

Friends of the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan 2022 Annual Report

NOTE: all e-mail and web addresses are active hyper-links

Archives Week 2022

The Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, along with other Archives in the province, celebrated Archives Week from February 6 to 11, 2022. To make the occasion the Provincial Archives launched two initiatives: a social media campaign giving a “behind the scenes’ look at how archives preserve the province’s history, and an exhibit showcasing the work of editorial cartoonist Brian Gable.

The social media campaign was an excellent opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan to learn about and engage with our province’s history, while the Archives showcased the behind-the-scenes work that is done to collect, preserve and provide access to artifacts that tell the stories of our province.

“We are keen to highlight some of the unique aspects of our work to everyone in Saskatchewan,” said Provincial Archivist Carol Radford-Grant in launching the campaign.

Cartoonist Brian Gable donated some of his drawings from his time at the Regina Leader-Post for the exhibit at the Archives’ office at 2440 Broad Street in Regina. A number of his illustrations were also shared through the Archives’ Facebook and Twitter accounts. Besides being one of Canada’s pre-eminent editorial cartoonists, Gable has had one of his drawings featured on a stamp issued by Canada Post.



During 2022 public access to reference services gradually returned to a more normal routine, with appointments booked online or by telephone.

Services are now also provided in French upon request. The COVID-19 protocol was simplified, making public access easier. The Archives provides more information at its website,

<https://www.saskarchives.com>



One of the features of the Archives’ new location in Regina is the ability to store range upon range of archival boxes.

FOPASK

The acronym FOPASK is the (sort of) short form for the Friends of the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, although emails that Friends receive originate from **fosa.regina@gmail.com**. This reflects that the Friends organization was established when the Archives was known as the Saskatchewan Archives. When the Archives was established it was named the Saskatchewan Archives Board.

FOPASK Membership

At the end of 2022 the Friends membership totalled 465, with 239 members living in Saskatchewan, including 110 in Regina and the surrounding area. The remaining 226 Friends live outside the province, including one in Norway and another in Australia. Many of these members are descendants of family members who settled in or passed through Saskatchewan, and are seeking more information about where they lived and what they did here.

FOPASK Administration

Archives staff and Friends held three meetings in 2022, using online conferencing tools. The informal arrangement between the Archives and the Friends continued, with the Archives hosting a web page for the Friends. <https://saskarchives.com/about-archives/friends-archives>

The Interim Gopher, aka Bill Armstrong, handles the email traffic for the Friends, including requests from Archives staff to distribute information to all members, and from Friends providing or seeking information. Some topics addressed in 2022 included the thorny question of what to keep and what to shred, the boundaries of personal privacy, the role that photos can play in telling stories, and unravelling the mysteries of Saskatchewan place names. Members also contributed stories and photos related to their family members who lived and worked in the province. World War I is a rich source of such stories, in part due to the holdings of soldier service records at Libraries and Archives Canada.

Volunteer Activities

Since the inception of the Friends the Photo Project has been the major activity allowing members to contribute to the work of the Archives, by reviewing photos before they are digitized, and collecting information on the photos (front or back) or their storage envelopes. This information accompanies the digitized photo when it is posted online, providing additional context.

The Photo Project, of course, is only available to volunteers who live close to Regina. Friend Lynn McCaslin is one of the volunteers working through boxes containing envelopes with photos. Since returning to this work after COVID interruptions Lynn has been reviewing photos from sources such as the government's Photo Services files, chambers of commerce, service clubs, family collections and commercial and private photographers. By November Lynn had volunteered over 35 hours to the project, including working with staff by helping to test the Archives' updated computer system. Lynn was able to review approximately 2300 photo holdings during this trial period. "The common thread running through all of them is the lack of identification of individuals, specific locations and dates," he observes.

It's a useful reminder that if you have or take a photograph that you think has historical significance, find a way to attach contextual information to it. The researchers of the future will thank you.

In 2022 the Archives developed an Archival Description Enhancement Form, recognizing that researchers, including Friends, may have some local knowledge related to a particular photo that would augment the information available online. In some cases where human error has crept in, corrections can be submitted. Here is a sample of the form. Note that the form includes a space to estimate the time spent on the research, which helps the Archives track the volunteer efforts of the Friends.

The screenshot shows a form titled "ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION ENHANCEMENT FORM". It has several sections: "Submitter Information" with fields for Name, Phone, and Email; "Archival Object Information" with fields for Call No. / Reference Code and Information or use of Archival Descriptions; a "Special Affirmation" section with a checkbox and text; a "Time Spent on Project" section with a checkbox and text; a "Consent" section with a checkbox and text; and a "Sufficiency" section with a checkbox and text. There are also some smaller text boxes and instructions scattered throughout the form.

Archival Description Enhancement Form available at https://saskarchives.com/sites/default/files/addendum_desc_form.pdf

"... because archives focus on records, archivists have an awareness of the societal, institutional, and individual construction of memory and an understanding of the implications of how that memory is represented and transmitted over time."

Council on Library and Information Resources.