara Janes



Dear Archivist, I have been working in the field for three years now and one situation always stumps me: the elevator pitch. Every time someone asks me what I do, I feel an inkling of dread before I reply, "I'm an archivist." Responses have been mixed. Sometimes I am met with silence, or a perplexed stare. On one particular occasion, a lady at the airport assumed I was some sort of paleontologist and we ended up discussing dinosaurs for an hour (I do not like dinosaurs). There have been similar run-ins where I have posed as an archaeologist out of failure to explain (or properly pronounce?) my job title.

So I have to ask: how do you explain this profession in casual conversation, in a few seconds, to people who have never heard of this job?

With hope,
Not-An-Archaeologist

Dear “Not an Archeologist,” Thank you for the question. I am sure all of your colleagues can relate to this. I searched various dictionaries for a definition and found the [Wikipedia entry](#) the most useful: “An archivist (AR-kiv-ist) is an information professional who assesses, collects, organizes, preserves, maintains control over, and provides access to records and archives determined to have long-term value.”

While this is helpful as it shows our role as information professionals, trying to describe what we do to the general public can be a bit more complicated. What I have found helpful is to associate archives to something that is identifiable to people. For example, I suggest that archivists are like librarians in that they are dealing with information, providing reference and access. The difference is that archivists collect rec-

ords, not just books, which have legal, historical or cultural value. Unlike libraries, patrons are not allowed to go into the stacks and retrieve the material they want. Our finding aids, like Archeion, serve as our catalogue as do our reference staff.

Archives are also like museums as they collect older material. The difference is that they are not display oriented. The focus is on the document for its information rather than the artifact. If you think of it, the archives provide the records to document an artifact. The blueprints or designs for a piece of furniture may be in the archives while the furniture is the artifact in the museum

We are the keepers of information, regardless of format and our goal is to ensure the material is kept and accessible to our users for many generations.

I hope that there is something in this answer to help you if the question arises again.

Sincerely,

Carolynn Bart–Riedstra

Student News

Extension of the Student Membership Rate

The Archives Association of Ontario is pleased to announce that the Student Membership category has now been extended. It will now be available to new professionals for two years following graduation from a recognized post-secondary program. The motion to extend the membership category was successfully passed at the May 12, 2016 Annual General Meeting.

The AAO's Student Outreach Planning Committee identified the extension of the membership category as a key goal for its activities this past year. Understanding that new graduates are often employed part time or in short-term contracts without professional benefits, the extension period will help retain student members until they have a better opportunity to secure themselves financially.

The two year post-graduation extension period is available only to individuals who joined the AAO while attending a post-secondary institution. Proof of enrollment or program completion will be required. More information about how students can benefit from an AAO membership is available on the [Students Page](#).

Ideas for Student Workshops Requested

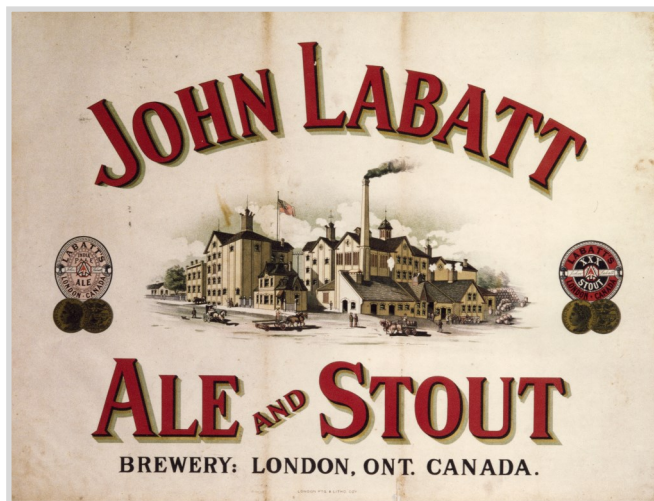
Are there archival skills you'd like to develop before graduation? The Student Outreach Committee and Professional Development Committee seeks your ideas on workshops you'd like to see offered! Please contact Grant Hurley at director2@aa0-archivists.ca.

Food in the Archives: The Labatt Brewing Company Collection

by Grant Hurley

The Labatt Brewing Company is one of the giants of Canadian beer history. Founded in 1847 in London, Ontario by John Labatt, it grew to a company of enormous proportions over the century to become a recognized brand in an international portfolio of breweries. The large size and long history of the company is matched by the incredible scope of Labatt's recent donation of its corporate records to the Western Archives at Western University. The collection spans the entire history of the company, from the 1832 deed for the original London brewery site, to engineering records documenting the company's physical operations in 2009. I spoke with Amanda Oliver, who was hired by Western to continue to process the collection. At the time, she was just a month into the job, and was beginning to get a real sense of the scope of the collection, which consists of 450 meters of textual materials, over 45,000 photographs, hundreds of different media types, and materials in twenty different languages.

John Labatt didn't become a brewer by accident. His father, John Kinder Labatt, had purchased an interest in a small brewery in London in 1847. Observing his son's interest in the business, he apprenticed the young John to a brewer of English ales in Wheeling, West Virginia. John came back with a recipe for India Pale Ale that would eventually become the standard-bearer for his business. After the death of the elder John Labatt, he entered into a partnership with his mother Eliza and slowly grew the family brewery into a profitable business.



Ale and Stout Advertisement, [189?], Labatt Brewing Company Collection, Western Archives, Western University, London, Ontario.

Labatt took advantage of railways to distribute beer beyond provincial borders, and used print media through ads in magazines, promotional cards and calendars, and attractively designed labels to market his beer. The result was a highly successful business that marked his company as one of

the largest malters and brewers in Canada by his death in 1915. Labatt willed the business to his nine children, meaning that the company would stay in family hands for many years afterward. It managed to weather the Prohibition era by relying on exports to the United States and selling a low-alcohol "temperance ale." Additional growth through a variety of acquisitions, and the successful marketing of Labatt 50 "light ale" and Labatt Blue in the 1950s, meant increasing market share through the

1980s, until the company was purchased through the Belgium-based Interbrew in 1995. Though several more acquisitions, it is now owned by the world's largest brewing company, Anheuser-Busch InBev.

The Labatt Collection was transferred to Western in two installments between 2008 and 2010. As Western had also accepted the Canadian Tire Heritage Collection in 1999, senior staff began exploring the idea of expanding its corporate archives holdings. Since Labatt was founded in London, the case for taking custody of the company's records was a strong one. The collection received a cultural property designation from the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board in 2011 for its "outstanding significance and national importance" and "historical cultural significance." Prior to donating the materials, Labatt had taken the effort to gather its historical records from offices across the country in an initiative called "Project Dusty." The project was intended to fulfill its corporate responsibility towards community-building by making its records accessible and ensuring their preservation. The company hired archivists to begin organizing and

inventorying the collection. This initial documentation was also transferred to Western and is being used to help inform the current processing. Amanda noted that her first task was to work to figure out Labatt's complex corporate structure, which was the result of a number of mergers and acquisitions through its history, as well as familiarize herself with the work of her predecessor, Bev Brereton. The variety of holding companies and subsidiaries means that she was considering the creation of sous-fonds, but has decided to go with a straight series approach to the collection. Currently, a preliminary finding aid describing the contents and the major series in the collection is available. Amanda is now in the midst of preparing a processing plan using a user-based approach: the areas of the collection that are currently attracting the most interest will be the first on the block for processing. There has been a lot of interest in the collection on the part of researchers, which has helped prioritize areas for focus. Labatt also continues to consult the collection for business needs.

Though brewers in Ontario and elsewhere



India Pale Ale Bottle Label, 1948, Labatt Brewing Company Collection, Western Archives, Western University, London, Ontario.

is available. Amanda is now in the midst of preparing a processing plan using a user-based approach: the areas of the collection that are currently attracting the most interest will be the first on the block for processing. There has been a lot of interest in the collection on the part of researchers, which has helped prioritize areas for focus. Labatt also continues to consult the collection for business needs.

Though brewers in Ontario and elsewhere

continue to produce heritage-style beers by the gallon, the actual heritage of brewing in Canada remains in the documentary records like those contained in the Labatt collection. These include not only the recipes that attest to the kinds of products made and consumed over centuries, but to the remarkable infrastructure that has surrounded a company like Labatt. From physical sites and labour relations, to marketing materials and public relations, the Labatt collection shows brewing at its largest scale, and I'm sure will provide ample interest not only to historians, but to modern-day brewers looking to see how the business was run. I hope too that today's breweries can also contribute to the historical record down the line – provided they care for their records today – so that the history of brewing continues to grow.



AAO 2016 Silent Auction: A Huge Success!

On behalf of the AAO 2016 Conference Silent Auction Committee, we would like to extend a warm thank you to members and institutions that donated and/or participated in this year's silent auction in Thunder Bay. We raised a total of **\$800** for the Shirley Spragge Bursary Fund! This achievement would not have been possible without an amazing community supporting this important cause. We are proud to be a part of such a caring community. We are AAO! Thank you again for all of your support! We look forward to another successful auction in 2017!

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Find available space, locate items quickly, and generate meaningful statistics.
- MANAGE REQUESTS**
Manage requests arriving by automated email or into the database.
- BROWSER-BASED**
You need only a browser with access to the "cloud" or your own server.
- GOOGLE MAPS**
Present your geographic locations on the map for all related material.
- PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**
Support the hierarchical structure required by all professional standards.

Breaking Down Barriers to Begin Meaningful Discussions: The AAO/AMA 2016 Joint Conference

by Tracey Krause

At the outset, we would like to acknowledge the traditional lands of the Ojibwa people of the Fort William First Nation and thank them for hosting our community. The Archives Association of Ontario (AAO) and the Association for Manitoba Archives (AMA) 2016 Joint Conference “Archives Confidential: Breaking Down Barriers” hosted by the Northwestern Ontario Archivists’ Association (NOAA) brought together colleagues from Manitoba and Ontario to converse, challenge, and incite action in archival practice and the profession. The conference was held in Thunder Bay from May 11 to 13 in the historic Prince Arthur Waterfront Hotel & Suites overlooking the area’s natural wonder, the Sleeping Giant.

The first day opened with the preconference workshop on “Emergency Planning and Salvage” in which participants gained valuable knowledge and resources to guide individuals through

emergency response and disasters from AAO Archives Advisor Iona McCraith. New members to both associations were welcomed at the First-Timers Reception by Emma Prescott and Marissa Paron, Presidents from each association. The opening reception was held at the Thunder Bay Military Museum & O’Kelly Armouries and welcomed over 70 delegates to the AAO/AMA 2016 Joint conference. Scott Goodine, Archivist of Manitoba, moderated the opening keynote address which placed Dr. Guy Berthiaume, Librarian and Archivist of Canada, and John Roberts, Chief Privacy Officer and Archivist of Ontario, on the hot seat as they answered questions pertaining to building relationships and collaboration within the archival community at both the national and provincial levels.

To build community between the two associations, Jessica Nichol and Tyne Petrowski from the AMA Education Committee hosted an Archivist Book Club. In a group session, delegates discussed how moral and/or ethical contentious issues and records are handled from acquisition to access through the examination of two invigorating articles: “Archives Beyond the Pale: Negotiating Legal and Ethical Entanglements after the Belfast Project” by Christine George and “Hard to

access through the examination of two invigorating articles: “Archives Beyond the Pale: Negotiating Legal and Ethical Entanglements after the Belfast Project” by Christine George and “Hard to



Participants at the First-Timers Reception (Submitted Photo).

Dismiss: The Archival Value of Gay Male Erotica and Pornography” by Marcel Barriault. Another community association-building event was the raucous trivia game that pitted association against association with questions related to each other’s provinces. Hosted by Tracey Krause, the first question stumped the AAO, who could not name Manitoba’s provincial motto, or for that matter, their very own! The AMA proved to be superior and blew AAO out of the water with a perfect score (Ontario, you really need to brush up on the history of other provinces even if you are the centre of Canada)!

The afternoon session opened with a plenary on Truth & Reconciliation, which recognized and acknowledged that reconciliation is a Canadian issue that must be built on truth and open dialogue. Moderator Anne Lindsay spoke about the role of the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba and the work the centre is doing alongside First Nations groups across the country. Sarah Story followed by sharing how we as settlers can choose to reject colonialism openly and become an ally and work with Indigenous

groups. She critically offered how the archival profession can build trust and move forward being informed and respectful when working with Indigenous groups. Sarah Hurford examined the collection gap within Li-

brary and Archives Canada (LAC) holdings of records pertaining to Aboriginal communities and individuals. She shared the steps that LAC has taken to address this important issue, such as “Project Naming” that is identifying who individuals are in photograph-

ic collections, as well as updating offensive terminology. Lastly, Jason Bennett closed the plenary by sharing what LAC archivists learned from their roles in support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and how LAC has made a lasting impact in the national conversation of reconciliation for both Aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples.

The second day closed with a session on “The Records We are Not Proud of: Discussion on Outreach and Controversial Materials.” Speakers Sean Hayes, Sara Janes, John Lund, and Rebecka Sheffield each presented a case study from their own experience where they navigated acknowledging difficult collections in celebratory events.



Sarah Ferencz, Danielle Robichaud and Jim Burant sporting their new conference toques
(Submitted Photo).

In the evening, delegates chose from a myriad of social activities ranging from a heritage walk of Historic Downtown Port Arthur to a guided tour of Fort William Historical Park. Individuals enjoyed a voyageur feast of pickerel and root vegetables and were entertained with fiddle performance at Fort William Historical Park. The night ended with star gazing at the David Thompson Astronomical Observatory and a memorable bus ride back to the hotel.

The final day opening session “Building Memory: Perspectives on Acquisitions and Appraisal” began with Sean Smith outlining the collaborative Provincial Acquisition Strategy that was drafted by the AAO Institutional Development Committee (IDC) in partnership with the Archives of Ontario. The strategy was passed earlier at the AAO annual general meeting. The discussion was contrasted by Catherine Bailey and Tina Lloyd from LAC, who critically examined the monitoring of appraisal and acquisition processes for government records. The last session of the morning “Mediating Discovery, Privacy, and Identity in Archives” was comprised of thought-provoking papers by Michael Moir, Alison Little and Dr. Jay Young, and Janel Cheng.



Delegates celebrate at the Conference After Party (Submitted Photo).

The AAO Awards luncheon hosted by Jim Burant honoured individuals and institutions for their contribution and dedication to Ontario’s archival community. The Alexander Fraser award was given to three recipients Jean Dryden Loryl Macdonald, and Theresa Regnier, the Institutional award went to Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, and the Corporate award presented to Université De Hearst.

Following lunch, in a ground-breaking session, Julia Holland, Danielle Robichaud and Anna St. Onge, spoke on “Acknowledging Emotion and Affect in Archival Practice” from their own personal experiences. They argued that we have a responsibility as a profession to create the environments in which we desire to work. Discussion included the difficulty of maintaining emotional neutrality as public servants and archivists. Those in attendance responded by openly and honestly sharing their own personal stories of emotional labour.

The AAO/AMA Joint Conference closed with Dr. Tom Nesmith who challenged the community to become more effectively engaged in political activity to move public policy on important cultural matters in his paper “Archives and Politics.” Dr. Nesmith encour-

aged the community to political action by expanding the number of archives, strengthening existing ones, and building alliances.

Thank you Thunder Bay for a conference that will be remembered by all, for bringing together two archival associations, and for connecting colleagues and new friends. Thank you for the laughter, tears, walks around the harbor, and culinary excursions to the Hoito restaurant for their infamous Finnish pancakes. Thank you to the conference delegates for your support, the speakers for sharing their knowledge and encouraging us to step outside our comfort zone to engage and acknowledge difficult professional issues. Thank you to the Local Arrangement Committee (Sara Janes, Christina Wakefield, and members of NOAA) for organizing the conference venue and coordinating the social activities. Thank you the AMA for enriching our discussions. Thank you to the exhibitors and poster presenters, our conference sponsors, the Program Committee for developing a strong program. Finally, a special thank you to Matt Szybalski for his dedication and passion for creating another memorable Thunder Bay conference.

Start your travel plans, next year's conference will be held in Toronto. Stay tuned for more information.

Note: Check the AAO website under Conferences for [links to papers and presentations](#).



The Last Years of The Ontario Association of Archivists and the Birth of the Archives Association of Ontario

by John Smart

In the last issue of *Off the Record* I described the early years of The Ontario Association of Archivists, how it came into existence in 1982, and how it came to prosper as part of the wave of organizational creativity in the Canadian archival community that marked the 1970s and 1980s. Now we look at the process by which the members of the OAA decided to merge with The Ontario Council of Archives to form the Archives Association of Ontario in 1993. Let's first recall that a new chapter for the OAA began in 1985 with the creation of The Ontario Council of Archives. The Council was set up to represent archival institutions in Ontario (as opposed to individual archivists) and to administer the new funds from Ottawa being made available to Ontario archives through the Canadian Council of Archives.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the entry of federal money into the Ontario archives world after 1985. In February 1986, the National Archives received an additional \$7,000,000 a year for the next five fiscal years (until March 1991) "to be used towards the establishment of a Canadian Archival System, enhancement of activities in the areas of EDP archives and conservation, and for initiatives in the areas of public awareness." The CCA eventually ran a number of grant programs (starting with a

backlog reduction grant program) which, over the years, brought millions of new dollars into hundreds of Canadian archives. The individual grants might have been small (for example, only sufficient to hire a contract employee for six months or a year), but they were very important, particularly for smaller archives. The ending of the National Archival Development Program by the Harper government in 2012 was a tragedy.

After 1985 the OAA and The Ontario Council of Archives began to cooperate together on a number of joint ventures, including an Archival Needs Survey in 1986-1987 and the launching of *Off the Record*, but the idea of a merger of the two organizations took shape slowly and was studied carefully by both sides before it came about. By 1987, the OAA, the OCA, and the ACA were all involved in separate formal strategic planning exercises, trying not just to position themselves in a new, more generous funding universe, but to figure out how they should relate to one another. The OAA's actual full strategic planning report published in 1988 ran to forty-two pages, including three pages of recommendations.

By 1988 the OAA had already achieved some of its major aims over the course of its six-year existence. It had brought together archival workers from across Ontario, many of them from small institutions where they might be the only employee. In the OAA people found fellowship and validation. They could also, by attending OAA annual conferences and chapter workshops, improve their knowledge of archival practices and be instructed in the new computer technologies that were beginning to transform archival work. In 1991, the OAA was even able to start a formal post-appointment

training program. And the OAA, almost by accident through the generosity of the Ontario government, had become a well-funded organization. But it was almost completely a volunteer organization and the weight of its growing structures and activities were difficult to manage on a volunteer basis. It was, perhaps, natural then for the OAA to look for a way to simplify and solidify its organizational life. It eventually found that solidity by sacrificing its identity and merging with the OCA to form the Archives Association of Ontario in 1993.

Merger, though, meant the disappearance of an organization that had been formed to give a voice to workers in archives all over Ontario, be they from big or small institutions. The Ontario Council of Archives, on the other hand, was an organization of employers: heads of archival institutions. Merging the two organizations would not seem automatically a natural thing to do. But the OAA had never functioned much as a union for archival workers. Most OAA members worked for public institutions where their rights as employees were already covered by union contracts. And, though there had been a little jostling between the OAA and OCA after the Council had been formed in 1985, the two organizations had generally got along together well and been involved in some successful joint ventures. And there are no recorded cases of an OAA member asking for OAA assistance against an employer who was a member of the OCA.

A major impetus for the merger was the uncertainty behind future OAA funding. No one believed that Ontario would continue to fund the OAA if it seemed likely that Ottawa might do it instead, and the Ministry was hinting as much to the OAA. In the April/May

1991 issue of *Off the Record*, Rick Stapleton, who was then serving on the executives of both the OAA and the OCA as liaison officer between the two organizations, wrote that he was firmly in favour of a merger. Stapleton said his first reason for proposing a merger was the difficulty of finding enough volunteers to staff the executives and committees of both organizations out of our “small profession.” He also noted that although the two organizations were already cooperating together on a number of projects, their activities were overlapping in a number of areas. An Ontario merger “would likely simplify and improve our relations with government and the public in general.” Neither organization would swallow up the other, he wrote; it is “the logical next step in the development of archives in Ontario.” Today Rick Stapleton recalls that “some archivists were concerned that the new organization would be dominated by large institutions at the expense of smaller ones, but I never understood why they thought that; regardless, I think it’s accurate to say their fears were never realized.”

In early 1991 the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications more or less ordered the OAA to allow outside experts to do a management study of the OAA at Ministry expense. The OAA received a \$25,000 grant to finance the study and reported to the June 1992 OAA AGM that it had spent \$30,000 on it. The resulting 108-page final report on the OAA authored by Chuck Sutyla Consultants of Ottawa surfaced in December 1991 and recommended that amalgamation with the OCA be the OAA’s top priority as part of a five-year corporate plan. Other recommended priorities included the establishment of a permanent office and staff and the creation of an OAA-sponsored post-

appointment training program. Sutyla’s proposed final plan for the OAA included a “Five Year Corporate Plan” centred on its proposed merger with the OCA, after which the new organization could begin to work on a set of objectives and priorities which, within three years, would include four employees and an annual budget of \$300,000. Sutyla put the case for merger clearly: “A new organization is proposed as a solution to the problems of overlapping mandates, volunteer burnout, the difficulty in coordinating joint committees, and limited administrative funding which confronts both the OAA and the OCA.”

At their annual general meetings in the spring of 1992 both the OAA and the OCA passed motions in favour of unity in principle, agreed to jointly study the subject of merger, and looked forward to a formal merger of the two organizations before the end of 1993. The OAA AGM motion, moved by Jim Burant and seconded by Paul McIlroy, authorized the OAA Executive to investigate the creation of “a single archival organization to represent both individuals and organization in Ontario to replace the OAA and OCA” and to report back to the 1993 AGM. It was carried unanimously.

A Joint OAA/OCA Unity Committee then set to work. The OAA members of the committee were Lutzen Riedstra, Roy Schaeffer, and Rick Stapleton, with Roy Schaeffer acting as Unity Coordinator. A meeting of the OAA/OCA Joint Executive Committees attended by seventeen persons took place at the Estonian Central Archives in Canada in Toronto on January 27, 1993. The Joint Unity Committee’s Action Plan Project, a sixty-page report with three “Exhibits” as appendices was thorough in the detailed consider-

ation it gave to the subject of unity. A research assistant, a lawyer, a chartered accountant, and two administrative assistants are thanked by name for their help in preparing the report. In addition, thirteen people from across Canada are thanked for their “advice and technical assistance toward completion of this project.” The report covered the key issue of money and reported on what little was known about the official attitudes to the merger held by the CCA and the National Archivist. As for the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communication, the report said “at no time did they indicate that the creation of a new and more comprehensive organization would automatically result in increased core funding. ... It would appear unlikely that significant new monies would be available to the new organization in the short-term.” The Unity Committee, however, certainly believed that the Provincial Archivist of Ontario was a partisan on the unity side:

... the Archives of Ontario has clearly identified broad political advantages in the union of the two bodies ... The Archives has been active in pursuing the goal of unity to the extent that it has supported applications for funding to research this issue, including the application in aid of this Action Plan.

The Action Plan estimated the costs of the amalgamation at \$10,000, which included \$4,000 for incorporation and bookkeeping fees, and \$5,000 for further meetings and mailings before a merger could be made final. Most of the rest of the report following the opening sections on money were devoted to descriptions of how the organization would work, a proposed constitution with mission statements and objectives, and a

detailed consideration of how staffing would be handled.

On February 1, 1993 Jim Burant, President of the OAA, and Martin Ahermas, Chair of the OCA, sent a joint letter to the members of both organizations inviting comments on a nineteen-page draft constitution for what was to be the new organization scheduled to be formed at twin AGMs in May 1993. The hope was to create “a complete, effective, and comprehensive constitution reflective of the interests and concerns of the entire archival community” for a new body that would “rationalize the activities and administration of the two organizations and to promote more effective service to the archival community in Ontario.” The constitution submitted to the 1993 AGMs of both organizations was approved and the merger was thus completed. We can all now look forward to full history of the Archives Association of Ontario which the AAO Organizational History Project Committee under the chairmanship of Paul Henry of the City of Ottawa Archives is working on, to be published as part of the AAO’s twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations in 2018.

[John Smart worked for eighteen years as an archivist at Library and Archives Canada and taught for ten years in the Archives Technician Program at Algonquin College. In 1988 he was the first recipient of the Alexander Fraser Award. This text forms part of a longer study of the Ontario Association of Archivists, predecessor to the Archives Association of Ontario, which he has made available to his fellow members of the AAO Organizational History Project Committee.—Ed.]



Submissions

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