



Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island – July 2008

Diocesan Archives Newsletter

Update since July 2007

Over the past year, your Diocesan Archives has been engaged primarily in the accession, description and preservation of approximately 20 metres of new deposits that have accumulated since 2002. An increase in the Archivist's hours in 2008 has helped to meet the requirements of a busy time, in which the holdings increased rapidly. We processed over 500 research requests, collected and supported research for updating parish histories for 2010, and gained intellectual control of more of our holdings by describing and arranging 11 large parish deposits and a substantial portion of Diocesan, Clergy and Synod records.

We have updated preservation standards and methods through conferences and networking with the Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA), obtained current guidelines for conservation from the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) and the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) and liaised with our Anglican Archivists' Network on matters that concern all Anglicans, including the reliability of digital media, the level of Diocesan record-keeping, and archival issues arising out of the large amount of records from the Residential Schools' Reconciliation and Healing process and Indigenous Peoples' research.

By managing our yearlong preservation grant projects alongside of regular duties, we have continued the successful preservation of the records that bear witness to the life and ministry of the Church and of our diocese.

Archives Budget cut 50%

In 2009 the Archivist's time in the Archives will be cut to a half-time position. In addition, the Archives operational budget has been reduced by 75% for 2009.

While this may have a serious effect on our ability to continue preservation projects, we are resolved to make services to the parishes and clergy our first priority in 2009. We will also continue preservation activities as far as supplies and time allow.

Preservation Projects

Our preservation grant project for 2007-2008 targeted all major accessions accumulated since 2002, that is, the major deposits from 17 parishes, the Anglican Church Women, and large Diocesan file groups (19 metres). These records had to be described and arranged before being given final enclosure, so this project has jumped a major hurdle in attaining knowledge of their contents for future access.

The grant funds for preservation supplies are matched by the Archives budget funds in time and wages for a qualified assistant to do the work, supervised by the Archivist. This grant project was funded by the Canadian Council of Archives through Library and Archives Canada and the National Archives Development Program (LAC/NADP).

There is still a major portion (about half) of our original parish records collection in the Diocesan Archives that needs to receive preservation enclosure and repair – these are targeted in our 2008-2009 LAC/NADP grant project. With these grants we can continue steadily with preservation each year until the Archives holdings are stabilized for the long-term, and for the short-term in the event of a move to a new facility.

A *NEW* provincial grant-funding program has started in 2008, largely as a result of the CNSA's Archival Collections Needs Assessment Survey in which we participated in 2007. In our collection, there is a major portion of Bishop's Office files and Synod records that are stored offsite, which need re-boxing and re-folding – these are targeted in our preservation grant project to be funded by the Provincial Archives Development Program (PADF) from Sept 2008-March 2009, concurrent with our national grant project.

Microfilming Parish Records

Reformatting is a method of preservation, and microfilm is still considered to be the most stable medium for reformatting,

next to archival paper itself. Therefore we are continuing to microfilm as many records as we can each year to add to the extensive microfilm holdings of our parish records at Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM), where the contents may be accessed by the public, thereby reducing the damage caused by over-handling of the originals over the long-term.

In 2007 we had 47 parish registers, ledgers and minute books microfilmed as part of a grant preservation project funded by the Canadian Council of Archives through NADP and Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management.

Archives Policies Revision

Last year's revision to our Acquisition Policy has been reconsidered in joint deliberation of the Diocesan Archives Committee and Diocesan Council through 2007/2008. It is important to note that our Acquisition Policy, in point A.6 now states that the Archives will not accept records that pose a health hazard, but adds that the Archives will help parishes to arrange recovery of records at risk. (SEE: copy of new page 4).

This point in our policy applies only to severely damaged records, such as those with active mould growth or pest infestation. This change was made out of consideration of the cost of special equipment that would be required to successfully treat these records in-house and the risk to health and safety of staff and others using the ADC if we accepted them. We can handle most other forms of damage in the Archives.

We still encourage parishes to make every effort to preserve their original records in accordance with Canon 40, and if they are found to be at risk, to ask the Diocesan Archives for guidance in their maintenance or recovery.

A Recovery Success Story

In the fall of 2006, a small portable safe containing the parish registers of Birch Cove Parish was stolen from the Church office and found in April 2007 in a gully, with the books wet and still partially frozen.

The parish immediately contacted your Diocesan Archivist, and we advised them to quickly (and gently) separate the books and wrap in freezer paper, to be placed in a deep freezer, which would

gradually evaporate some moisture, until we were ready to proceed with a recovery method for water-damaged records recommended by the CCA.

It took many weeks and many archival blotters, but we managed to restore the registers (except for permanent ink bleeding) to a state of flat, clean, dry, readable pages, still bound at the spine. (SEE: [Birch Cove Recovery](#) in the "Diocesan Archives Documents" on the "Archives" page Diocesan Website: www.nspeidiocese.ca).

This is a case in point where **immediate action** to freeze the records, before temperature, moisture and exposure to pests could do their damage, resulted in complete recovery. These registers had not been microfilmed, but the parish had transcribed the information to a database, stored digitally, which is a wise precaution for parishes to take. However, **it is important to restore the paper original**, because the longevity and durability of paper is far superior to digital media.

Digital Records

It has been confirmed in 2008 by the results of accelerated testing by the CCI that digital media storage (CD, DVD, or hard drive disc) is NOT as reliable as paper or microfilm for permanent storage of information, whether text or graphic (digital-born photographs). Back up your hard drive files to archival quality ("gold") discs, store in a cool, low-fluctuation environment within "inert" plastic cases, and recopy to new discs each year. ALSO PRINT the same files on acid-free copy paper and your photographs to premium quality photo paper and protect from light and heat as you would any photographic print.

See On the Archives Web Page:

- [*The Primate's address before the Canadian Church Historical Society and Anglican Archivists Nov. 1, 2007*](#)
- [*Archives Policies, Rev. 5.4, April 20, 2008*](#)
- [*Birch Cove Recovery*](#)

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