

Arnprior & McNab/Braeside Archives

2023 Annual General Meeting

April 15th, 2023

Archivist's Report

I started back at my job as Archivist at AMBA in March of 2022, after a year away. I took over the reins from Archivist Kristen Mercier. It has been a pleasure to be back and I have had a wonderful year!

The Archives has remained open by appointment only. While this has affected our research request numbers, the archives is still seeing a steady flow of research appointments and requests by phone and by email. Scheduling appointments in advance has allowed us to be better prepared for researcher's questions, which has been great for both our volunteers and the members of the public.

Accessions of new donations have also been coming in steadily over the year. We have added 14 new accessions to our archival backlog. These accessions have included material from the Arnprior Fish and Game Club, the Calabogie Women's Institute, a collection of letters from a WWI soldier from Burnstown who was a prisoner of war in Germany, The Junior Farmer's Association of Renfrew County, the Handford Studio, and the Renfrew County Fiddlers Association, to name a few.

Speaking of Backlog, one of my priorities this year was to tackle the backlog of archival material that we have received by donation but that has not yet been added to our database. I completed nine descriptions of material from the backlog this year, including collections from the Braeside United Church, Robertson's Furniture, Robert G. Moles (a photographer and politician in Arnprior in the late 19th century), and John Smith, one of our own volunteers and past archives presidents.

In addition to processing some of our backlog, we have conducted a few exciting projects and other initiatives that are worth highlighting.

In April, the archives participated in the Archives A-Z campaign on social media, where we posted 26 times over 26 days on topics that started with each letter of the alphabet. Kristen began that campaign and I finished it when I took over, and it was so successful that we are now in the midst of posting our second Archives A-Z series. This year we are showcasing

beautiful photographs from our collection. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter to see the campaign and lots of other interesting posts throughout the year.

Another project that we have been working on is our digital preservation strategy. I created a multi-step process to ensure that our digital collections framework was in place, and started planning for the digitization of some of our outdated audio-visual formats, like cassette tapes, LPs and even DVDs and CD-Roms.

Part of this project was to deal with the backlog of digitized images that had not yet been added to the database and website. We employed a Digital Collections Assistant through the Canada Summer Jobs program. Our assistant was Marc-Alexandre Webb, an Applied Museum Studies student from Algonquin College. He blazed through this project, processing over 1000 photos and adding them to the database.

After Marc discovered that a collection of negatives were succumbing to a deterioration process called vinegar syndrome, Marc researched the condition and came up with a plan to digitize over 500 negatives and upload them to the database as well. Great job, Marc!

Our volunteers were busy this year as well. As we all started getting back to our normal activities, more volunteers were in the archives on a regular basis. We held volunteer training meetings every month, and even added a few new volunteers to our roster. They conducted special research projects, helped the public with their research during appointments, and kept the archives (and the archivist) going with their kindness, knowledge and motivation. I would like to say thank you to the volunteers for their hard work, their energy and their passion for our local history!

Thank you very much, and I look forward to another great year at the AMBA!

Emma Carey
Archivist