



ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Year-in-review

Through 2024, the Archives focused on expanding the discoverability of our collections, encouraging public use in as many ways as possible. With grant and donor support, we brought more records and images online than ever, promoting user-friendly access both for those browsing remotely and those planning research trips. Staff and volunteers dug further into large amounts of material previously overlooked, forgotten, or underappreciated, discovering invaluable details to translate into greater knowledge of our collections. This work continues to be the backbone of our outreach efforts, focused in 2024 on encouraging the same kind of exploration from audiences of all ages. Throughout, the Archives' dedicated team maintained our inviting reputation through the provision of gaol tours, research assistance, collaborative efforts, and community appearances.

Collections

A significant triumph of 2024 was our successful completion of our “Enhancing Photograph Collection Access and Preservation,” funded by a major grant from the Documentary Heritage Communities Program (DHCP). Through this project, we were able to migrate over 14 000 photograph catalogue records into a more accessible database, improving standards and adding images along the way; improve housing and labelling for our entire collection of over 25 000 photographs; create custom housings for over two hundred albums, oversize photographs, and cased images; and, most publicly, launch a browsable, searchable online photo collection with over two thousand of those photographs available anywhere. Through 2024, our volunteer photo team has been happily working with the new database, and various staff members have continued to upload photographs to the online collection. Since the online collection launched in April 2024, the site has had more than 14 000 pageviews.

Across the collection, the main focus has been on improving our own understanding and descriptions of our holdings, ensuring we know what we have and enabling us to share those contents with a wider audience. Emphasis has been on significant overlooked or underprocessed fonds, many of which were those created by women. While increasing intellectual control is an ongoing effort, in 2024 our archivist Anna and archives intern Paige created 15 quality descriptive finding aids. Volunteer Mary Myers also catalogued over seventy rolled maps that lacked records.

The year also saw 48 new accessions, some of which were recent donations and others of which were ‘found in collection,’ donated long ago but never formally accessioned. Anna’s ongoing collections survey, which has covered 423 boxes since 2023, was crucial in identifying those in the latter category.

Notable donations included three decades’ worth of scrapbooks made by the IODE St. Stephen chapter; documents and photographs from the Flagg family of Grand Manan and St. Stephen; and 19th century deeds to land around Bartlett’s Mills. The newly established St. Andrews

Historical Society donated an extremely high quality facsimile of the 1760 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, presented to the Archives at their launch in October.

Visits

Our site was open for drop-in visits from Victoria Day to Thanksgiving, with visits by appointment at other times. We were regularly open five days a week, increasing to six in July and August.

Across 2024, we had a total of 2530 visitors to the Gaol and Archives, many of whom visited the Courthouse as well. This represented our highest visitation since 2019, despite reduced operating hours and fewer summer staff. July alone saw over 1000 visitors, the highest number for the month in at least eight years.

From data collected of visitors to our site, we can report that 35% of visitors were from New Brunswick; 13% were from Ontario, 11% from Quebec, and 13% from other Canadian provinces; 24% were from the United States; and 4% were international. Visitors included six bus tour groups, two groups from St. Andrews' kids summer day camp, four classes from Sir James Dunn Academy, and the local group of Cub Scouts.

Programming and outreach

Over the year, we held several public events. Reviving our Historic Home Movies series, we screened moving image material from our collection over seven Sundays from January to March at the NBCC St. Andrews, with 213 attendees total. In collaboration with Sunbury Shores Nature and Art Centre, in April the Archives offered a creative "Make your own 'vintage' photo album" workshop, thematically tied with Lisa Marie Boissonneau's art exhibition drawing from her family history. After further polishing of our outreach presentation about the Archives, Archives Manager Anna and Board Member Margo Emrich gave it a first public presentation at McAdam Station in May. A second public presentation was given in December in St. Andrews, drawing an audience of approximately 25 people.

As part of our education arm, Archives Manager Anna gave four classes of Sir James Dunn Academy students an onsite introduction to archives, later assisting many with research for their school Heritage Fair projects, for which she also served as a guest judge.

To boost our public presence, volunteers staffed Archives booths at the St. Andrews Canada Day celebrations and the Charlotte County Fall Fair in St. Stephen. The booths were enhanced by three new display boards featuring historic images from the collection, created by our summer students and intern. We also brought our 'pop-up jail' to the Huntsman's Halloween event for the third year in a row, accompanied by a spooky hooded figure with a scythe (Franklin Cardy) and the ghost bride of the Algonquin (Anna Krentz).

We circulated two well-received newsletters to our email list of 700 in Spring and Fall issues. Ahead of the summer, we also created and printed a series of five postcards, using images from the archival collection, for sale onsite and at our booths.

Research

Research enquiries were regular through the year, including 46 visits from researchers consulting our genealogical, microfilm, and/or archives, and over 40 further research enquiries received via phone or email. Researchers included genealogists; middle school students working on Heritage Fair projects; an academic studying Canadian women's quilting efforts during World War Two; a member of a research group working on a project regarding community-based ways to adapt to climate change in the Maritimes; and a local filmmaker researching photographs for use in a documentary on the Milltown Dam, in conjunction with community TV channel CHCO.

Audiovisual collection

For the last ten years, Franklin Cardy has been our one person video archive team. He has continued his work of gathering a unique collection of historic videos of general interest, and this year has been preparing some for screening and release online.

By the end of the year three new videos were completed: "Creating the Community Playground," on the planning and construction of the playground at Vincent Massey Elementary in St. Andrews in 1991-1993, filmed from beginning to end by Brian Dickson and others of Channel 10 (now CHCOtv); a 1996 interview with Elvira Berzins, a Latvian who came to St. Andrews after the war in 1952 and lived beyond age 95; and our own production from scratch about John Boyd, a Rolling Dam farmer in the 1870s who wrote a daily a journal which forms the basis for narration of this video. These videos are now publicly available on our Charlotte County Archives Youtube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@charlottecountyarchivesvid2520>

Work continues on two very detailed Hugh Graham videos about the old golf course which he walked around and described on video in October 1997 just before it closed. Two preliminary video interviews were also recorded with Ranby Medcof and Jeanie Stinson.

As our audiovisual collections manager, Franklin has built an extensive collection that is now accessible to the community. As he is currently retiring from this position, we are looking for a new volunteer willing to pick up the valuable work of preserving our moving history. We still have works in progress, some of which are awaiting family approval for release. Ten years' worth of accumulated formal and informal interviews await further processing, seeds with which to grow our collection of oral histories.

Supporters

As a non-profit, registered charitable organization, we greatly depend on our fundraising efforts in order for us to provide a successful archives service for the community. We would like to extend our appreciation with a very big THANK YOU to all **129 donors** who helped us surpass our 2024 Fall Fundraising goal of \$20,000. We faced the additional challenge of the postal strike which began just as we launched our fundraising campaign, and we would like to especially thank those who dropped off their donations in person or used alternate methods to ensure their donations were successfully received.

A special thank you goes to Dr. Mary Conley who continues to be a major supporter. In recognition of her ongoing support of our efforts, last summer an afternoon tea was held for her with the archives research room being named in her honour. We also thank the Kiwanis Club of St. Andrews who donated \$6500 in support of our educational programming and Lutz Parrish Gerrish Barristers and Solicitors for their generous donation of \$7500 from their annual charity wills event. Thank you, as well, to the Town of McAdam for their donation in support of the archival service that we provide to the region. Thank you, finally, to the Town of Saint Andrews for serving as a generous and conscientious landlord for our home in the Old Gaol facility.

Volunteers

Our volunteers provide valuable support to the success of our organization. Two valued Board members retired in May 2024. With his extensive knowledge of the history of St. Andrews, Jeff Holmes made many major contributions to the success of the initiatives of the board. Heather Richmond was a strong contributor to the educational programming activities developed and are available to the community on our website.

A special thank you to Robin Burton, who had been critical as our unofficial office manager and bookkeeper for many years. A past board member, in the last several years Robin has worked tirelessly behind the scenes, keeping our office in line, managing our finances, spearheading our fundraising campaigns, and bringing a great deal of patience to the training of our Archives Manager in basic bookkeeping.

In 2024, we welcomed three new board members: John McGarry, who brings a strong background in financial and public service management; Bruce Thompson, Manager of Visitor Services at the Roosevelt Campobello International Park, with a long-standing interest in New Brunswick heritage and a career in the museum field; and Chris Costello, who brings his enthusiastic dedication to sharing, supporting, and celebrating the rich history of St. Andrews.

Felicity Cooper, a.k.a. “Miss Demeanor”, continued to play a strong role in publicizing and supporting our Archives through her Ghost Walks, half the proceeds of which she generously donated to the Archives. Felicity also oversees external paranormal investigations that sometimes occur at the Old Gaol.

We continue to have our weekly volunteer “photo ladies” join us as they work their way through the cataloguing and digitization of thousands of archives photos. Many thanks to Irene Scarratt, Donna Walsh and Vicki Smith whose work has been invaluable. Thank you also to volunteers Mary Myers, Mike Marlatt, Gary Swim, and Heather Richmond for giving their time in various ways.

Board Members 2024 – 2025

Name	Role	Elected
Sandi Omson	Chair	June 2022
Joan Schwartz	Vice Chair	May 2024
John McGarry	Treasurer	May 2024
Margo Emrich	Secretary	June 2021
Franklin Cardy	Past Chair	May 2017
Carmelita Thompson O'Neill	Member-at-large	June 2022
Susan Waddy	Member-at-large	June 2022
Doug Naish	Member-at-large	May 2023
Taylor Gallant	McAdam representative	May 2024
Bruce Thompson	Campobello representative	May 2024
Chris Costello	Fundraising	May 2024

Staff

Our archivist and Archives Manager, Anna Krentz, has now been with us in a full-time position for two and a half years. In 2024, she joined the Board of Directors of the Council of Archives New Brunswick as a member-at-large.

Through the year, six different contract staff worked alongside Anna for various durations. Early 2024 saw the last few weeks of our DHCP contract staff, Erika Baker and D'Arcy White, who were key in organizing, rehousing, migrating, and cataloguing a huge portion of our photo collection.

Over our summer opening season, we had two students welcoming visitors, offering tours, maintaining the facility, and engaging in helpful archival tasks. Sarah Burbine, of Bayside, who returned for a second season before starting her first year of university, worked for nine weeks under a Young Canada Works in Heritage Organizations grant. Anjali Singh, of St. Andrews, worked for fourteen weeks under Canada Summer Jobs and New Brunswick Community Museum Summer Employment Program funding before returning to university for her third year. For the six weeks from September to Thanksgiving, we welcomed back Victoria Butler-Bryant, a past summer student, to offer tours to shoulder season visitors and assist in operations.

Thanks to funding from Young Canada Works Building Careers in Heritage, we were able to offer a six-month paid internship, started in September by Paige Arden, an MA graduate from British Columbia. Focusing on overlooked materials of women's history, Paige undertook intensive, hands-on training from archivist Anna before processing and re-processing numerous fonds and collections in our holdings that were created by or focused on women.

Grants

Federal and provincial grants enabled us to hire contract staff, through funding from Young Canada Works, Canada Summer Jobs, and the New Brunswick Community Museums Summer Assistance program, detailed above. We also received financial support for operations from the New Brunswick Community Museum Assistance Program (\$4000), and a grant from the Council of Archives New Brunswick to facilitate Anna's improvement of processing standards for our Elinor and Colin Mawson fonds (\$4000). 2024 also saw us successfully complete our major photograph preservation and access project funded by the Documentary Heritage Communities Program, started in 2023 (\$17 388). The Town of Saint Andrews granted \$4000 towards the provision of summer tourism.

Next steps

In the year ahead, we aim to connect with new audiences in communities across Southwest New Brunswick. Through a variety of creative programming, we hope to encourage wider engagement with our mission and collections. We intend to build on existing collaborations with other heritage and cultural organizations across the region towards our shared goals. Maintaining our current momentum, we will continue to facilitate increased public access to collections contents, while enhancing our own understanding of them. We will especially encourage appreciation and use of the Archives by young people, whether in school or working alongside our professional staff.

In December 2025, the Charlotte County Archives will mark fifty years since its founding. This year is thus an opportunity to celebrate our endurance and successes, as well as reflect on our journey as we equip ourselves for the next fifty.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Krentz
Archives Manager

Sandi Omson
Board Chair

Charlotte County Archives
April 2025