

NEWSLETTER

Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society



The Nursing records project was initiated by a donation from the Shirley Stanton estate and completed with casino funds.

See Carmen Zhang's article for more details on this project.

Photo 19.237.0076
Title: "Nurses with Toys"

The Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society (FPAAS) works with the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) to help preserve Alberta's documentary history. We also provide young people with six-month internships in the archives environment that is a steppingstone into their professional lives. In this newsletter, our Young Canada Works (YCW) interns describe the variety of work they have done this past year.

Contents:

New Provincial Archivist	2
Archives Store: What's New	2
Advancing Access to Alberta's Archival Records	3
Photography Update	4
PAA Fashion Week Sean McKinnon, Conservator Technician	6
<u>FPAAS Staff Spotlight:</u>	
Lorraine Butchart	8
Carmen Zhang	8
<u>YCW Intern Reflection:</u>	
Jacob Landry, Audiovisual Conservator Production Technician Intern	10
Reis Pouliot, Archivist Intern	11
Mikaela LeBlanc, Archivist Intern	12
Membership Application	13

FPAAS Board 2024/2025

President: Linda Borys

Treasurer: Karen Hesson

Secretary: Margaret Shane

Directors-at-Large: Judy Kovacs

Tim Marriott

Kelley Abercrombie

Catherine Whalley

Deborah Beaver

New Provincial Archivist

The Provincial Archives of Alberta is pleased to announce that Heather Innes has begun her role as the new Provincial Archivist.

On January 20, after twenty-five years in the legal profession, Heather fulfilled her familial destiny by joining her mother and maternal grandmother (both librarians) in the GLAM sector. Heather recalls that before heading to law school, her mother *bookmarked* a suggestion: she should consider becoming a librarian. However, young Heather *closed the book* on that idea, *preferring* to write the LSAT instead. But as her law career *unfolded*, Heather couldn't resist the *call number* of research, and began working on her MLIS part-time, all while juggling her career and raising young children. During her twenty-year stint at Alberta Justice, Heather had the opportunity to serve on the Alberta Records Management Committee and learn a lot about information management in the public sector. The catalog cards fell into place when "the best job in Government" became available and Heather took the leap.

A warm welcome to our new Provincial Archivist – Heather Innes.



Archives Store: What's New

By Elizabeth Johnson, Archives Retail Services Coordinator

The Provincial Archives of Alberta, what a place to work and learn!

I joined the PAA in April 2024 and continue to be amazed at the amount of information that is accessible to researchers, genealogists and those simply curious about who we are and what we do.

In my role I have not only completed a refresh of the Archives Store but have also had the pleasure of working with a range of wonderful clients that have entrusted us with the conservation of their valued documents, photos and artwork. I have been touched by the many stories that have been shared with me related to items that have been discovered within boxes in basements, attics and barns. How great it is that our clients trust us with their family history, whether in their stories or in their belongings.



An assortment of new products has been added to the Archives Store and some relate directly to our Love and Marriage exhibit. We've got our wonderful, blended tea, Steeped in Romance, that brings several romantic elements together in one cup. This black tea has a subtle taste of chocolate covered strawberries and a delicate hint of rose petals. Other items include a custom tea towel that features an excerpt from a heartfelt letter dated September 1908, a lined coil notebook and a prompted journal where you can record milestones of your own love story. Any of these items are available either online or when you come visit our exhibit in person.

In addition to the exhibit related items there have been numerous other products introduced to the store, including roughly 20 new 8" x 10" images added to our pre-printed photo collection. These pre-made prints take the guess work out of gift giving or provide you with a memorable image to take away and display in your home or office. All images have been pulled from our holdings and include fantastic early-mid 1900's photos of Jasper Avenue, Whyte Avenue and the Hotel Macdonald. We also have fantastic images of mountains in Jasper and incredible landscapes in Banff, the only catch is that you'll have to visit us in person to see these images as there are simply too many to share on our website. When visiting us in person, or online, look at our Edmonton Settlement Map coffee mug or pick up a 5-pack of beautiful William Copeland McCalla cards that have been left blank for your own message. These cards feature images taken from hand-coloured botanical lantern slides from the 1930's, and they are fantastic!

If you are looking for unique gifts, which include images from our vast holdings, are considering an interesting read from a local Alberta author or searching for archival supplies for the safe care and storage of your photos, letters and documents, you'll find what you need at the Archives Store at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. We look forward to seeing you!



Advancing Access to Alberta's Archival Records

By Jaclyn Landry, Program and Volunteer Coordinator and
Meghan Leschert, Government Records Archival Technician

The volunteers at the Provincial Archives of Alberta continue to make remarkable strides in improving public access to our province's rich history. Their dedication and hard work have been pivotal in preserving and expanding access to archival records held by the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

One of the most impressive achievements this year has been the ongoing work to re-house and file list vital statistic records, which document some of the most important moments in Albertans' lives, such as births, marriages, and deaths which are frequently requested by researchers. Volunteers have foldered a staggering 336,271 registrations, totaling approximately 570,258 pieces of paper across 5,703 folders. This effort has led to the better preservation of death registrations from 1936 to 1974 and marriage registrations from 1949. Volunteers have reviewed original registrations to create keyword searchable file listings



for 54,137 registrations for the 1973 and 1974 deaths, 1948 marriages, and Indigenous death and stillbirth registrations from 1923 to 1945 and confirmed the accuracy of the information in existing file lists for 33,018 file list entries. This is important work that both ensures the preservation of these records as well as provide better access to them for staff. Once all file listing work is complete, we hope to provide researchers with an easier search experience for these records using Access to Memory (AtoM).

The dedication of our volunteers extends far beyond vital statistics. Volunteers have been instrumental in advancing other significant archival projects. The records of the Alberta Women's Institute, which document the pivotal role women played as leaders in communities across the province, are nearly complete. Volunteers have processed and created detailed file lists for the collection, making it easier than ever to explore the profound contributions of this group.

In addition, one volunteer is currently working to provide an accurate count of the photographs and negatives transferred from the Government of Alberta's former Public Affairs Bureau. This important project will provide valuable insights into Alberta's historical events and public communications. Another major initiative involves taking a comprehensive look at Alberta's land survey-related records to create new file lists, update file lists with additional information and to prepare a guide to accessing these records; this will become an essential resource for anyone researching the province's development and land use over time. A volunteer is also reviewing photographs from the self-serve photo area in the Reading Room, identifying Indigenous content where original photo descriptions may not have specifically noted these connections. Significant progress is also being made on the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) collection. Volunteers are helping to record French text from photographs, creating a detailed finding aid to assist researchers and make these important records more accessible.

Additionally, volunteers from the Alberta Pioneer Railway Museum and the United Church Archives continue to make significant progress on their respective projects. The Alberta Pioneer Railway Museum team is advancing efforts to preserve the history of the railway in the province, while United Church Archives volunteers are supporting research related to the church's history, processing records from its congregations and helping with research queries.

The hard work and passion of these volunteers cannot be overstated. Their contributions to the Provincial Archives of Alberta have a lasting impact, not only on the preservation of our history but also on the researchers who rely on these valuable records. We are incredibly grateful for their dedication to preserving Alberta's heritage and for the immeasurable difference they make to the Archives' work.

Photography Update

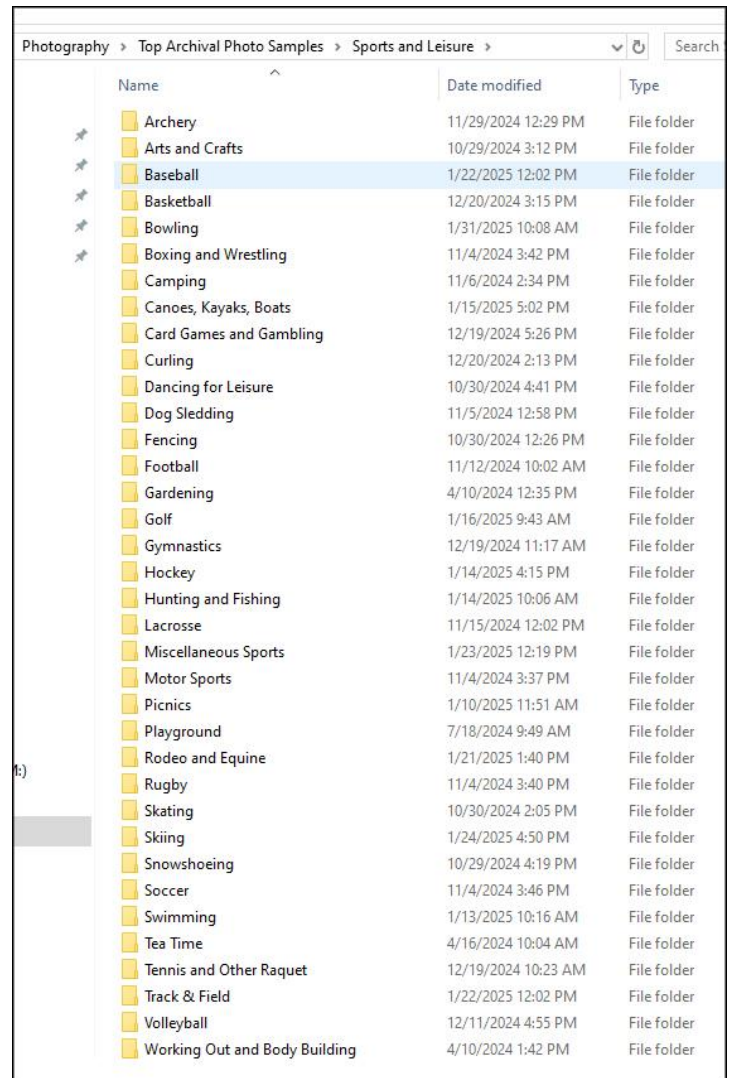
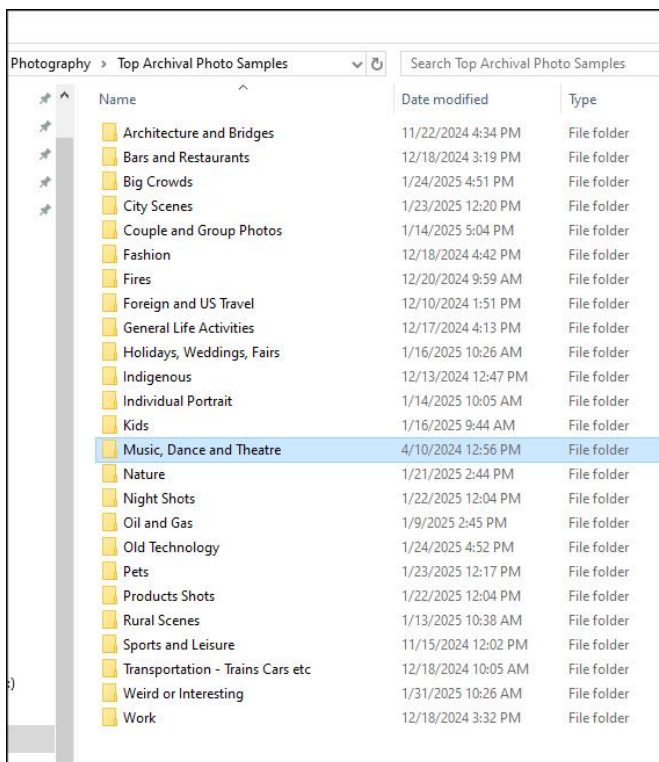
By Yesan Ham, Photographic Technician

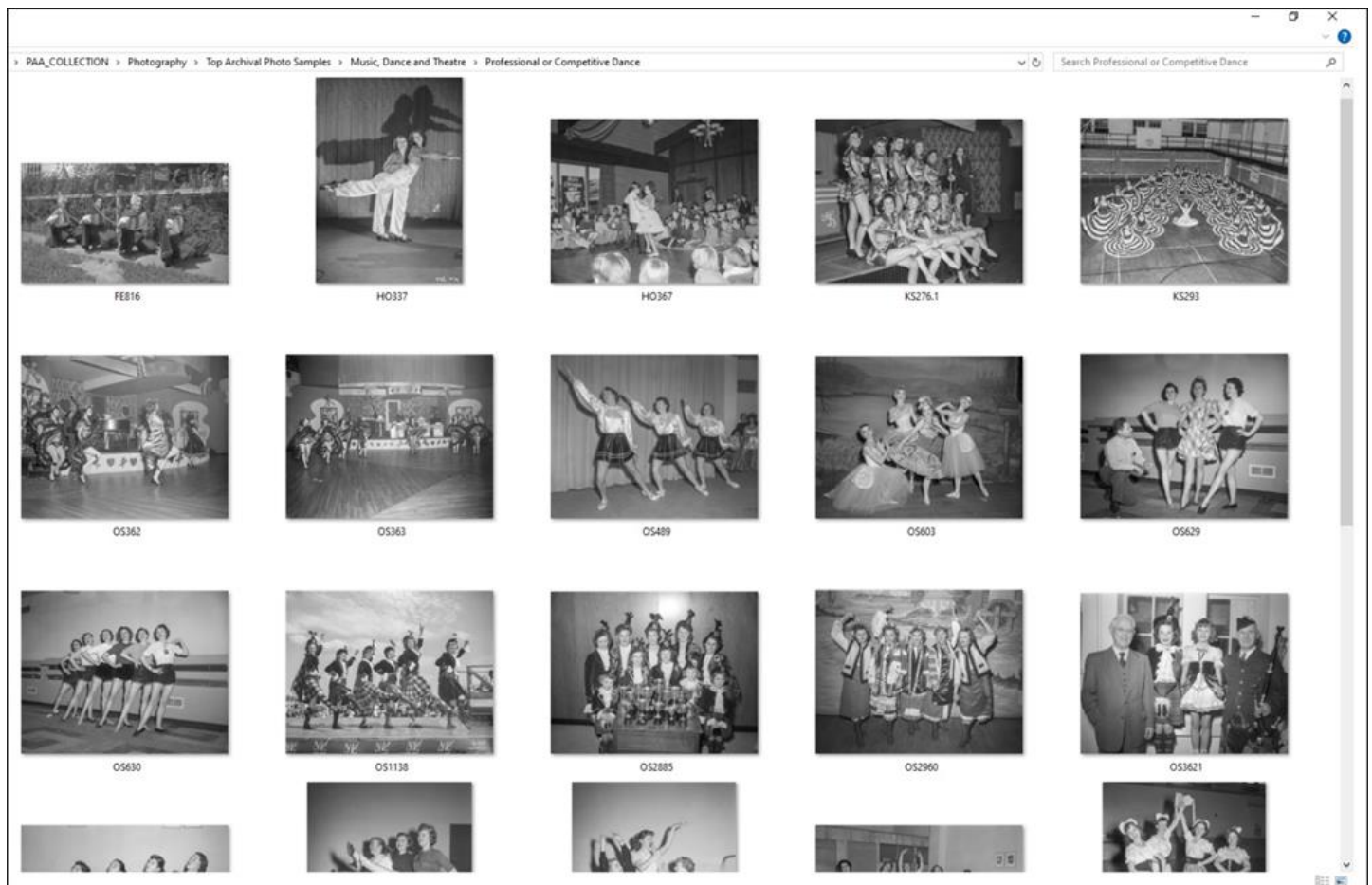
As the PAA's Photo Technician, I come across hundreds of images every week. Most of these photos are your run-of-the-mill building, boring event, or unidentified person, but occasionally something eye-catching comes along. When this happens, I save the image to a folder called "Top Archival Photo Samples". Within this folder, there are many subfolders of various topics including Fashion, Nature, and Sports and Leisure, among others. There are even subfolders within these subfolders. This long list of categories and sub-categories is evidence of the high-quality breadth and depth of the Archives' overall photo collection. Saving and



organizing images this way allows me to help my colleagues find examples for client questions, projects, Facebook posts, or even personal interest.

I am continuously adding images to these folders as I work on orders and preservation scans. Every so often I will add, merge, rename or delete folders. I will sometime recategorize photos if I decide they fit one topic more than another. Some photos are in multiple folders, as they relate to more than one category. The Top Archival Photo Samples folder is constantly changing and growing. I look forward to working on many more interesting/beautiful/fascinating/thought-provoking/weird/inspiring photographs as I continue my job at the Archives. I hope others find this folder a useful resource.





“PAA Fashion Week” Sewing Custom Enclosures for Hanging Storage

By Sean McKinnon, Conservation Technician

I started at the Provincial Archives of Alberta back in September 2024 as an academic intern from the Fleming College Cultural Heritage Conservation and Management post graduate certification program. Through this internship I learned many new skills such as including bookbinding and repair, safe removal of various types of tape, and treating three-dimensional paper artifacts. I also completed a capstone research project focused on creating an introductory resource on understanding and creating archival housing. At the end of my internship I was lucky enough to be offered a short-term contract aimed at improving the hanging storage rows in vault 8.



With this project came a new skill to learn, sewing! I had a basic understanding of hand stitching and common repair techniques from my conservation education, but the larger scale custom covers and housings for oversized items has been an exciting challenge. I had never used a sewing machine before so after familiarizing myself with the machine and learning how to thread the needle and bobbins, I eased myself into machine sewing by refining existing dust covers.

Once those were completed, I moved on to creating custom dust covers for the hanging artworks which did not have previously made covers.



By this time in the project, I had become quite familiar with the hanging storage and the artifacts placed within. I did condition checks and refined/ created new four flap folders for oversized materials that, though not hanging, only fit secured to the hanging storage rows. During this process I was able to condense the artifacts into lesser rows, allowing room for future accessions. I also did condition checks and four flap folder adjustments on the vast collection of oversized panoramic format photographs, negatives, and documents.

Once I had taken over what felt like most of the tables in the archives with piles of panoramic materials tucked safely away in folders, I had to figure out how to put them back in the vault. The previous "sling"

enclosures had warped after many years and some slight over filling, this led me to brainstorm more flexible options that would still be structurally sound and supportive. After many prototypes textual records conservator Alison Freake and I landed on an unbleached cotton sling with the previous coroplast slings used as supportive inserts. Some smaller details that increased stability and accessibility include grommets to increase support where the slings hang on S hooks on the row walls, double rows of stitching to attach the side panels, and custom fitting the outer flap to keep the insert in a vertical position while the sling is in a closed position.



As mentioned, the slings for the current artifacts are custom fit so I will also create spares to act both as placeholders and useable storage for future accessions. This project also includes the creation of a guiding document which will include instructions on how to make these slings if more are needed in the future. This project has been a fun challenge and has helped me hone my problem-solving skills and has increased my preventive conservation knowledge.

FPAAS Staff Spotlight: Lorraine Butchart

Hello, Friends!

I have been a proud contract employee of the Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society for the past 9 ½ years, faithfully reapplying for (and landing) the position of Archives Technician at the Provincial Archives of Alberta every March. This year, however, I have had to make the difficult decision to bow out of the competition for the annual contract, as various circumstances in my life have let me know that it's time to leave the work to someone younger.



I feel that I have gained immensely from my time here in terms of what I've learned about both archival practices and Alberta's history. Perhaps even more importantly, I've experienced a sense of community and acceptance while working with a wonderful group of people, and while I will miss many aspects of the work, I will especially miss the day-to-day interactions with my colleagues that have made the experience of working here truly special. It may sound like a cliché, but it does in many ways feel like we are a family, in all the best senses of the word.

I am grateful to the Friends of the Provincial Archives that they have been able to provide me with this opportunity for the past (almost) decade. I plan to remain at least somewhat active in the archival community in the future, as my health and family commitments allow.

In the words of the late, great Douglas Adams, so long, and thanks for all the fish!

Best,
Lorraine Butchart

FPAAS Staff Spotlight: Carmen Zhang

Hello! My name is Carmen, and I share the Archives Technician position with Lorraine Butchart. In my position, I work with private records, and I am responsible for various tasks that include assigning accession numbers to new donations, creating accession files for said donations and adding the information to Access to Memory (AtoM), creating file lists, going on donor pickups, covering for retrievals in the public facing reading room when needed and many more! I also process archival records, that is, I put them in acid free folders, boxes and create finding aid lists to make them available.



On top of sharing the Archives Technician position with Lorraine, I was also given an opportunity by the Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society to work on the Nursing project at the PAA. I am working with Kelsey, a Private Records Archivist, to make records that were donated by the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) available and accessible to the public. Through this project I have learned the impact Alberta nurses have on Alberta.

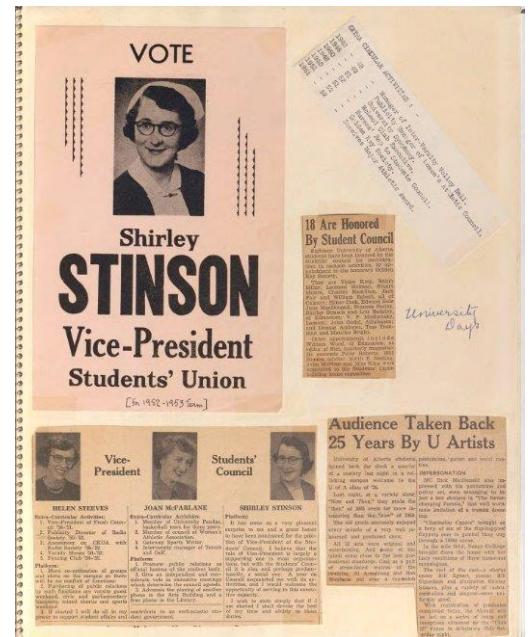
One memorable figure and the first collection that I worked on in this project was the Shirley Stinson fonds (image 1). She made huge contributions to higher education in nursing and nursing research, mentoring nurses, and was involved in the establishment of the masters program of nursing at the University of Alberta. When viewing her records, her quirky personality and the witty way she replies to her letters and emails is evident in her - [Correspondence and Photographs series](#), and some of the files have been digitized (image 2). The Shirley Stinson finding aids can be found here, [Shirley Stinson fonds](#) on Access to Memory.

Other records that I have processed include [Nursing Sisters' Association of Canada fonds](#), [Alberta Community Health Nurses Society series](#), [Kay Christie fonds](#), and many more records! Interesting fact: Kay Christie served in the Second World War and was a Canadian nurse who was a prisoner of war in Hong Kong. All these records are searchable on Access to Memory and are available to the public!

That is all I have for now. Until next time.



(Image 1 – Shirley Stinson. In file #: [1992.07-19.269](#))



(Image 2- Shirley Stinson Scrapbook: File #: [1992.07-19.297](#))

YCW Intern Reflection: Jacob Landry

Before starting my internship at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, I was volunteering in the archives of the Montreal Film Society. It was there that I first saw the documentary short *Children of Alcohol* on 16mm film. I prepared myself a condition assessment sheet, ready to note any scratches, splices, or fading, but as soon as the film began, I found myself captivated. When the film ended, I realized that my condition assessment was completely blank.

At the time, the director Gil Cardinal's name was still unknown to me. When my internship at the PAA began, I was amazed to learn that I would be tasked with digitally preserving his collection, and more amazed to learn that most of his life's work is lost, incomplete, or otherwise inaccessible. His oeuvre is a lot larger than any online biography would imply.

Cardinal's collection has over 900 audiovisual items in it. These span many different formats and can vary in length. The most common type of item is a 30-minute videocassette, field tapes from his documentary work. His 1-hour documentary *Our Home and Native Land*, for example, had 190 of these tapes. The vastness of the collection forces me to be selective in my efforts, and it becomes painful to prioritize one thing over another. A seven-month internship isn't enough time to finish this project in its entirety. As I close in on my final month here, I'm barely halfway done.

Not wanting to waste any time, I hit the ground running as soon as my internship began. After an introduction to our workflow from the resident technician Tom Bernier, I was left mostly to my own devices. My supervisors emphasized the importance of independent learning, although Tom was always close by whenever I had a question. I had many.

The job is a difficult balancing act between efficient speed and careful consideration. I need to be preserving items fast enough to make a worthwhile dent in the mountain of sand that is our collection, but I also need to pace myself enough to make sure I'm doing it well. Learning to balance these two qualities is one of many essential skills that I've nurtured during my time here.

Another important skill is the ability to troubleshoot and manage equipment problems. Almost every tape deck I work with is somewhere between 30-50 years old, and each is showing its age in one way or another. Machines, just like people, develop different quirks as they age. Learning to deal with the peculiarities of each of the 15 or so devices I use when working is essential to keeping things rolling.

As the internship progressed, my work became more varied. I started on videocassettes, before moving to film, then to audiotapes. Sometimes I would juggle multiple projects at once. I started helping with odd jobs around the archives, delivering access files for researchers, and contributing to public exhibitions. My experience has been extremely varied and extremely rewarding.

Now, my internship has only a little over a month left. I feel like I've learned an incredible amount in such a short time about audiovisual digitization and preservation, about archives, and about a filmmaker whose work I grow to appreciate more each day, as hours of his footage roll by in front of me.



YCW Intern Reflection: Reis Pouliot

As the latest Young Canada Works Archivist (Intern), my primary task is working through the backlog of private records donations. I also tackle any other puzzle that comes across my desk (or, more specifically, into my email inbox), including working on reference inquiries, contacting potential donors, and giving community presentations. I have had the opportunity to appraise and describe all kinds of records, from the papers of former Speaker of the House Ken Kowalski to farm ledgers and family scrapbooks. When I talk about my work with friends and family, I am always being asked about the records that I have worked on, and what I found the most interesting. The answer to that question are the records from Edmonton-based artist Ilda Lubane.



Born in Liepaja, Latvia, Ilda Lubane committed herself to art at the age of eight, studying under the German painter Karl Hartmann. She met with him for an hour a day, five days a week, while continuing to attend Liepaja Commerce School. She came to Canada following the end of the Second World War and attended both the Banff School of Fine Arts and the University of the Americas in Mexico City to study painting; she went on to teach painting at the Banff School and the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension for nearly forty years. Her donation includes sketches and drafts, reference photos and slides, teaching materials, interview transcripts, and even a draft of a master's thesis written about Lubane and her work.

At this point in my internship, I have noticed that it is routine to work through records from farmers, families, and volunteer organizations, but appraising and describing Lubane's records was my first chance to work on those of an artist and other records from Alberta's visual arts scene. It was fascinating to watch her artistic style develop as I worked through the records. There were some pieces that I watched go through several drafts in different media that never seemed to be completed, as well as drafts by her students that showed they were learning Lubane's technique and applying their own unique visions.

This is a great example of how it is not just the whole of the fonds that holds value, but that there is also plenty of valuable information in the format and original order of the records. I can see Lubane's records being very helpful to anyone interested in learning more about the development of Edmonton's art scene, or even art education in Alberta!



This sketch is a draft for a mural that Lubane was commissioned to paint for the maternity ward of the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton in 1970.

Lubane's records are now available as the Ilda Lubane fonds (PR4327). The description can be found here. [The description can be found here](#)

YCW Intern Reflection: Mikaela LeBlanc

I started at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) in September 2024 as the Young Canada Works TRC Archivist Intern. I've primarily been focusing on records created by and about Indigenous peoples and communities within government records. My main task has been working with oral histories and identifying where within the Government of Alberta these records belong, and which departments created them. This has led me to learn a lot about the records themselves and the key figures within them; as well as archival skills such as how to write descriptions.



Earlier in the year, I attended the Arts, Culture and Status of Women (ACSW) Fall Gathering with other PAA staff. During the work trade show, one of the booths I stopped by was for Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump. When I mentioned where I was working, a staff member was interested to know if I knew anything about some oral history tapes that were recorded for the creation of their interpretive centre. The inquiry was also a personal one as the staff member's grandfather was interviewed and recorded on the tapes. This was sort of funny coincidence as the tapes were the oral histories I had recently spent time on researching the background information about the creation of the tapes and writing a description for the tapes. When I returned to work, following the Fall Gathering, I contacted the Head Smashed In staff member, and with the help of other PAA team members, the tapes were digitized, and copies were provided to Head Smashed In. The Head Smashed In employee told me that they are currently working on updating the interpretive centre and creating new displays, and that they are looking to revisit the tapes for this. This will be something exciting to look forward to and to see how the new interpretive centre turns out.

While I've been at the PAA, it has also been interesting to have had the experience working in both behind the scenes and in front at the reference desk in the reading room. Behind the scenes, I've learned the thought and consideration that goes on to make records accessible such as what series records should be placed in and how tagging records helps to make them more searchable on the Access to Memory (AtoM) database. For example, I added Metis Settlements and Reserves as place locations to the townships maps making it so the maps will pop up under search results for those places. There is also a lot of consideration about the researcher and how they will find things on the AtoM. And during reference shifts in the reading room, I've seen another perspective on how people search for records in ways that make sense for them. It has been a great experience to witness and be a part of the work that goes on at the Provincial Archives of Alberta and it has given me a greater appreciation for archives and archival work.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Membership Categories and Rates

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

Please accept my donation to help the Society with its programmes and projects in support of the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Donation amount: _____

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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

Thank you for your
generous support!

Visit us online at: www.FriendsPAA.ca and follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/Friends_PAA
Email: FriendsPAAinfo@gmail.com