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## ArchiNews / ArchiNouvelles

### The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies



Photo courtesy Conrad Stoesz

Reading room entrance – April 2005

The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies has a new home at 1310 Taylor Ave. On April 25, 2005 the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren churches national office along with the Manitoba Conference office opened its doors to the public in a brand new two-story building consisting of over 20,000 square feet. The archival component includes a 1645 square-foot vault, equipped with humidity and temperature controls, and mobile shelving throughout. The 1241 square-foot public area includes a spacious reading room, library, and plenty of space for researchers. The 388 square-foot office area as well as the public is an open design concept with good sightlines to see the activity in the Centre. New furniture and décor make the Centre an inviting and welcoming place to read and do research.

The vault contains over 1200 boxes of archival material, including conference, congregational, institutional and personal papers; 23,000 photographs; 100 architectural drawings; and 700 periodical titles. Maps, audio recordings, a hymn book library, and video collection are also to be found in the vault. The J.A. Toews historical library, the conference yearbook collection, and the Katie Peters genealogical collection, are in the public research area.

The Centre documents the lives of the Mennonite Brethren constituency over a lengthy period of time. During this time the Centre has also changed

considerably. It was founded in 1969 by the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. Its mandate has always been to collect and preserve historical documents relating to the Mennonite Brethren church, focusing on Canada. In 1969 the Conference owned and operated the Mennonite Brethren Bible College (MBBC) and the Centre was given a small room above the library. Herb Giesbrecht, the librarian of MBBC, administered the Centre. Soon the Centre outgrew this space. When the college undertook an expansion in 1979, space was built for the archives in the basement of the building at 169 Riverton Ave. in Winnipeg's Elmwood district. Here a total of 1,500 square-feet were allocated to the Centre for all its activities. Ken Reddig was appointed archivist. In the mid 1980s mobile shelving was purchased which almost doubled the storage space. Some environmental controls were installed at this point but they never worked properly. Staff joked about working in the catacombs. The advantage of larger space was offset by the fact that the location was not the best for researchers because it was hard to find and was some distance from the offices of the sponsoring body.

In 1991 Abe Dueck was appointed Director. The Centre continued to function in the basement until 2000 when the College (then known as Concord College) amalgamated with Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) along with Menno Simons College to form Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) on the campus at 600 Shaftesbury Blvd. At this time the Centre moved to the former administrative area of Concord College, and the vault occupied part of the former library. Some of the space had originally been used by the archives several decades earlier.

Other recent changes include library automation which was implemented in 1992. On August 8, 1993, during a heavy rain, the sewer backed up causing serious flooding which resulted in significant damage. Support from the CCA by way of grants from the mid-1980s to the present allowed for extra staff to be hired to work on electronic finding aids and collection descriptions that increased its usefulness.

*(continued on page 2)*

## Chair's message to AMA members

### WCPI (Western Canada Pictorial Index)

In the last newsletter, members were advised that the Board had sent a letter to Mark Leggott, University Librarian, University of Winnipeg, detailing longstanding concerns with the operation of the WCPI. Following receipt of a response to this letter (on April 7), the Board instructed Elizabeth Blight to convene a meeting of member institutions with an interest in this issue. Further updates will be provided as discussion develops.

### CCA Update

Did you know that the CCA is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year? To mark the occasion, and to refresh the relationship between the CCA and its provincial and territorial councils, a signing ceremony is planned for the fall. The Board is currently discussing with the CCA wording for the document to be signed. The event will be held in conjunction with the AMA's annual general meeting.

Jody Baltessen



Photo courtesy Conrad Stoesz

**Reading Room – April 2005**



Photo courtesy Conrad Stoesz

**AMA Membership Committee**  
**Conrad Stoesz, Diane Haglund, Bronwen Quarry,**  
**Shelley Sweeney, Elizabeth Blight (chair)**

### Mark your calendar !

**The AMA Annual General Meeting will  
 be held September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> 2005.**  
**Details to follow**

### The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

*Continued from page 1*

The Centre has seen the number of visitors increase. Also the scope of research done has grown. Researchers with varied interests continue to visit the Centre. We are excited about our new facility and hope it can continue to serve the Conference and the wider public.

### Denise Jones at HBCA

The Archives of Manitoba is pleased to announce the appointment of Denise Jones to the position of Head, Client Service for the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. She began her work in HBCA on April 11, 2005. Denise comes to the archives from Fredericton, New Brunswick. She holds a Masters of Arts (History) degree from Concordia University and a Masters degree in Information Studies (Archival Stream) from the University of Toronto. Denise has some 10 years experience in the archival field and has spent the past two and a half years managing the public service function at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. Her experience will be valuable in overseeing the research and reference activities of HBCA and sharing the supervision Research Room function with Paula Warsaba as Co-Advisor to the Access team of the Archives of Manitoba. Denise is also actively involved in the ACA and chairs the Membership Committee. Welcome Denise!



## Looking Back...

2005 marks the 25<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary of the Association for Manitoba Archives. This is the second in a series of planned articles looking back to the activities of 1980.

Education and Training was one of the first concerns of the new Association. Twenty members attended the first workshop, Basic Archival Principles, held on 21 June 1980. Instructors were Peter Bower “What are Archives”, Garron Wells “Reference Sources for Archivists”, and Catherine Macdonald “Life Cycle of a Collection”. This was to focus on textual material with future workshops on visual and cartographic material promised.

The cost? \$3:00

In August the AMA co-hosted with the Canadian History Club (an organization which didn't make its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary) a presentation by Dr. Richard Ruggles of the Department of Geography, Queen's University titled the “Blue Coat and Grey Coat Apprentices: Surveying, Mapping and Navigating for the Bay in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.” Could this be considered our first Distinguished Lecture Series?

Two workshops were planned for the fall and winter. October saw a discussion about Archives and Genealogists with Eric Jonasson of the Manitoba Genealogical Society. In December, Shirlee Smith, Keeper of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, and

### Lac du Bonnet Web Site

The Lac du Bonnet Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (MHAC) has developed a web site of the municipality's rural heritage. It is a link on the web site of the R.M./Town and available at: [www.lacdubonnet.com/mhac/heritagemgmt.pdf](http://www.lacdubonnet.com/mhac/heritagemgmt.pdf). We are the first Manitoba MHAC to have a web site. The total cost was \$500.00 and was done professionally by Granite Internet Services Inc. of Pinawa.

Gord Emberley

Marg Preston of the Movable Cultural Property Office of the Secretary of State jointly offered a session on “Appraising Archival Material for Tax Purposes.”

Two archivists from Manitoba, Garron Wells of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and Ken Reddig from the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies attended the 3 ½ week course offered by the National Archives of Canada. And which National Archives staff member was the director of The Archives Course? None other than Gordon Dodds who at that time was also the editor for *Achivaria*.

Next time: Familiar faces - the executive of the AMA and the issues they faced.

Elizabeth Blight



### Visit to the Martin H. Ainley Archives Centre

Calla Grabbish entertained colleagues Gloria Romaniuk, Janelle Reynolds, and Carole Barnabé, last month at the Martin H. Ainley Archives Centre located at St. John's Ravenscourt. Keep up the good WORK!

Carole Barnabé

### Oversize Storage Workshop

A group of 16 participants met at the Archives of Manitoba on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April to learn about oversize storage. Ala Rekrut led the group with suggestions for innovative and often cost efficient storage solutions. It was a very informative session, followed by a visit to the vaults. Thanks Ala!

## ABOUT ARCHIVAL STEREOTYPES: KAYE LAMB ON THE "NEW PROFESSION"

Kaye Lamb, fourth Dominion Archivist of Canada, 1948-1969, was very aware that a "new profession," in his words, was appearing in the mid-century years. In fact, he articulated its main outlines and then implemented these in practice more than anyone else in Canada, and perhaps second only (if that) to T.R. Schellenberg internationally.

"If records have changed with the years," Lamb observed, "so have archivists. We are all familiar with the archivist of old – who, incidentally, continues to live on, sometimes to an alarming degree, in the popular imagination: a gentle old soul, with a long white beard, who lived happily and harmlessly in the past..." Lamb loved to tell the story of a visiting Australian official who, coming to see Lamb as Provincial Archivist of British Columbia, brought "gifts made from a wide variety of beautiful Australian woods. These had been chosen with considerable care, in the hope that each would be appropriate for the occupation of the recipient. My gift – handled to me with obvious embarrassment – was a stout walking stick intended to support my declining years. I was thirty-one at the time, and the thought that an archivist might be young had clearly never crossed the statesman's mind."

In this incident, Lamb saw both the stereotype of the past and the portent of the future. Until his generation, an archival career, far from attracting dynamic young people, was seen as "a passive occupation. Archivists were primarily custodians; they looked after whatever manuscripts were placed in their care; they felt little obligation to add anything to the collections except items that chance and gift brought to their doorsteps. All this has changed," Lamb asserted, writing in the early 1960s. "The archivist now seeks to build up his collections, and to make them represent more fully the history of the parish, county, society or authority they represent; and beyond this if he is active and conscientious, he will endeavour to see that any documents of historical value, regardless of the subject or area to which they relate, are preserved and, if possible, deposited in a safe and suitable archival repository."

Yet the revolution in archives did not stop there, for "the greatest change is that most modern archivists must be prepared to pass judgement on records, including the sentence of life or death; they must be ready to pick and choose the items that should be kept, and to decide which items may be destroyed without serious historical loss. This is a grave responsibility – indeed, rather a frightening one – but we must face it and discharge it to the best of our ability. The old archivist, as we have seen, could dodge it in great part by the simple expedient of retaining everything. We, on the contrary, must pick and choose knowing that the decisions we make will in a measure – and frequently to a very great measure – shape history, since they will determine what documents will survive to provide source materials for historians in the years to come." That challenge meant "leaving far behind the peaceful but passive days of the antiquarian archivist" and fostering a "dynamic and developing profession," as Lamb implemented at the Public Archives of Canada, encompassing new media, new alliances with records managers, new types of researchers, and new functions for archivists. The "new profession" would of course have its own standards, terminology, and methodologies, but these Lamb saw as means for the new core of specialist archival scholarship. We are no longer hewers of wood and drawers of water, the modern archivist, especially through appraisal, would now consciously shape history by co-creating the archive. This was the heart of Kaye Lamb's revolutionary transformation of the Public Archives of Canada during his years, and through his work there of the wider archival profession in Canada.

Terry Cook  
Archival Studies Program  
University of Manitoba

## Info Bits...

### ArchiNews / ArchiNouvelles

is published by the Association for Manitoba Archives. Submissions, questions or comments should be directed to the Chair of the Information and Awareness Committee,  
Carole Barnabé

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### **Humidification & Box Making Workshop**

**June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005**

**St. John's Ravenscourt  
Places limited**

**Please contact AMA office**

### **CCA and AMA Initiative**

Participants of the Global Preservation Assessment Phase I & II met on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2005 to discuss a cooperative initiative in purchasing basic mop-up kits and monitoring equipment. Partial funding has been provided by the CCA. Sessions will soon be available on preservation issues. Details to come.

### **Oral History in Canada Conference University of Winnipeg**

**18-20 August, 2005**

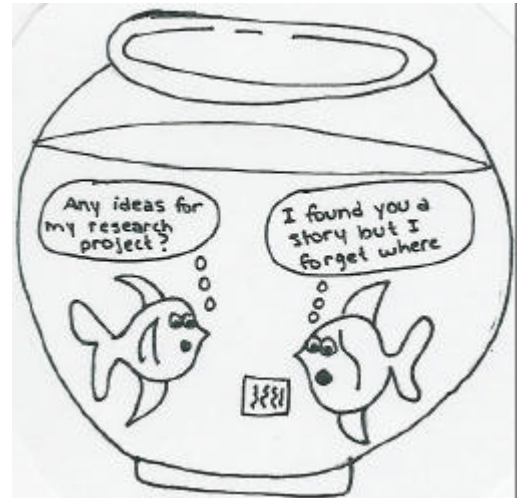
**For more information please contact**

**Dr. Alexander Freund  
786-9008**

### **Manitobia.ca**

**Go visit the new website to get a  
glimpse of Manitoba's rich history.**

**Why would a goldfish find archival  
research difficult?**



**Answer: A goldfish has a memory  
span of three seconds.**

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*A history teacher and his wife were sitting at a table, the wife asked "Anything new at work", and he replied", no, I am teaching History".*



### **Digital Projects Roundtable**

On May 12<sup>th</sup> 2005, 22 participants attended the Digital Projects Roundtable held at Saint-Boniface College. Thank you to all presenters who shared their expertise and experience in creating Web projects.