

AABC Newsletter

Honorary Patron:

The Honourable Iona Campagnolo, PC, CM, OBC, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

Volume 15 No.3

Summer 2005

ISSN 1193-3165

Newsletter homepage

aabc.bc.ca/aabc/newsletter

How to join the AABC

aabc.bc.ca/aabc/meminfo.html

The AABC Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Archives Association of British Columbia. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the AABC.

Got news? Send AABC news, tips, suggestions or letters to the acting editor:

Marnie.Burnham@lac-bac.gc.ca

Deadlines for each issue are one month prior to publication.

Editorial Board:

[Kelly Harms](#)

[Greg Kozak](#)

[Jennifer Mohan](#)

[Chris Hives](#)

[Marnie Burnham](#), Editor

[Leslie Field](#), Technical Editor

Next Issue:

November 1, 2005

Please supply all submissions in electronic format, as either .txt, WP7, WORD 97/2000/XP or via e-mail

Table of Contents

Features

- [Coming Home: A two-phase research project for the Canada Lands Company by Kelly Harms](#)

Columns / Regular Items

- [B.C. Archival Network News](#)
- [B.C. Archival Education and Advisory Service](#)
- [B.C. Archival Preservation Service](#)
[Videotape Preservation: Format Identification and Condition Assessment \(Part 1\)](#)

Community News

- [Dorothy Dodge receives the 2005 BC Community Achievement Award by Anthea Seles](#)
- [Association of Canadian Archivists Conference, Saskatoon 2005: East vs. West Softball Game by Linda Nobrega \(photos courtesy of Garron Wells and Linda Nobrega\)](#)

Coming Home: A two-phase research project for the Canada Lands Company

Contributed by Mr. Kelly Harms, Community Archivist
Chilliwack Museum and Archives
Monday, August 15, 2005

British Columbia archives large and small are dealing with the angst of increased financial pressures. This economic reality is nothing new, but seems to be the trend of the past two or three decades. Financial hardship has caused many to come up with new and innovative ways to generate revenue to compensate for funding shortfalls.

One example of innovation is a project recently undertaken by the Chilliwack Museum & Archives; to conduct historical research on behalf of the Canada Lands Company (hereafter CLC). The Chilliwack Museum & Archives was approached by the CLC to provide vital historical context, which in turn allowed them to broaden their vision for their commercial redevelopment project.



The CLC is the "arm's length, self-financing Crown corporation" in charge of the redevelopment of the former Canadian Forces Base Chilliwack. According to the Company website, the company: "purchases surplus strategic properties at fair market value from the federal government, then improves, manages or sells them in order to achieve optimal financial and community value for both local communities, and the company's sole shareholder, the Government of Canada".

According to the project introduction the CLC was aware of the close link between the former CFB Chilliwack and the community of Chilliwack. The goal of the project therefore was to "identify themes that are representative of the legacy that has been left behind by the thousands of men, women and their families who contributed to the legacy."

The research was conducted in two phases, based directly on the needs and vision of the redevelopment plan. The first phase of the

project "focused on the military families and the origins and development of the Permanent Married Quarters (PMQs) area of the former A6 Canadian Engineers Training Centre (later known as Camp Chilliwack, then Canadian Forces Base Chilliwack). The second phase of the research was to study the "military portion of the base, on the south side of Keith-Wilson Road."

Chilliwack Museum & Archives Director Ron Denman was asked to draw up a contract for the work, and assemble the project team. Meetings were held to identify project goals, and once the project team was assembled work commenced.



The project team for Phase 1 was: Ron Denman, Project Manager, Carol Baird, Researcher, Kelly Harms, Graphics Coordinator, and Paul Ferguson, Military History specialist. The Project team for Phase 2 was: Ron Denman, Project Manager, Dave Yendall, Researcher, Kelly Harms, Graphics Coordinator, Maria Wong, Research Assistant, Paul Ferguson, Military History specialist.



In order to determine important themes in life on the base, a focus group of former military personnel and local residents was assembled to discuss and give their perspectives. There were many themes identified by the focus group; so many in fact that it was necessary to distill these down to a few essential elements.

The detailed research and focus group discussions led to the recommendation of a legacy walk, to be incorporated into the lay out for the Garrison Crossing subdivision. Themes identified in the research, and reviewed by the focus group, were then added as program elements within this legacy walk. Themes recommended for inclusion were: 1) The major development phases of the base; 2) The Military Schools and Training; 3) The Field Engineers; 4) Community relations; 5) Gathering places; 6) Civilian employees.

The one major theme that came to dominate both Phase 1 & 2, was "Coming Home". According to the project introduction: "Careers were characterized by frequent returns to Chilliwack for postings or schooling. For many, Chilliwack was the only community that was called home. It is significant that a large number of military personnel chose to live in Chilliwack after retirement, reinforcing the strong ties of military personnel to the community and the base."

Themes and recommendations derived from the research were submitted to CLC, and other urban planning consultants retained by CLC. In due course these themes were incorporated into a legacy walk which was introduced into the layout of the Garrison Crossing subdivision project.

Accepting the challenge of this project made for a positive experience for the staff and contractors of the Chilliwack Museum and Archives. The project gave us an opportunity to reach a new corporate client; particularly one which appreciates the historical geographic context to the point where listening turns into constructive action.



Meeting new private sector partners broadens our connections throughout the business community, and demonstrates a new potential for how things can be done. Our philosophy going into the project was that it was better to get involved and be actively engaged in the process, than to stand back and be critical of decisions taken by the developer.

We were very impressed by the knowledge and considerable skills which CLC brought to the project. There was a good group dynamic between the project team and CLC staff and contractors, which made it an enjoyable project to be part of. Participation in the project has already led to new opportunities for consultant work. Director Ron Denman has been called upon by CLC to provide historical context presentations and on site walking tours as part of the development of the Canada Education Park.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

AABC Newsletter

Volume 15 No. 3 Summer 2005

British Columbia Archival Network News

AABC/BCAIN Web Usage Continues to Increase

Web usage statistics for the first quarter of the AABC fiscal year (April 2005-June 2005) continue to show a healthy increase in the number of users of AABC and BC Archival Information Network (BCAIN) web resources. Quarter 1 statistics for 2005-2006 show a 35% jump in the number of unique visits to the AABC/BCAIN sites as compared to the same time period in 2004-2005. From April through June of this year, there were 177,930 unique visits measured, averaging almost 2,000 visits per day. This level of increase is consistent with quarterly percentage increases measured over the last three years.

The most heavily used resources continue to be the BC Archival Union List (BCAUL), the online Guide to Archival Repositories in British Columbia, and the AABC's online Archivist's Toolkit. In Quarter 1 of this fiscal year, 88,810 unique sessions were established on the BCAUL database, averaging just under 1,000 per day. One unique database session can constitute any number of searches, index scans, and display results.

British Columbia Archival Union List -- New Descriptions on the Database

Archives in the province are reminded that new and revised BCAUL descriptions should be submitted to the BC Archival Network Service Program. For more information on the various ways submissions can be made, people are asked to contact Bill Purver, BCANS Coordinator, by phone (604-876-9150), by fax (604-876-9850) or by email (bpurver@aabc.bc.ca).

New or revised descriptions recently submitted and added to the *British Columbia Archival Union List* are listed on the "New Descriptions on BCAUL" page of the BCAIN web site at aabc.bc.ca/aabc/newbcaul.html

Guide to Archival Repositories in British Columbia -- Recent Updates

The following is information recently updated on the AABC's online directory, *A Guide to Archival Repositories in British Columbia* (aabc.bc.ca/aabc/bcguide.html):

1) Barkerville Historic Town and Resource Centre

New email address: barkerville@barkerville.ca

New web address: www.barkerville.ca

2) Bowen Island Archives and Museum

New web address: www.bowenhistory.ca

3) Revelstoke Museum and Archives

New web site: www.revelstokemuseum.ca

4) Penticton Museum and Archives

New web site: www.penticton.ca/city/parks_rec/archives.asp

5) Arrow Lakes Historical Society Archives

New web site: www.nakusparrowlakes.com/historicalsoc.htm

6) Atlin Historical Society

New email address: heritage@atlin.net

7) Agassiz-Harrison Museum

New fax number: (604) 796-3572

New email address: avogstad@dowco.com

8) Crofton House School Archives

New web address: www.croftonhouse.ca/discover/history/archives

9) Kamloops Museum and Archives

New web address: www.city.kamloops.bc.ca/museum/index.html

10) Oliver and District Heritage Society Archives

New web address: www.odhsmuseumandarchives.com

11) Union of BC Indian Chiefs Resource Centre

New web address: www.ubcic.bc.ca/department/library.htm

12) Providence Health Care Archives

New contact person: Archivist

New hours of operation: Mondays, 10 am to 3 pm, or by appointment

13) City of Richmond Archives

New web address: www.richmond.ca/archives

14) Boundary Museum

New contact person: Wanda Mizner , Curator/Administrator

New email address: cwmizner@telus.net

15) West Vancouver Museum and Archives

New contact person: Melanie Hardbattle , District Archivist

New email address: mhardbattle@westvancouver.ca

New hours of operation: Wednesday and Thursday, 1:00-4:30

British Columbia Archival Network Service - Contact Information

Archives or archivists wishing to submit new information for any of the AABC's web resources, including new or revised descriptions for the *BC Archival Union List* and the online *Guide to Archival Repositories in BC*, should contact Bill Purver at the BC Archival Network Service program (Phone: 604-876-9150 ; Fax: 604-876-9850 ; Email: bpurver@aabc.bc.ca).

For more information about the program, people are asked to consult the BC Archival Network Service homepage at aabc.bc.ca/aabc/bcans.html.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

© 2005 Archives Association of British Columbia

B.C. Archival Education and Advisory Service

Education and Advisory Archivist Linda Wills

My last newsletter column was based on a lot of the positive aspects of all the community archives that I have visited in my role as Education and Advisory archivist. While I don't want to call this column the negative aspects of my visit, I do want to point out some of the more worrisome issues that I have come across in my travels. No names will be mentioned and, if you think I am using an example from a particular archives, you are wrong. These problems exist in many archives.

The most important two basic administrative documents that you need in an archives are gift agreements and accession records. Gift agreements record the name, address, and phone of the donor, a description of the material donated, a record of any restrictions, a transfer of ownership and copyright, and a signature of the donor and a representative of the archives. There may be instructions from the donor re disposal of unwanted material. The agreement is dated and the corresponding accession number is added when possible. These gift agreements are filed in alphabetical order by the donor's last name. The accession record is filled out as soon as possible after the donation has been received and requires the assignment of a unique number to that donation. Biographical/administrative information is recorded along with method of donation, media information, extent, and a brief description of donation contents. The record is signed and dated by the archivist. The accession records are kept in order of accession number. These two documents provide a cross-referenced means of recovering and using information about holdings even if they have not been processed.

I cannot stress enough the importance of these two basic documents. Without them, you do not have legal ownership of your archival material and you not have any control over your holdings. Although chances are slim, what would you do if the son of a donor came back at a later date and demanded to have his father's papers back? Without that legal transfer of ownership, you are in hot water. How embarrassing to have to admit that you don't have a legal transfer and, perhaps, cannot find all of the papers. It has happened to more than one archives and no one wants to find him/herself in that situation.

A lot of archives operate with little or no money. Imagine my dismay on seeing acid free envelopes inside acid free file folders when the item being preserved is a newspaper clipping. Appraisal of archival and non-archival material is difficult for all volunteers and staff at the beginning of their collecting activities; I must admit that I didn't grasp the difference immediately when I first started working in an archives. However, you can save yourselves money by learning the difference. Spend your hard-earned money on archival storage materials for your original, unique, and unpublished material. Newsclippings, magazine articles, and other published material do not need the specialized treatment given to archival material.

Some archives are not referring to their mandate and acquisition policy when accepting donations. Please

abide by these documents and do not hang on to items because they are interesting. Think about what will happen if you keep items rightfully belonging to another archives. Will any researcher ever ask for these items? We must think of the public good rather than our own interests when accepting donations. Photographs of the building of the Alaska Railroad do not belong in an Okanagan archives. I can say this with impunity because I found such a collection in 1986 and transferred it to Anchorage, Alaska.

Other archives find it difficult to discard photographs. All you have to do is think of the time and money expended on keeping one photograph and you will soon learn to discard the out-of-focus, poorly processed, backs-of-heads photographs. There are a lot of other reasons for not keeping certain photographs, but this column is not an archives workshop! Some archives will keep photographs that do not fall within their mandate and acquisition policy. When I was archivist at the Vernon Museum and Archives, I have to confess that I hung on to a spectacular panoramic photograph of Salmon Arm, convincing myself that I was keeping it because it was such a splendid example of panoramic photography. My conscience got the better of me and I finally transferred it to the Salmon Arm Archives. I was feeling very proud of myself until I visited Salmon Arm to find that my special donation was just one of many of the same photograph! I didn't know the photograph had been reproduced so many times, but the sentiment was the right one.

As a result of visiting many small archives, I have written a one-page summary on the disposition of published and unpublished material. It includes the type of storage materials to use, whether or not to label items with accession numbers, where to store various items, lists of some standard series in a fonds, and how to handle ephemera. I can e-mail a copy to anyone who feels that they can use this help. Feedback has been positive and many archives have my little guide in a permanent place on the wall. E-mail me at lwills@aabc.bc.ca and I'll send you a copy.

That appraisal summary will be expanded in a one-day workshop to be offered in Penticton this November. The exact date has not been chosen, but watch for more details on the AABC website. Attendees will be asked to bring archival material with them to appraise – both published and unpublished.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

B.C. Archival Preservation Service

Videotape Preservation: Format Identification and Condition Assessment (Part I)

This is the first in a two part series dealing with the preservation of videotape.

Videotape — and all other magnetic media — is considered high risk from a preservation perspective. In archives, videotape often suffers from the preservation syndrome of benign neglect. This neglect is due to a general lack of information regarding format identification and a lack of playback equipment required to view and appraise the media. Finally, the confusion regarding migration strategies can paralyse the best of archivists or conservators.

Before a videotape preservation strategy can even be considered the videotapes must be appraised. A common problem encountered during many BC Archives Preservation Service (BCAPS) site visits is the acquisition of unappraised videotapes. Appraisal of the videotape content is not done as the archive does not have appropriate playback equipment. The videotapes are then left to languish on the shelf. In an attempt to deal with this problem BCAPS is compiling a list of videotape playback equipment found in archives throughout the province. Archives will be asked if they would be willing to make their playback equipment available to other archives so that appraisal of videotape can be undertaken. Use of playback equipment and subsequent appraisal would be completed at the archive that owns the playback equipment. This is a crucial step in the development of a videotape preservation strategy as videotape migration is costly so an archive will want to ensure that the tapes being migrated are worth the effort and cost.

A preservation strategy for videotape consists of four steps:

- Videotape format identification
- Condition assessment and evaluation of storage environment
- Videotape priority for migration
- Evaluation of migration format options. (This step will be covered in the Autumn 2005 AABC Newsletter in " Videotape Preservation: Migration Options").

1. Videotape Format Identification

Since the introduction of commercially viable videotape in the mid 1950s over 65 formats — analog and digital — have been in use.

Identification of videotape formats has become much easier with access to two excellent videotape identification websites. The Texas Commission on the Arts *Videotape Identification and Assessment Guide* (<http://www.arts.state.tx.us/video/>) is divided into five sections: Identity format; Longevity Risks; Condition

Assessment, Conservation Actions and Resources. The section on Identity Format is of particular use as it offers a detailed videotape identification guide with colour images and a description of each video format.

A second website compiled by Sarah Stauderman is the *Video Format Identification Guide* (<http://www.video-id.com/>). While less comprehensive than the Texas Commission on the Arts website is useful as it also has descriptions of videotape formats with images arranged by date. This site has identified formats not included in the Texas Commission on the Arts website.

Condition assessment and evaluation of storage environment

Assessing the condition of videotapes can be tricky. To assist with condition assessment the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) has produced a series of 18 Videotape Preservation Fact Sheets. (www.amianet.org/publication/resources/guidelines/videofacts/about.html) *Fact Sheet – 9 Tape Inspection* is easy to follow and outlines seven steps to undertake as part of a basic videotape inspection. A more detailed condition assessment can be completed by a videotape migration company technician.

The terminology used to describe videotape, in general, and deterioration characteristics in particular are specific and technical. While the AMIA Fact Sheets tend to explain terms as they are used more detailed terminology glossaries are available. The AMIA *Fact Sheet 18 – Glossary* (<http://www.amianet.org/publication/resources/guidelines/videofacts/glossary.html>) and the Moving Image Collections (MIC) Glossary of Preservation Terms (http://mic.imtc.gatech.edu/preservationists_portal/presv_bggloss.htm) are useful references to download.

Storage Environment

Media format and equipment obsolescence are proving to be more of a deterrent to tape (information) access and preservation than the more common preservation issues of chemical and physical deterioration. However, a storage environment that meets ISO recommended standards will extend the life expectancy of all magnetic media and "buy" time to implement a tape migration program.

The ISO standard for the archival storage of polyester based magnetic media is listed in the Table 1 below.

Table 1

Extended Term Storage Conditions	
Max. Temperature	Maximum RH
23° C	20%
17° C	30%
11° C	50%

Below 8° C not recommended	
+/- 2° C/24 hours	+/-5% /24 hours

Videotape priority for migration

Determining priority for migration is the next step in the preservation strategy. It is unlikely that an archive could afford to migrate all their videotapes at one time so it is necessary to identify which videotapes are a priority for migration. Table 2 — Videotape Priority Migration Tool — offers a numerical checklist to assess priority for migration. The videotapes with the highest numbers would be the first to be migrated. This checklist is not exhaustive and should be modified to fit the needs of individual archives.

Table 2

Videotape Priority Migration Tool	
Copyright Can the tape be copied Yes NO	If NO then stop evaluation
Age Over 25 years old 15-20 years old 10-15 years old less than 10 years old	+5 +3 +2 +1
Format Obsolescence Rating	+1 to +6
Limited Edition – term used for some artist’s video – these tapes would be found in art gallery archives	Yes +3 No + 1

Use/Loan Requests Are researchers requesting access	High +5 Med +3 Low +1
Playback Equipment Does the archives have playback equipment	Yes +1 No +3
Sticky Shed	+5
Original/Master Video Duplicate	+5 +1
Stable Environment Meets ISO 18923-2000	Yes +1 No +3

The Format Obsolescence Rating referred to in Table 2 is based on the obsolescence rating system outlined in the *Video Format Identification Guide* (<http://www.video-id.com/>). To determine which numerical value (+1 - +6) your videotape should receive see Table 3 — Format Obsolescence Rating below.

Table 3 — Format Obsolescence Rating includes 12 videotape formats commonly found in archives. (They are included in no particular order).

Table 3

Format Obsolescence Rating		
Format	Obsolescence Rating	Rank
¾" U-matic	Threatened	
	10 years or older	+5
	Less than 10 years old	+3

Hi8	Threatened	+3
Betacam SP	Endangered	+4
Betamax	Critically endangered	+5
Digibeta	Lower Risk	+1
½" open reel	Extinct	+6
DVC Pro	Threatened	+3
Mini DV	Threatened	+3
DV CAM	Threatened	+3
Hi 8	Threatened	+3
VHS	Vulnerable	+2
SVHS	Vulnerable	+3

The six obsolescence rating levels are subjective but allow for relative ranking of formats.

6 = **Extinct**: Only one or two playback machines may exist at specialist laboratories. The tape itself is more than 20 years old.

5 = **Critically endangered**: There is a small population of aging playback machinery, with no or little engineering or manufacturing support. Anecdotal evidence indicates that there are fewer working machine-hours than total population of tapes. Tapes may range in age from 40 years to 10 years.

4 = **Endangered**: The machine population may be robust, but the manufacture of the machinery has stopped. Manufacturing support for the machines and the tapes becomes unavailable. The tapes are often less expensive, and more vulnerable to deterioration.

3 = **Threatened**: The playback machines are available; however, either the tape format itself is unstable or has less integrity than other available formats, or it is known that a more popular or updated format will be replacing this one in a short period of time.

2 = **Vulnerable**: This is a current but highly proprietary format.

1 = **Lower risk**: This format will be in use over the next five years (1998-2002).

Part two of "Preservation of Videotape: Evaluation of migration options" will be discussed in the Autumn 2005 AABC Newsletter.

Rosaleen Hill
AABC Conservation Coordinator
rhill@aabbc.bc.ca
www.aabbc.bc.ca

Community News

Dorothy Dodge - BC Community Achievement Award

In February 2005, Dorothy Dodge of the Lytton and Museum Archives was awarded the prestigious BC Community Achievement Award. The BC Community Award is meant to recognize and celebrate B.C.'s spirit of excellence and is meant especially to honour dedicated individuals who give their time to various associations, institutions or volunteer organizations.

Dorothy established the Lytton Museum and Archives and was recognized for her work not only at that institution but also as a member of the Hospital Auxiliary and local Legion Branch.

What follows is the description which can be found on the British Columbia Community Award site:

For nearly 60 years, Dorothy Dodge has contributed selflessly to community life in Lytton. From taking on the challenge to setting up and maintaining the Lytton community cemetery, to becoming the first volunteer curator at the newly formed museum as well as positions at the Hospital Auxiliary and local Legion Branch, Dorothy promotes volunteerism and community spirit with her energy and tireless work ethic. Dorothy exemplifies the spirit of imagination, dedication and commitment. (<http://www.bcachievement.com/community/recipients-2005.php>):

The AABC would like to congratulate Dorothy on the award and wish her continued success in her work.

Information on the BC Community Award may be at the following URL: <http://www.bcachievement.com/community/>

* * *

Association of Canadian Archivists Conference, Saskatoon 2005: East vs. West Softball Game

Coming out of a whirlwind of bison meat and Saskatoon berries what I shall cherish most is the classic ACA East vs. West softball game. How I have not taken part before it pains me to ponder. The score, or simply the winner, of past games has taken on legendary proportions. It has been hotly debated as seen on Arcan-L. And at the ACA awards luncheon the anniversary booklet included a page that outlined the results of prior games, as best remembered. I wish to immortalize the triumph of the West, in our humble newsletter, by reporting that on Thursday June 9th 2005 the West had a successful game of 9 to 6. Our score keeper, Evelyn Peters-McLellan can certainly account for this.

There was no shortage of players in the West team and they hailed from across Western Canada. The sportsmanship displayed by this energetic team is something to be proud of. A memorable moment was the amazing catching ability of our shortstop, Mary McIntosh. Not once, not twice but thrice! She was soon hailed as MVP and assailed for much of the weekend on the status of her attendance at next year's conference. In fact, I believe there may have been attempts by the unscrupulous East to offer her contract employment in the East so that she may play on their side. I say.... good chance of that! Following the game was the Great Western Brewery beer night. George Brandak, our fearless captain and pitcher, entered the hall and was welcomed with loud applause and hollering.



(photos courtesy of Garron Wells and Linda Nobrega)

The game provided a great opportunity to meet and socialize with fellow colleagues. I will certainly take part in next year's game if I have the honour of attending the conference.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

© 2005 Archives Association of British Columbia