

ASSOCIATION FOR MANITOBA ARCHIVES

Protecting Manitoba's Documentary Legacy

Communique

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Member News

Archival Research Builds Bridges

Boissevain Community Archives and the Moncur Gallery of Native History have completed their two-year research project "Turtle Mountain Tales : the Council Stones", an ambitious marriage of archaeology, archival sources, first-person accounts, oral history and current interviews. The result according to the Federal Indian Claims Commission is the "first tendering by a non-Native municipality in Canada of evidence in support of a Native land claim."

The two year project is essentially a rewriting of the history of southern Manitoba from the viewpoint of Turtle Mountain with an emphasis on Native history. Unlike the archaeological approach which is largely a technological classification of artifacts, "The Council Stones" research proceeded from a starting point of cultural artifacts and oral history. Literally hundreds of first-person accounts and oral interviews were consulted, and cross-referenced, resulting in a composite local history which was sometimes at odds with the established historical and archaeological interpretations of the area.

Changes in Supreme Court

precedents over the last decade have significantly altered the nature of arguments over treaty law. This has opened the door for the admission of oral history as evidence. "The Council Stones" presents an argument that the Dakota people of Manitoba are Aboriginal within the meaning of Canadian law, which may eventually result in recognition of their Treaty Status. It also sheds a new light on the operation of the Mandan Trail from the mid-1600's to 1900, and on the role Native people themselves played in the peaceful settlement of Western Canada by non-Natives.

One of the unexpected benefits was identification of several photographs of the International Boundary Commission held by NAC and PAM. The locations of three different photographs all titled "Turtle Mountain Depot" have been established as having been taken in three widely separated spots. In one instance the identifications is within a few hundred feet.

The greatest surprise was corroboration of a Cree legend of a "Council of All Nations" associated with Turtle Mountain. We now know that the entity we have called the "Council of Seven Stones" was an international dispute mechanism for governing trade and war along the Mandan Trail. In association with this

discovery is another controversial theory that the 49th Parallel may in fact be the remnant of an ancient frontier between a large Algonquin federation and a Siouan federation. This and other related discoveries suggests that Native people played a much larger proactive role in the founding of Western Canada than has previously been credited.

As a community development the project included extensive consultation with representatives of the Dakota, Lakota, Cree and Ojibway nations; the Michif and Metis communities of Turtle Mountain, as well as the lore of the local Homestead Era families. Manitoba Historical Resources was supportive in lending archaeological time for the auditing of artifacts. The National Archives of Canada and Provincial Archives of Manitoba have been helpful in locating documents. Financial assistance for the oral history component was provided by Manitoba Heritage Council.

"The Council Stones" will hopefully be published sometime in 2001 and has already been cited as evidence before the Federal Indian Claims Commission in Ottawa by the Canupawakpa Dakota Nation. The Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Group and Sioux Valley Dakota Nation have launched their own oral history program

The ACA Annual Conference

Winnipeg ~ June 4 - 9, 2001

We Invite You to Come on a Journey...

What is an odyssey? A long journey during which the traveller must overcome obstacles....an intellectual quest. The development of archival theory and practice and of the archival profession in Canada has been an odyssey of sorts, with a long and rich history, its full share of obstacles to overcome, and a wealth of opportunities for professional, institutional, and intellectual growth.

The Association of Canadian Archivist Annual Conference 2001 brings an opportunity for archivists to explore the archival odyssey: from where we have been, and how we can bring the lessons of the past to the challenges of today, to where the technology of the 21st century is taking us, and how archivists can harness technology's potential to ensure the continued relevance of archives to our institutions and to Canadians.

For more information on the Conference Sessions; the ACA Institute and Pre-Conference Workshops; Conference Accommodations; and planned Social Events, please visit the ACA Web Site at : <http://aca.archives.ca> (click on the Annual Conference link).

collections. The AAO invites papers and/or proposals on any and all aspects of digitization.



We invite proposals at various stages of development, from conceptual to completely developed sessions with suggested speakers. If you have session proposals/papers, questions concerning the conference program, or are interested in serving on the Program Committee, please contact the 2001 Program Chair: Sharon Smith, 62 Hampton Ave., Ottawa K1Y 0N2 Phone: (613) 995-6654 E-mail: ssmith@archives.ca

Surfing the Web

If you want to learn more about albumen photographs, check out this web site: **Albumen photographs: history, science and preservation** <http://albumen.stanford.edu/>

The new web address for the **New York State Archives** is www.archives.nysed.gov.

The **UNESCO Archives Portal** website is http://www.unesco.org/cgi-bin/webworld/portal_archives.

If you are looking for national or regional colleagues a great source for contact information is the **Canadian Council on Archives** website: <http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/dir.html>



People

Lewis St. George Stubbs has joined the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections. He will be responsible for first line reference and special research projects.

Communiqué is published by the Association for Manitoba Archives. Submissions, questions or comments should be directed to the Editor, Carole Boily. Views expressed in *Communiqué* are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors of the AMA. Deadline for next issue 30 May 2001. Box 26005 Westminister P.O., Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4K9. Tel: 204 942-3491, Fax: 204 942-3492, e-mail: ama@pangea.ca, website: www.pangea.ca/~ama