



City of Edmonton Archives

Annual Report 2014

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City of Edmonton Archives
10440 – 108 Avenue, Edmonton**

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Introduction

The City Archivist and Supervisor of Heritage and Specialty Facilities Unit is pleased to report on the activities and responsibilities of the Archives, a part of the Valley Zoo and Specialty Facilities Section of the Community and Recreation Facilities Branch of Community Services Department of the City of Edmonton.

The City of Edmonton Archives acquires, preserves, arranges and describes, and makes accessible civic government records with permanent legal, administrative, financial, and historic value. A number of these records date from Edmonton's incorporation as a town in 1892 and the range of corporate records has grown each year since. Annual deposits are made from the City's active corporate records management program. Donations of personal records from individuals, organizations and businesses are also accepted by the Archives to ensure that Edmonton's diverse social, political, and cultural history is preserved. Currently there are 758 private records fonds and collections catalogued.

The Supervisor of Heritage and Specialty Facilities continues to manage the Prince of Wales Armouries Heritage Centre (where the Archives is located) and to support the Edmonton Historical Board and the Edmonton Heritage Council as part of the responsibilities around heritage liaison. In 2014 considerable support was also offered to the Alberta Aviation Museum as they advanced significantly on their new operations plan.

During the year the staff at the Archives consisted of five and a half FTE positions of archivists and two clerks. One of the clerks is the receptionist for the POWA and Archives, and the second is the coordinator of the Edmonton Historical Board. We are generously supported by a cohort of enthusiastic and experienced volunteers who perform a number of tasks which greatly assists the Archivists. The staff forms a very capable and knowledgeable team which helps the Archives function efficiently to serve our City and Public clients extremely well.

Our thanks should be conveyed as well to the public whose donations of documents and photographs continue to enhance the collections of the City Archives and help to preserve Edmonton's heritage.

Kathryn Ivany
City Archivist,
Supervisor Heritage and Specialty Facilities

Administration and Staff

The City Archivist reports directly to the Director of Valley Zoo and Specialty Facilities Section, Community and Recreation Facility Services, within the Community Services Department.

In 2014 the staff consisted of:

City Archivist	Kathryn Ivany
Reference Archivist	Melissa McCarthy
Librarian / Plan Archivist	Kim Christie-Milley
MS / Photo Archivist	Paula Aurini-Onderwater
Digital Archivist	Elizabeth Walker
RG Archivist	Tim O’Grady
Conservator	Tj Lewis
Receptionist	Marlene Gothard (plus Catherine Craggs – CRM)
EHB Coordinator	Sonia Caligiuri

There were up to ten volunteers at the City of Edmonton Archives who assisted with a number of our on-going projects such as maintaining the clipping files, and re-assessing and updating finding aids for the manuscript collections, as well as with special projects undertaken in 2014 to support City operations, such as digitizing cemetery ledgers, and to support the Archives itself by preparing an inventory of a major private donation for appraisal. Their contributions amounted to 1679.5 hours this year which is nearly another FTE position for the archives. Many thanks go to Helen LaRose, Doug Sigler, Keith Stotyn, Gillian Austin, Kathryn Merrett, Lynda Murray, Erica Tsui, Isabel Ramos and Kelly Ainsworth.

There was one Student Placement at the archives this year courtesy of the University of Alberta Library and Information Studies – Heather Martin accomplished much in her 8 weeks with us – from assisting with reference requests to preparing a virtual exhibit. We were also able, thanks to a grant from the Archives Society of Alberta, to hire Lorraine Butchart as a contractor to assist with reproduction orders while our Photo Archivist Paula was preparing for a major exhibit to take place in 2015. Lorraine was also helpful in digitizing a large portion of the Edmonton Grad’s collection and a private organization’s donation. Quinten Starko was hired as a summer student, and spent 250 hours creating an inventory of the boxes in the Parks and Recreation Department, which will prove very useful as processing of that collection begins.

Staff Development

Two staff members, Elizabeth Walker and Kathryn Ivany attended the Association of Canadian Archivists Conference in Vancouver in 2014 presenting on the challenges of creating a digital preservation plan. They also brought back to the other archivists learnings from the conference (and the ASA workshops) ideas on the latest trends in Archives. Tim O’Grady took training on creating better exhibitions and used his new skills in creating “Tonight’s the Night”, an exhibit on the history of Hallowe’en in

Edmonton. Tim also attended a workshop on disaster preparedness, offered through the Canadian Conservation Institute.

Providing Archival Services



Reference Access

Reference services are an important and most visible function of the Archives. Our dedicated Reference Archivist is responsible for most of the requests but is ably assisted by the other archivists as required. In 2014 there were 5,004 individual requests handled. The total number of reference requests has increased notably from 2012 and 2013. (See chart below)

Reference desk inquiries						
Month	walk in	evening	email	telephone	mail	TOTAL
2012	1772	158	1264	1286	9	4489
Total						
2013	1546	135	1149	1183	9	4022
Total						
2014	2090	176	1350	1345	43	5004
Total						

The City of Edmonton Archives maintains open hours for access from Monday to Friday between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM with extended hours on Wednesday evenings until 8 PM. Wednesday nights attract an average of 14.6 visitors per month or about 4 a night. Our website is available 24/7 however, and in 2014 we recorded 17,333 hits on the website.

Researchers include members of the public with special interests – Genealogists and Academic researchers or with needs from their work - Engineers and Architects, as well as the Media. There has been more interest from among the Civic Government category - reflecting growing awareness among our City colleagues of the services of the Archives. Notable reference services include class visits from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology architecture tech students and K-12 students participating in Heritage Fairs.

On-line Catalogue – The number of catalogued items in the database increased in 2014 by 10,800 entries as the Archivists processed material and made more descriptions available online to the public. This is an on-going initiative to assist researchers to do a bit of their work prior to their visit and to access our collections from distance. Entries include clippings files, maps and information files as well as finding aids for individual collections and the City’s record groups. The finding aids often include a .pdf document containing the list of files in each box so the researcher can narrow their request to specific items and even send in a request in advance so there is a shorter waiting period for the material to be retrieved. This is in addition to the images already available in the photograph online catalogue.

Reprographic Services - The photograph catalogue is probably the most used finding aid at the City Archives and results in the highest number of reprographic service orders. In 2014, 755 Photograph reproductions yielded the Archives just over \$15,000. We continue in partnership with the Edmonton Heritage Council and the Living Local Grant program to provide some images at a discount to not-for-profit groups doing projects to enhance the community’s awareness of heritage. Other reprographic services for maps and blueprints or other oversized materials are provided as well and netted approximately \$1,000 in revenue to the archives.

Research Services – For researchers unable to come to the City Archives we provide limited research assistance for simple questions. For more detailed or complex answers we do provide services for a fee or referrals to other agencies which might be able to provide assistance to the researchers.

The Archives continues to respond to inquiries and provide materials to the public through a variety of social media including our own website, the City’s Transforming Edmonton blog and Twitter sites. This year the number of comments and hits on the blog increased.

Conservation – Hundreds of hours are spent in the lab, making paper repairs on documents, maps and blueprints, rebinding reference books, and un-framing and encapsulating our extensive artwork collection. Before articles are sent for reproduction our conservator, Tj Lewis will confirm that the material is in an appropriate condition for such handling. If not she repairs or stabilizes the materials.

Often, because records are stored in dusty, dry or damp conditions prior to coming to the Archives, the conservator must assess much of the new accessions and provide advice as to cleaning and care, prior to them becoming available to the researchers.

Archival Acquisitions and Processing

Donations

There were 94 private donations received by the City Archives in 2014. The private records are collected from the public: individuals, families, organizations and businesses who feel their records, or even at times, one item, merit preservation as part of the history of the City of Edmonton. The items are acquired and a brief summary of the contents is made before the material is re-housed and placed on the shelves to wait processing. In 2014 approximately 34 linear metres were acquired from private individuals and organization.

Often the donations contain photographs and again this year several accessions came in as digital or electronic records. This new format requires a different method for processing as well as different preservation strategies. These digital records will continue to be the Archives' most pressing challenge in the next years.



Corporate Records Scheduled Deposits

Each year the Corporation of the City of Edmonton turns over thousands of records which are deigned to be of legal, financial and administrative value to the City or significant for the history of Edmonton. The records of each department are “scheduled” for disposition according to the date on which they were declared “inactive” and when their date for disposition comes due they are assessed by the City Clerk’s Office and the Archives. Most are sent for destruction but approximately 3-5% are preserved at the Archives permanently. This resulted in 54 multi box accessions from City Departments this year. This year approximately 316 boxes of files of corporate records were reviewed and 52 boxes retained (or 17.5 linear metres). The Archives has 8,000 linear metres of shelving in total and currently houses more than 6,000 linear metres of records.

Inventories and Finding Aids

The City’s record groups collection is the most important of the City Archives collection and takes a great deal of time of the RG Archivist. This year 30 metres of records were processed from 8 different departments. Tim O’Grady also continued the administrative history of the City Departments, which helps describes the organization of the department and how its records were arranged.

The Archives’ manuscript collection continues to be updated to comply with current archival standards. Approximately 60 manuscript descriptions/finding aids were updated this year by MS archivist Paula Aurini-Onderwater, with assistance from volunteer Keith Stotyn.

Special Projects in 2014 included the processing of a significant photograph donation by local Edmonton photographer, Chris Bruun. Photo archivist Paula-Aurini Onderwater processed over 2500 images with the result of 1750 new photographs being added to the archives collection and online catalogue. This work was done in preparation for an exhibit on Chris Bruun planned for the spring of 2015.

Library and Information files

Approximately 2,646 titles have been added to the online catalogue by Kim Christie-Milley, our librarian.

The information files (the Names database, the clipping files and the “firsts” database) are also being migrated to be accessible online. To the end of December 2,135 clippings files had been completed. It is a labour-intensive task as each entry must be checked for accuracy prior to being activated online but the benefits will be seen in the ability of our customers to help themselves find information for which they might otherwise call the reference desk.

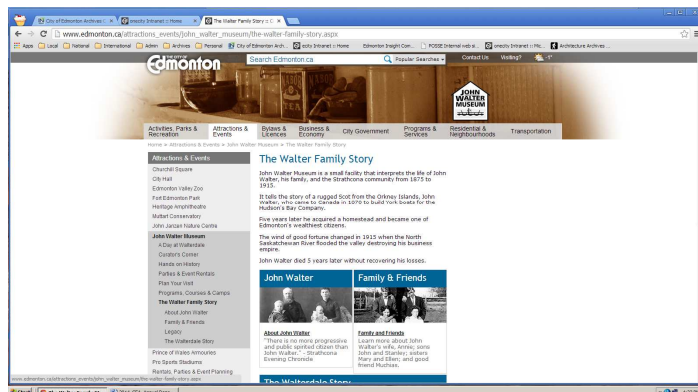
Programming

Summer day camps are offered in the Prince of Wales Armouries Heritage Centre by our partner museums, the Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum and the Telephone Historical Centre, as well as by the City Arts Centre. Other activities around the Archives building include seniors lunch and learn days, and school, cadet, guide and scout tours and visits.

Workshops were again offered by the Archivists, one in conjunction with Sustainable Development’s “This Old Edmonton House” series on “Researching your Historic Home” and others on the preservation of family photographs and other digital records.

Presentations - The Archivists made several presentations on the role of the archives in the City, the history of Edmonton and even on records management, to senior’s centres, community leagues, volunteer organizations and at special events like the Doors Open Edmonton Festival. The Archives participated in the Historic Edmonton and District festival in July, the Progressive Librarians Guild, and the Librarian’s professional development day at the University of Alberta. The Archives also provided support through tours and lectures to students of a Public History course at MacEwan University.

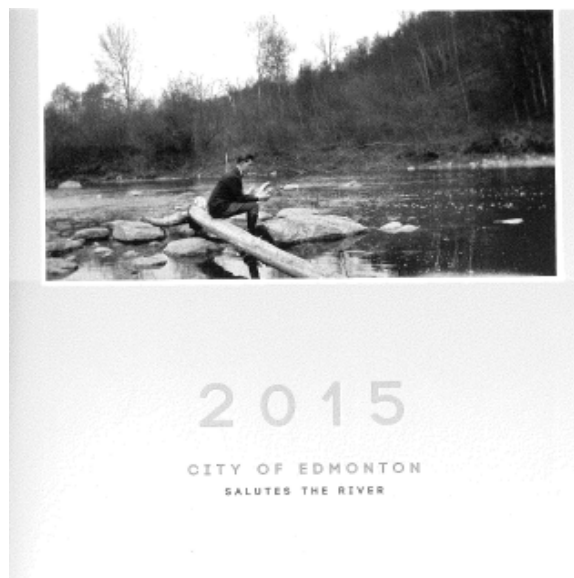
Virtual Exhibits continue to be a popular method for the Archivists to communicate with the public. These online exhibitions are found on the City’s website and help explain with historic images, documents and text the history and significance of specific subjects,



such as the Humberstone Mine. The John Walter Museum’s virtual exhibit and website was re-launched in the summer of 2014.

Special Projects

Other promotional activities undertaken include pieces to highlight the centennial of the 1915 flood of the North Saskatchewan River. These included a calendar for 2015 full of archival photographs from the Edmonton river valley mugs with archival images of the river and Jasper Avenue. Photo Archivist Paula Aurini-Onderwater researched the images and City Archivist Kathryn Ivany wrote the captions for the calendar.



Support to City and Other Organizations

The City Archivist and staff support the **Edmonton Historical Board** and its committees (Plaques and Recognition Awards, Historic Resources Review Panel and Outreach Activities) to raise awareness and advise City Council on a number of heritage issues. In 2014 the Board members’ recruitment was moved up a few months – making a shorter season in which to accomplish all their work – and a large number of new members were successfully integrated onto the Board. A successful Recognition event was held in November, approximately 50 buildings were recommended to addition to the Register of Historic Resources

The Heritage Outreach Committee of the Board launched an architectural website – www.edmontonsarchitecturalheritage.ca. The site explores Edmonton’s architectural legacy by profiling over 70 buildings and more than 20 different architectural styles

found in Edmonton. The site won an award for heritage outreach from the Alberta Historic Resources Foundation in the fall.

The Information Management Council deals with all areas of the City which have authority over the Information Resources of the Corporation. Including the City Clerk's Office, the Law Branch and FOIP coordinator, Archives, and IT, work this year has been focused on information security (IT department) as well as making information accessible to the citizens under the Open Government protocol.

The City Archivist also supports the **Edmonton Heritage Council** in its work within the historical and cultural heritage communities. In 2014 this work focused on programming for the Edmonton City as Museum Project (ECAMP) as well as the Edmonton Heritage Network. Grants to heritage organizations for sustainability in operations as well as for innovative projects have also been of considerable interest in the community.

Archives staff also helped David Holdsworth of Sustainable Development develop the interpretive text for the Neon Sign Museum.