



Association  
of Canadian  
Archivists

# theBulletin

Spring 2014

*Hatley Park National Historic Site by  
Nick Redding. Courtesy of Tourism  
Victoria*



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of Canadian  
Archivists

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## Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the spring edition and final print version of the Association of Canadian Archivists' Bulletin.

It is with mixed feelings that I write this letter from the editor for the Bulletin. I am excited to officially introduce the launch of the blog version of the ACA Bulletin, which is already up on the ACA website. The blog format will allow for greater flexibility in terms of making announcements timelier and allowing for more frequent posting, which will, I sincerely hope, encourage more in-depth dialogue on issues as they arise.

However, I am sad to announce that this will be my last issue as Bulletin editor. I have really enjoyed working with everyone at the ACA these past two years, in particular Duncan Grant, Loryl MacDonald and all of the members of the Communications Committee. I give my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed over the past few years. It has been really great getting to know more of my wonderful archival colleagues across the country.

Please check out the newly launched ACA Bulletin blog here: <http://archivists.ca/bulletin> and send your submissions to the Communications Committee, [aca-com@archivists.ca](mailto:aca-com@archivists.ca).

Best Regards,  
Carrie Limkilde  
Editor

**eloquent**  
Organizing data for eloquent presentation!

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## The Bulletin is moving!

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The print version of the *ACA Bulletin* will soon be no more. But don't fear it is not disappearing just changing to a blog format beginning in Spring 2014. Staying up to date with new posts is easy. You can either sign up for email notifications by registering on the blog webpage or via the RSS feed option.

Why the move? There are several benefits associated with moving to an online delivery format. Among these are lower costs, immediate posting of time sensitive information including announcements, articles and events, no submission deadlines, and the ability to interact with posts.

In the survey conducted in late 2012 gauging the support for moving the *ACA Bulletin* to an electronic format, the results supported the need for a platform that would allow posting of time sensitive information. Such a platform, according to the survey results (64%), would encourage users to submit to the blog. 71% of respondents from the 2012 survey indicated that they would read the *ACA Bulletin* if it were in a blog format.

## ACA Website Survey

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### History of the ACA Web Presence

First launched in 2002, the ACA website has grown to serve as the main resource for members and other interested parties for information on the Association and its activities. The ACA website design and structure was updated in 2004, when a number of member services were placed online, including conference registration, membership renewal and access to back issues of *Archivaria*. The most recent updates in 2009 and 2010 also added work space for Committees and Special Interest Sections, and moved the website to a content-management system on a Drupal platform.

### The 2013 Survey

In October 2013, the Communications Committee surveyed users, both ACA members and non-members, to examine levels of satisfaction with the website. We received 133 responses, each answering seven questions about the public website, but not including questions about the member-only website. A report of the results and comments is available on the ACA website for further perusal.

The findings showed that the majority of users visit the ACA website every few months (41%) with a significant number visiting at least once a month (36%). Of those

The print version of the *ACA Bulletin* has enjoyed a long history and dedication of many editors. The publication was first published in 1971 under the title *Archives Bulletin* by the Archives section of the Canadian Historical Association. The volume and issue number used today made its debut in 1976. The title *Archives Bulletin* changed in the August 1979 issue, (Vol. 4, No. 4), to the commonly known title it bears today: *ACA Bulletin*. The September 2002 publication featured the first instance of the current ACA logo on its cover page. And in Spring 2014 the last print issue of the *ACA Bulletin* is issued. The *ACA Bulletin* switches to a blog format with a new logo in the same year.

The blog can be accessed via the Blog icon located at the top of the ACA homepage, via the RSS feed icon also located on the ACA homepage or by visiting <http://archivists.ca/bulletin>. Visit the blog and let us know what you think by sending any questions or concerns you may have to [aca-com@archivists.ca](mailto:aca-com@archivists.ca).

Happy reading!

ACA Communications Committee

visiting once a month or more, an overwhelming majority (78%) visited the website to access publications like *Archivaria*, followed by obtaining general information on the Association and membership renewal (both 61%), conference registration (55%), viewing job postings (40%), keeping track of upcoming events (34%) and conducting committee or Board work (18%). For those who visited once every few months, their main reasons were similar, with accessing publications at 63%, conference registration and seeking general information on the Association each at 58%, and membership renewal at 45%, followed by upcoming events (29%), job postings (21%) and committee work (10%). Most users access the website from work (43%) or both work and home (38%).

The survey asked users to rate a number of statements on a scale of 1 to 5, using 1 to disagree with a positive statement about the website, and 5 to agree with the statement. The overall results were predominantly neutral, with certain statements skewing lower for user experience and navigation, yet higher for the information provided on the website.

In terms of user satisfaction, the majority of the responses fell in the 3 to 4 range. For ease of use, 46% held a favorable view of the website (rating 4 and 5), with 30% holding a

neutral view (rating of 3).

For ease of navigation, respondents were overwhelmingly neutral, with 32% rating the ability to “find what I need quickly” at 3 out of 5, and 30% rating the statement “it is easy to navigate within the website” similarly. A nearly even number of respondents rated these two statements at 2 and 4, with 21% and 25% respectively for the first statement, and 25% and 26% for the second. Comments relating to navigation within the website also revealed some strong negative opinions on user experience:

*The ACA website is a complete mess-- difficult to navigate, does not look professional, and information that you might expect to find (e.g., board members, committees, etc.) isn't there. You can't even mouse over the main headings to reveal drop-down menus. It needs a thorough overhaul.*

*Even though I have used this site and its predecessors for years and know where things \*should be\* based on the structure, I often still have difficulty finding information that I'm looking for.*

*It is not often obvious where to look for things. On the home page, the box on the right with links to the next conference or to Archivaria, for example seems like a hodge podge of things that no one knew where to put. Links don't seem to back up very well. I certainly don't use the web site unless I need specific information about the ACA.*

Even on the positive side, comments tended to balance good aspects with the poor:

*Generally good; but could use a bit of "modernization" in terms of appearance --- it's a bit dated looking*

*Great information, but visual presentation could use an update.*

For statements relating to enjoyment and attractiveness of the website, the majority of respondents also answered neutrally. For the statement “I enjoy using this website,” 41% rated this as a 3, with a further 17% rating 2, and 21% at 4. Respondents rated the value of information found on the ACA website very high, with 40% answering 4 and 36% answering 5.

Users were also asked to rate their experience with the website on mobile devices. An overwhelming majority responded that they do not access or attempt to access the site through smartphones or tablets (56%), while those who do rated each statement neutrally (18%) or worse. Admittedly, these results are none too surprising, considering the current website was not developed with mobile optimization in the plan.

### Next Steps

In Spring 2014, the Communications Committee will issue a follow-up survey for ACA members on the members-only portion of the website. The results of this second survey in combination with the results presented here will help determine the key improvements we should be making for a better overall user experience. The Communications Committee will then develop a plan to revamp the website and better tailor it to meet users' needs. In preparation for the launch of the ACA Bulletin in blog form, some improvements have already been made to the current website to improve access to the ACA's social media outlets, including the Twitter feed, Facebook and LinkedIn pages and YouTube channel.

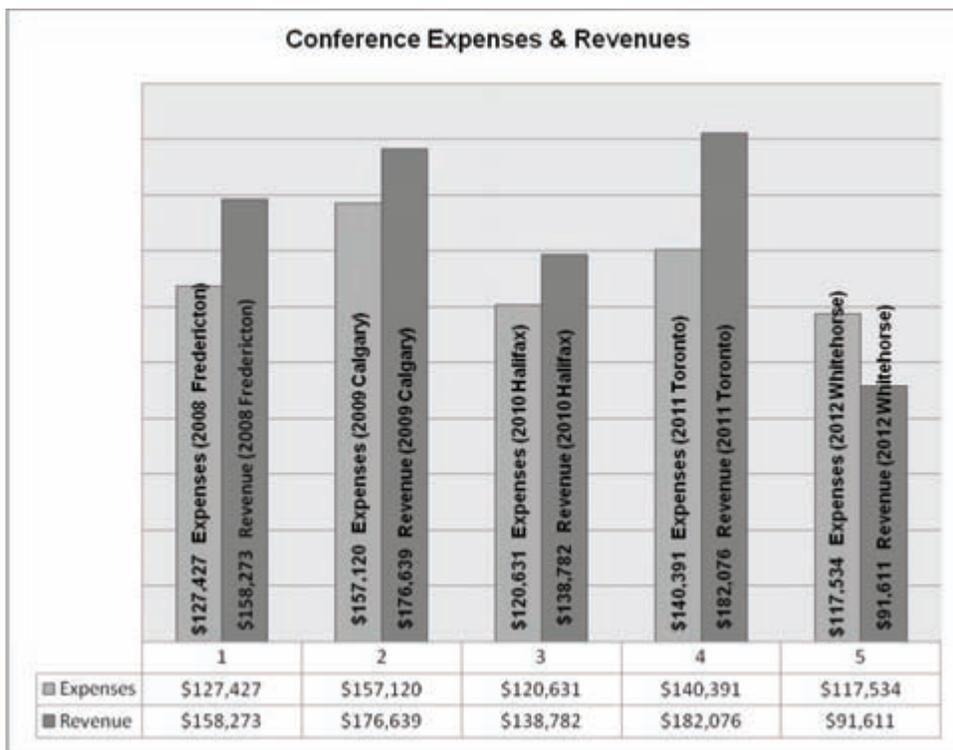
We would like to thank everyone who participated in the first survey. If you have not yet had your say, or if you ever find some particular problem with the website, please do not hesitate to contact us at [aca@archivists.ca](mailto:aca@archivists.ca).

## Demystifying ACA finances – Annual Conference

Maintaining healthy finances for the ACA is a partnership between you as members, the committees, and the Board. This is the first in a short series of articles that will provide an overview of the three major revenue and expense streams for the ACA: (1) the annual conference; (2) membership; and (3) Archivaria.

Overall, in the last 6 years, revenue for the ACA has fallen from about \$475,000 in 2008 to a projected \$345,000 in 2013. Total expenses for the same period rose to a high of approximately \$400,000 in 2009 but have since remained steady around \$325,000.

The conference accounts for roughly 30 – 35% of ACA’s annual revenue, while costing slightly less. Between 2008 and 2012, the conference accounted for an average of \$158,000 in revenue, while expenses averaged \$134,000. We have an excellent track record of achieving a net gain on the conference; for those years where expenses are higher than revenue, the short-fall tends to be offset in either the preceding year or following year. Revenue from the 2013 Winnipeg conference is currently projected at \$118,000, while expenses for Winnipeg are showing as \$95,000 (as of 31 October 2012).



Conference revenues are generated from registration fees, partners and sponsors, exhibitor fees and social events ticket sales. Reasons for the declines in revenue include an overall lower number of delegates in attendance and a decrease in participation at the Trade Show. Conference expenses are for infrastructure (venues, food & beverages), publications and materials, conference calls and meetings of the Program and Host Committees, plenary speaker assistance and conference support from the ACA office.

As one component of the partnership to ensure financial stability, the Board provides oversight and advice to balance the conference’s revenue and expenses; as the second component in the partnership, the Program and Host Committees seek out sponsors and donors, and work to provide an interesting, challenging and fun conference that will appeal to the membership.

As a member, what can you do as the third partner in maintaining the health of ACA’s bottom line? When possible, attend the conference and take part in the social events. Choose to stay at the conference hotel as filling the block reservation assists with reducing the costs of meeting space. Visit the exhibitor hall and talk to the representatives – the more interest shown in the exhibits will encourage firms to attend the next year. Complete a delegate survey to provide feedback to the Board about your conference experience so that next year’s Program and Host Team can build on successes and avoid repeating less valued activities. Each year, the current and incoming Host and Program Chairs review your comments with the Board to consider adjustments for upcoming conferences.

If you have any questions, let us know!

## Weighing Outreach: Essential or Indulgence?

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INF2180, term paper Hilary Barlow

*Hilary Barlow is a master's candidate in the archives stream at the University of Toronto Faculty of Information. She previously worked as a library and archival assistant at Penn State University Libraries.*

The position of outreach as a major project for archives has a somewhat contentious history. For a long time outreach existed on the periphery of archival literature, if it was mentioned at all. As archives are increasingly expected to do more with less funding to accomplish their most basic goals, outreach can seem like a luxury. Indeed, some scholars contend that an over-emphasis on outreach could lead to an upending of rightful priorities and a neglect of key archival activities. Nonetheless, outreach projects can be of great benefit to archives. Through outreach, archives can bring in new patrons, educate the public and, in the opinion of some outreach proponents, better equip archivists to document their communities and even bring in more funding.

The allegation that outreach can distract resources from core archival tasks is not completely without merit. This paper will show one incidence where this occurred.. However, proper assessment and allocation of resources early on in the planning of outreach initiatives can keep such programs in balance with the overarching goals of their repositories. Outreach has a tremendous potential to raise the profile of archives and illustrate how indispensable they are to the communities they serve.

This paper gathers observations and strategies on the implementation of outreach initiatives from a variety of articles to illustrate the costs as well as the potential gains of beginning outreach efforts at an archives. Beginning with an influential article on the broad theory of how the incorporation of outreach can impact archival mandates, this paper will compare those predictions to the observations of archivists who have implemented outreach programs at their own archives. Of particular note are two public archives in Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom and the Peel Region of Ontario, respectively. Also included in the discussion is a university theatre archives in Nova Scotia and an independent community archives in downtown Toronto.

Archivists from these institutions have written about very specific projects they developed and how various aspects benefited or did not benefit their archives. From there one can draw conclusions as to what kind of risks, in terms of returns on effort and funding (among others), are entailed when an archivist begins an outreach initiative.

Terry Cook is cautious about the development of outreach in his 1990 article “Viewing the World Upside Down.” Cook refers to a trend in the business world of customer-centred thinking, which he perceives to be bleeding into archival literature and discussion.<sup>1</sup> Although Cook supports a more sensitive approach to user needs, what he fears is patrons’ interests overtaking the archivists’ sense of what is important to preserve for posterity. Cook argues that archivists need to make determinations about what sort of records best represent culture in the present and how to preserve those for the future. These should not be dictated by patron groups and their interest in certain specialty topics.<sup>2</sup> To use marketing terminology again, Cook argues that archivists should not create products according to consumers’ wants, but instead convince them to buy what is already there.<sup>3</sup>

Reading about outreach initiatives in different repositories, it appears that either archivist’s took Cook’s fears to heart or they were never in danger of manifesting his fears in the first place. As this paper will show, numerous archives have robust outreach initiatives without allowing these initiatives to dictate acquisition decisions. This is not universally true; however, and this paper will show one case where it appears Cook’s fears are at least partially confirmed.

Many archives are publicly funded, and thus outreach-conscious archivists argue that for a repository to justify its public support, it needs to be out in the community and serving the public in an active way. Making the public more aware of a repository’s holdings can in some cases put more pressure on the archives to deliver materials. Kathryn Harvey and Michael Moosberger found that the more patrons and theatres became aware of their fonds on Nova Scotia theatrical history, the greater the expectation that those fonds would be useable. Archivists in the theatre project found themselves prioritizing the processing of

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1 Terry Cook, “Viewing the World Upside Down: Reflections on the Theoretical Underpinnings of Archival Public Programming,” *Archivaria* 31 (1990-1991), 124.

2 Cook, 130-131.

3 Cook, 132.

certain high-expectation fonds and having to push others farther down the queue.<sup>4</sup> The disadvantages in this case include ceding some autonomy when pressure mounts, and of course the disadvantage to the less-anticipated fonds that will have to wait longer to be processed. Nonetheless, the archives did gain quite a bit of engagement and interest from the theatre community in its holdings.

Victor Gray points out that even before outreach became a buzzword in archival literature, he was going out to meet church officials and trying to get them interested in what his repository had to offer, suggesting that archives were doing something like outreach even before the term was in circulation. While the development of the word “outreach” signals a shift in focus, he believes that archives will still be doing something resembling outreach even if and when the word becomes passé and some new buzzword takes its place.<sup>5</sup>

Timothy L. Ericson points out that outreach is often posed as an afterthought, frequently seen following the word “and” in archival literature. It is the thing that gets done only when everything else is done. Anne ten Cate even argues that when archives say they will put effort into outreach when they have more money, they are putting it off until a time that will never come to pass.<sup>6</sup> Archives rarely have a large cushion of money from which to launch projects, so archivists might as well nurture small but effective outreach projects. Ericson argues that outreach work should be incorporated into the day-to-day functioning of an archives. It should not be a one-off project, but an undertaking with short and long-term goals.<sup>7</sup>

After all, aren't records meant to be used? Ericson points out a case where a record from a feminist writer was reported in the local press as being “discovered” by a graduate student in an archives, where it had previously been relatively hidden from view, its existence unknown to those in the field of feminist theory. This created a preposterous situation in which something that had been described and cataloged

and put in a known repository could later be “discovered” as if it had been underground. Ericson interprets this as a failure of the repository to publicize its acquisitions generally and within the academic community that was obviously so excited to find it.<sup>8</sup> So what is the point of all the effort that goes into selecting and accessioning an item if no one will know about it and use it? Or as Gray writes, “without end use in mind, the archival game is merely a pursuit for pursuit's sake.”<sup>9</sup>

Increasingly outreach is being understood as an integral part of archival practice along with the traditionally recognized functions of preservation, arrangement and description. Gray emphasizes that outreach needs to be properly balanced in archives with other essential functions. While outreach should not be an afterthought, he argues, it also should not be piled on top of other obligations to the point that staff become overburdened.<sup>10</sup>

Outreach can take many forms and will vary depending on the collection mandate and focus of individual archives. Nonetheless, there are certain types of projects that are consistently seen in outreach strategies. Chris Weir lists the outreach projects undertaken by his archive in Nottingham and it touches most the major common outreach efforts: publications, developing media contacts, working with local libraries and education initiatives.<sup>11</sup> To this I would also add exhibits.

In a time when many archives are losing funding, outreach is one way to demonstrate an archives essential role and relationship to the community it serves.<sup>12</sup> Harvey and Moosberger, who write about a theatre-focused project within the Dalhousie University archives, argue that outreach can encourage archivists to become “students of their society” and by becoming more aware of goings-on in their community become better equipped to document them.<sup>13</sup> The authors also found that outreach efforts led

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4 Kathryn Harvey and Michael Moosberger, “Theatre Archives Outreach and Core Archival Functions,” *Archivaria* 63 (2007), 48.

5 Victor Gray, “‘Who's That Knocking on Our Door?': Archives, Outreach and Community,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 29, no.1 (2008), 7-8.

6 Anne ten Cate, “Outreach in a Small Archives: A Case History,” *Archivaria* 28 (1989), 29.

7 Timothy L. Ericson, “Preoccupied with Our Own Gardens': Outreach and Archivists,” *Archivaria* 31 (1990-1991), 115-117.

8 Ericson, 114.

9 Gray, 2-3.

10 Gray, 2.

11 Chris Weir, “Selling yourself: Outreach & promotion in the Nottinghamshire archives office,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1991), 16.

12 Weir, 15.

13 Harvey & Moosberger, 36.

them to new donors and sources for oral history projects, which in turn led to more liaison opportunities:

...[A] digital resource intended to improve our public service became much more, essentially blossoming into a donor outreach program with positive spinoffs for both theatre companies ... and for [the archives], through acquisition of further fonds to improve breadth and depth of our holdings.<sup>14</sup>

These interactions even led to some archival education for theatre staff. As the archives worked more and more with different theatres, the staff donating items became more adept at preparing records properly for transfer to the archives.<sup>15</sup> Harvey and Moosberger are careful to explain why they do not feel their archives is in danger of just following trends, though it might seem that way given their tendency to have acquisitions follow outreach and vice-versa in a kind of cycle. The authors argue that though they are rather liberal in what they collect, all their acquisitions fall within a collections mandate to document Nova Scotian theatre. Furthermore, they argue that their project does not influence the collections mandate of the Dalhousie University archives as a whole.<sup>16</sup>

Liaising with related professionals and community groups is one major way archivists are engaged in outreach. Obvious partners are libraries and historical societies that have resources on topics similar to those covered at the archives. Professionals at these institutions can collaborate with archivists to create exhibits or lectures on topics of local history. Promoting one's archives with other professionals can also lead to referrals when a patron's needs are better served by one repository over another.

Education is a common component of most outreach strategies. Liaising with teachers and classes at the university, high school and even grade-school level is common. This is a great way for teachers to expand their curriculum and also for archivists to promote their work to potential young patrons who might be inspired to make use of archives in their coursework or later on in life. Working with young people can also contribute directly to specialized missions of

individual archives. For instance, the Canadian Lesbian & Gay Archives (CLGA) gives lectures to Positive Space clubs at public schools. As Kate Zieman recounts in her article about youth staff hope such lectures and tours in the archives can play a role in reducing anti-gay bullying in schools.<sup>17</sup>

The school lectures given by the CGLA project has the disadvantage of being quite a drain on time and resources. The CLGA is staffed entirely by volunteers so scheduling and transporting a volunteer to and from a school can become very expensive. At the time Zieman's article was published, the CLGA did not have an exhibit space where it could easily host an entire class. Thankfully, this has since changed.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, staff felt it was an important outreach endeavour, particularly because of the stated potential to improve the lives of LGBT youth and make an effort to reduce bullying. When Zieman's article came out, CLGA staff were hoping to further their relationship with the Toronto District School Board and bring in even more classes.<sup>19</sup>

Not surprisingly, university archives are a space where educational initiatives are a major part of outreach. The theatre archives at Dalhousie make use of their materials as educational tools for classes. Graduate students also gain experience working on records surveys for theatres.<sup>20</sup> In the Peel Region, archivists have engaged with elementary classrooms in several different ways. Peel archivists have conducted tours and lectures with students visiting the archives, though this is not as popular with teachers because of the cost and logistics of transportation. In some cases, the archivists have been successful in getting students into the archives for orientation, with the rest of the instruction taking place at their school. The archivists found it advantageous to have the students at the archives at some point because young children tend to find the idea of an archives hard to imagine conceptually.

Archivists have to be aware of not only how to engage with a young audience, but also how to work within the allowed curriculum. Ontario teachers have strict guidelines from the Ontario Ministry of Education and an archivist's lecture will

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14 Harvey & Moosberger, 45.

15 Harvey & Moosberger, 44-45.

16 Harvey & Moosberger, 43-44.

17 Kate Zieman, "Youth Outreach Initiatives at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives," *Archivaria* 68 (2009), 315-316.

18 "The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Research, and the Public," *CLGA Canadian Lesbian & Gay Archives*, Web, 13 November 2013, <<http://www.clga.ca/research-and-public>>

19 Zieman, 316.

20 Harvey & Moosberger, 25.

not match with the teacher's lesson plan if it does not follow the same guidelines.<sup>21</sup> The Peel archivists developed instruction kits for several grades that included copies of archival documents. As at Dalhousie, the Peel archivists found that once the initiative started, more opportunities began to crop up. Archivists became acquainted with the Peel Board of Education, which in turn promoted the archives as an educational tool and assured that even more teachers were aware of the repository's education efforts.

Peel does represent a case where outreach actually eclipsed other essential archival functions to a certain degree. Archivists found that once they were deeply involved in instruction at elementary schools, there was an overall decrease in the amount of time spent on arrangement and description. At the time the article was written, the archivists were considering enlisting volunteers, particular retired school teachers, whom they thought would be best equipped to do outreach work.<sup>22</sup> Cook's fear was therefore confirmed in at least one case: one repository did find itself neglecting basic archival function in favour of outreach.

Publications are another form of outreach at many archives. In Nottingham, an archives found that their house publications on a range of local history subjects sold very well to local schools as well as to the public.<sup>23</sup> Archives can choose topics that are relevant to their areas of specialty as well as patron favourites such as genealogy. Nottingham was seeing a growing interest in women's history so the archive published a booklet on how to do historical research about women using local resources. Far from Cook's concern about archives allowing patron interests to dictate acquisitions, the archivists in Nottingham identified areas of specialty that already exist in their archives that match a patron group's interest and make those patrons more aware of those particular fonds. If anything, Nottingham archivists are, in Cook's lingo, persuading customers to buy what is already there.

When developing outreach initiatives, it is important to be strategic. Nottingham archivists emphasized the advantage of developing projects that promote the archives as much as possible, but that do not eat into the budget excessively or overburden staff. Weir refers to projects that are big and

overly taxing to the archives with not enough return in the form of publicity or patron use as "blockbuster" projects.<sup>24</sup>

The Nottingham public library system has a regional history section called "Local Studies" in many branches across the area. Collaborating with Local Studies librarians was an obvious choice for Nottingham archivists because of the overlap and potential for cross-promotion between them.<sup>25</sup> Individual archives have to take stock of their resources and their region in order to develop effective outreach initiatives, as Cate describes the early planning stages of outreach efforts in the Peel Region:

...[W]e assessed the goals of our institution; we evaluated the needs of our institution and the resources available; we assessed the needs of our clients; we chose an appropriate type of programme, planned the logistics, and prepared a time for its execution.<sup>26</sup>

Both Nottingham and Peel developed popular archives roadshows. In both cases archivists put together a set of exhibition materials that were relatively easy to transport and assemble, so information about the archives and its holdings could be shown at a range of events to a wide variety of audiences. Peel acquired a portable electronic display that allowed staff to show archival holdings in detail without the risk of damaging said items. This display and other roadshow items have made appearances at county fairs, retirement homes, sororities, libraries and historical societies.<sup>27</sup> The Nottingham archivists created a roadshow with functioning quill pens that participants could use. In addition to having information on the archives and local history, the archivists were able to bring in children and adults with a hands-on activity. The roadshow tour was extremely successful, with the display even making a well-attended stop at a mall. In this unusual and distracting setting, the roadshow actually thrived and Weir reports that the repository made invaluable media connections from that particular stop.<sup>28</sup>

Thinking out of the box and collaborating with people from different fields can also work to an archivist's advantage. Weir reports that some of his colleagues have been hesitant to work with the news media, he has, however, found it to be a fruitful

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21 Cate, 32.

22 Cate, 34.

23 Weir, 21-22.

24 Weir, 16.

25 Weir, 17.

26 Cate, 29.

27 Cate, 30-31.

28 Weir, 20-21.

connection. Coverage by the local media can lead to wider coverage of an archives' activities than a brochure or lecture series could ever do on its own.

Weir encourages his colleagues to learn how to write press releases and assures them that journalists are also aware of and like to emphasize anniversaries of historical events in their articles.<sup>29</sup> Archivists in Nottingham have been especially creative and even worked with a local radio station to create dramas based on primary source documents at the archives.<sup>30</sup> While something so out-of-the-box and outside traditional archival work might not be viable for every archives, the Nottingham archivists provide a lesson in creativity and ingenuity that can be useful for other professionals.

The roadshows are examples of another common type of outreach project: exhibits. While exhibits can be brought on the road, it is also common for exhibits to be hosted at the archives' primary location. Some archives have their own exhibit rooms, which sometimes double as lecture areas. These areas often look like small museums with display cases containing prominent materials, or a set of materials on rotating themes. One disadvantage of having the exhibit close to home is that visitors have to be persuaded to come out to the archives, hence the allure of bringing exhibits to the public. However, some records are very delicate and risky to transport. Display cases do not travel very well either.<sup>31</sup>

Outreach has incredible potential to raise the profile of an archives and keep archivists involved in the communities they serve. It can also be an overwhelming task, taking resources away from the essential tasks of running an archives.

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29 Weir, 22.

30 Weir, 23.

31 Weir, 18.

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Although the case of Peel shows that this is a possibility when embarking on outreach initiatives, it does not make them so risky as to not be worthwhile. Most archives receive some funding from the public sphere, and I agree with the idea that archives have an obligation to serve the public, and not only the academic research segment of the public.

The connections that can be fostered and the sharing of knowledge are worth the investment. In Nottingham, the archivists accomplished a great deal by keeping their minds open and staying creative. They were able to spread awareness of their services much further than if they had not engaged in outreach activities. At Dalhousie, the theatre archives developed an important and intimate relationship with Nova Scotia theatres that benefited theatre staff and Dalhousie students. In Toronto, the Canadian Lesbian & Gay Archives stayed committed to providing instruction for grade-school age children undeterred by their very limited resources. Even when the Peel archivists realized that their outreach efforts had taken away efforts from arrangement and description, they did not scrap the outreach program altogether. Instead, the re-evaluated their resources and came up with ideas to move staff around and better balance their initiatives.

Outreach work is an individualized endeavour that should be catered to the needs and resources of whatever archives undertakes the challenge. It is important to be creative and a little ambitious, but avoid the eclipse of vital functions that Cook feared, it is also extremely important to be realistic about limitations. Given level-headed planning and evaluation, outreach can be an immensely fruitful venture and should not be dismissed out of hand as tertiary or frivolous.

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## The Canadian Archives Summit: Manitoba experience

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At 7:30 am on January 17<sup>th</sup>, many (somewhat bleary-eyed) members of Winnipeg's archival community gathered at the University of Winnipeg to watch the simulcast of the Canadian Archives Summit. There was a very good turnout, with around 35 people attending. The big, bright event space was lovely and the technology set-up with two large viewing screens worked well. We encountered a few technical glitches during the morning presentations due to the number of people attempting to stream the Summit, but this didn't detract much from the overall experience. Thank you to Erin Acland, Acting University Archivist, and the University of Winnipeg for organizing and hosting the event, and to the University of Winnipeg Libraries, United Church Archives, and Association for Manitoba Archives for keeping us well-fed and caffeinated throughout the day. I thoroughly enjoyed being able to watch the Summit live alongside students from the archival studies program as well as colleagues from many different archives around the city. Knowing that similar events were being held concurrently across Canada really did foster a feeling of camaraderie and community. With attendees coming from various academic, government, corporate, religious, and community archives, the audience shared many areas of interest and concern, but also had different priorities and issues to deal with on a day-to-day basis. I thought the format of the Agents Provocateurs' talks worked very well to address this; the large number of short presentations on a variety of topics

ensured that there was something of particular relevance to everyone.

In the afternoon discussion circles, lively and interesting dialogue built on the morning's presentations. Several common themes seemed to emerge from each table's discussion: collaboration and engagement with new and established user groups, as well as other potential allies; issues relating to how and when partnerships with private sector organizations are possible or desirable; how to determine what archives' priorities and goals should be in an environment of limited resources; and of course, how to increase these resources. Although we tried to use the questions provided to guide the discussion, at the end of the afternoon I didn't feel like we had come up with any substantive answers about the future of Canadian archives. However, knowing how many dedicated, passionate, intelligent, and creative people all across the country got together that day to discuss the same questions does give me confidence that together we will be able to address these challenges and re-envision the Canadian archival community to create a new blueprint for Canada's recorded memory.

Heather Beattie  
Archivist, Hudson's Bay Company Archives  
ACA Director at Large

## What Next? Telling Their Stories After the Summit

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Archivists across Canada joined in an unprecedented national conversation during the Canadian Archives Summit. The Summit rallied our many strong allies. Their papers and local meeting transcripts are now available. Some of us are planning follow-up meetings. Proposals for a new "blueprint" for Canada's archives are being sifted. Reports from the Royal Society of Canada and Council of Canadian Academies are in the offing. And we will give further shape to national and local strategies during the coming conference season.

While we continue the conversation about long-term group strategies, what can we also do as individuals *now*, where we work and live? How can we help our employers and communities to see how tightly woven into their daily experiences archives are? Let's listen for *their* archival stories. Let's go beyond the generalities of accountability, efficiency, and history that we usually rely on to explain our work toward more specific things that enable their work and sustain our communities. We could begin by asking about their day and then walk them through their day of living archivally. It might begin by catching up on the morning news about an Indigenous protest or court case and end by reading a favourite novel or biography before turning in at

night. We could explain the often invisible role archives play in these and a great many more day-to-day activities, hopes, worries, and joys -- from wondering about what the latest developments in genetics, climate change, pandemic research, or a toxic environmental problem mean for our children, businesses, organizations, or neighbourhoods -- to planning a vacation, or planning to attract tourists, attending a public consultation about a major urban renewal project, administering that project, or thinking about buying and renovating property for it, then wondering about following up on that intriguing Ancestry.ca ad or what that strange new word metadata means. What would be on your list? Being able to talk to our employers and others about their archival stories may well be the bridge between our eventual group strategies and the people we work, meet, and live with each day.

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Archival Studies Program Web site:  
<http://umanitoba.ca/arts/departments/history/archives/>



Canadian Archives Summit - Munk School of Global Affairs  
Ian E. Wilson, Chair and former Librarian and Archivist of Canada.  
photo: Charlotte Gray (@CharlotteJGray)



Canadian Archives Summit - Munk School of Global Affairs  
Ian E. Wilson, Chair and former Librarian and Archivist of Canada.  
photo: Charlotte Gray (@CharlotteJGray)



Canadian Archives Summit - Montreal  
"Salle presque comble à Montréal!!"  
photo: Noura Elmobayed (@nelmobayed)



Canadian Archives Summit - Munk School of Global Affairs  
Loryl MacDonald, Association of Canadian Archivists  
photo: Dominique Marshall (@Dominiq92516944)

## I Crashed the Archives Summit! A View from Two Vantage Points

by Rebecka Sheffield

Rebecka Sheffield is an archivist and doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto's iSchool. Her current research considers resiliency and sustainability at four community-led archives.

On January 17th, I woke early and caffeinated in anticipation of the 2014 Canadian Archives Summit, a one-day gathering of Canada's archival community hosted by Ian E. Wilson, former Librarian and Archivist of Canada. Speakers and invited delegates met at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs and the event was

simulcast in both official languages to over 30 regional sites across Canada. I made my way to the Toronto iSchool site and joined an engaged group of students, faculty, and invested community members to watch the action from afar. Nearly two years after the suspension of the National Archival Development Program and further cuts to heritage institutions, the archival community continues to advocate for the value of our repositories and we believed that the Summit might be a catalyst for real change. The crowd at the iSchool listened carefully to the presenters and *agents provocateurs* respond to the current crisis facing Canada's archival system. We were particularly keen to hear from

experienced archivists and allies about how we might move forward to cultivate public support for Canada's rich archival heritage and make room for new and emerging professionals.

For the most part, my group was satisfied by the commentary and ideas shared throughout the morning sessions. Wilson's emphatic claim that the recent cuts to heritage institutions is a "deliberate, willful cultivation of ignorance," set the tone early in the day and was particularly well received. That said, the crowd was in agreement that much of the discussions taking place at the Munk School was familiar territory. Speakers focused on the need for innovative partnerships and collaborations, the importance of digitization, and the role of archives in Canada's increasingly diverse communities. Memorable comments came from Laura Millar, who insisted that we need to think of archives not as gifts for the next generation, but as essential tools for contemporary democracy. Laura Madokoro also roused the audience by underscoring the need for both public and community-led archives that better reflect Canada's changing social demographics and by challenging archivists to lead these initiatives. Other speakers missed the mark by either idealizing archival work or musing on the potential of digital technologies to democratize history. While few of us would disagree that Canada needs a national digitization strategy, several speakers seemed to underestimate the resources and expertise required to operationalize such a strategy. Any real

discussion of managing born digital records was also absent from the Summit program and this was duly noted by the iSchool group.

At lunch, I received a tap on my shoulder and an invitation to join the afternoon roundtable discussions at the Munk School. Feeling a bit like a party crasher, I found my way to the event location and took a seat. A quick look around the room validated my own fears about the Summit. For an event focused on the future of the archival community, there were conspicuously few young professionals and little representation from previously under-documented groups. As one of my iSchool colleagues noted, it is impossible to move a profession forward if we are only ever hearing from ourselves diversity inspires diversity. Nevertheless, the caliber of invited speakers and delegates was undeniable and should prompt decision-makers to take note of the importance of archives, perhaps for the first time since David Cameron's 1996 assessment of Canadian Studies. The roundtable discussions, both at the Munk School and at the regional sites, also produced a comprehensive list of grand challenges that face the archival community. Should the ACA, CCA, or AAQ decide to coordinate a follow-up event, I hope that we would use that opportunity to move beyond complaints and archival pipe dreams and focus on developing strategies to realize our next steps. There were plenty of people watching the Summit from the wings who are ready to meet these challenges and are just waiting for the opportunity to do so.

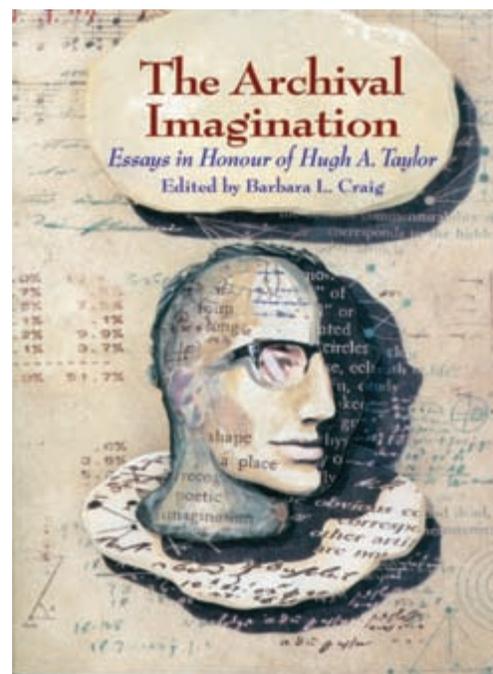
***The Archival Imagination:  
Essays in Honour of Hugh Taylor,***

Barbara L. Craig, Editor

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## ACA 2014 Archivatopia

26--28 June 2014  
Victoria, British Columbia



Archives and the archives community in Canada and around the world are experiencing fundamental stresses. Recent years have been difficult for prospective and practicing archivists. How can we alter our perception of the stresses we all face to change them from obstacles to opportunities? How can we position ourselves to overcome difficulties and capitalize on new possibilities? Now is the time to assess the current state of archives in Canada and, more importantly, to chart our way forwards to archival utopia. Archivists have responded to the call to define their "archivatopias." Join us in Victoria, BC, Canada's Shangri-la, to hear how archivists from across Canada and around the world envision the ideal future for archives and archivists, and to discuss together how we can strive to make these dreams a reality. High points of this exciting, thought provoking conference include:

- presentations on the role of education and training to prepare archivists of the future;
- expert panelists addressing the design, construction, and maintenance of archival facilities that help ensure preservation and promote access;
- case studies of strategies that position archives to reach out to and include the records of marginalized and unrepresented social groups and movements;
- experiences of archivists supporting the work of small institutions by developing capacity and building partnerships and networks; and much more!

This year's conference not only promises an engaging program, but also offers opportunities to join colleagues in experiencing Victoria's utopian setting. Social events will highlight the unique natural charms of Victoria and Vancouver Island, including Coast Salish traditional carving, whale watching, touring Canada's oldest Chinatown, and Cougar Annie's garden brought to the stage. ACA 2014 will connect you and your colleagues through Facebook, Twitter, and the ACA website. The 2014 Conference App will ensure you have up to the minute *Archivatopia* details, no matter where you may be (floating in the Salish Sea, biking Dallas Road, swimming on Gonzales Beach, paddle boarding in the Inner Harbour, relaxing in Butchart Gardens, or replenishing your fluids at Spinnakers).

The ACA 2014 conference hotel is the Fairmont Empress. Among its many features are a central location in downtown Victoria within walking distance of many of the city's attractions, excellent dining, traditional high tea, and cocktails in the colonial style Bengal Lounge. Get the royal treatment at Willow Stream Spa, admire the Edwardian era architecture, the hotel's own archives, the restored Palm Court ceiling, and kick up your heels in the Crystal Ballroom.

Plan for extra time to make Victopia your summer vacation destination! Vancouver Island is green and beautiful year-round, and is rated the Top Island in the Continental US and Canada and one of the Top Ten islands in the World by the 2012 Travel+Leisure World's Best Awards.

For information on, or to register, visit the ACA 2014 section of the website at <http://archivists.ca/content/annual-conference>





## HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR ACA MEMBERSHIP?

We understand that with today's economic realities, Canadian archivists demand a return on their ACA membership investment. With this in mind, we would like to briefly highlight what we feel are some substantive achievements the ACA has made over the past year.

Your membership enabled us to accomplish much in 2013. The ACA created the Canadian Archival System Taskforce to analyze and articulate the principles of Canadian archival heritage in a rapidly changing economic, social, and technological landscape. The ACA was also a key player in coordinating the Canadian Archives Summit which provided archivists across Canada with an opportunity to engage in a national discussion about the future of both Canada's documentary heritage as well as its archival community. With your support, the ACA also held its highly successful 38<sup>th</sup> annual conference in Winnipeg on the theme of "Community as Archives, Archives as Community." Your continued support also allowed us to continue the important ACA Mentorship Program which pairs young archivists with seasoned mentors who advise and guide them on work and career management issues. Two issues of *Archivaria* were also published in 2013, thanks again to the continued support of ACA members like you.

It is critical that the ACA sustains its membership numbers to ensure that archivists continue to play an important role the construction of Canada's recorded memory. The loss of even one member diminishes the ability of the ACA to effectively represent the interests of Canadian archival community and we are all the poorer by your absence.

The ACA strives to respond to the changing needs of its members. If there is something you believe the ACA should be doing differently for you or your institution please let us know.

**It is not too late to take advantage of membership discounts for the upcoming June 26-28, 2014 ACA Conference in Victoria and to receive the Spring and Fall 2014 issues of *Archivaria*.**

Simply visit the Membership page of the ACA website for a copy of the membership form:  
<http://www.archivists.ca/content/membership-form>.

Mail or fax the completed form to the ACA office. Should you have any questions regarding membership or the ACA, please contact the office at [aca@archivists.ca](mailto:aca@archivists.ca).

Sincerely,  
The ACA Membership Development Committee