



Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island – July 2007

Diocesan Archives Newsletter

Update since Feb. 2005:

Your Diocesan Archives has been growing in both volume and activity from 2005 to 2007. Aside from regular work on the collection, we have provided research materials and a database of parish histories in support of 2010 planning, trained students and volunteers, and provided more informational materials to the parishes.

Due to the development of the Diocesan website, more involvement in archivists' networking, and more information flow, we have received a greater number of deposits than in previous years and the pace of research enquiries has steadily increased.

However, our work and storage space has not increased and may not do so until 2009. We have submitted a plan and source material for designing the new Archives space, to be considered when the time for "Phase II" property redevelopment comes about.

Although the Archivist's time in the Archives was increased somewhat in 2007, it was not sufficient to advance the extra work necessary to prepare the collection to move it safely to a new space within this timeframe.

Vision for 2008-09: In the next two years the Archives resolves to help prepare for our 2010 Anniversary celebration, to achieve intellectual control of the backlog of deposits, and to apply conservation treatment and preservation housing to the entire collection, as much as time, space and funding allow. To do this the Archivist will have to be available to administrate grant projects, supervise research and train volunteers, as well as complete the specialized work on the collection. Recent deposits may remain inaccessible and services may slow down until this is done.

Archives Policy Changes:

In 2005 the Archives' Access Policies were revised to address concerns for protection of privacy of personal identifying information

contained in church records, and also to meet the demand for genealogical enquiries without endangering our original church records from over-handling.

This **Revision No. 5.2** was approved at Diocesan Council in April 2005 and distributed to the parishes. We have received many questions from clergy and parish wardens about how the Archives Policies could affect their responses to enquiries for information contained in parish records.

To be able to redirect genealogical enquiries, we have seen that it would be advantageous to have copies of microfilm in more institutions, one in each region, as long as their access and photocopying procedures comply with our policies. **Revision No. 5.3** simply adds this condition to the purchase of microfilm reels of Anglican church records by other institutions.

The Diocesan Archives now refers genealogical enquiries to the appropriate microfilm facility, and handles only parish business enquiries (property, baptismal, marriage certificates, etc.) directly from the originals deposited to our custody. We do not issue to the public any photocopies of personal identifying information contained in sacramental records dated within the last 100 years, unless identification or family permission is submitted.

We recommend that original registers still held *in the parishes* be protected from public access in the same manner. Current information about microfilm for your parish and region can be easily obtained by contacting the

Diocesan Archivist, Lorraine Slopek at:

Diocesan Archives, 5732 College Street, Halifax,
NS B3H 1X3. or by

Phone (902) 420-0717 Ext. 231

EMAIL: archives@nspeidiocese.ca

Genealogical enquiries may be referred to our **Diocesan Genealogical researcher:**

Taunya Dawson: tdawson@ns.sympatico.ca

Microfilming Parish Records:

In 2006 we had 33 deposited and loaned registers microfilmed by the Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) as part of a cooperative project of the Council of Nova Scotia Archives and NSARM. We will apply to have more parish records microfilmed in the fall of 2007.

Preservation grants: We have also qualified for grants from Library and Archives Canada's National Archival Development Program (LAC/NADP) through the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) each year for our own preservation projects: In 2005-06 we enclosed, arranged, indexed and labelled about 2500 of the 4,000 photographic prints in our collection. In 2006-07 we applied repair and conservation treatment to 46 parish registers and 830 documents (pre-1900). Each of these grants was \$1,500 for archival supplies, matched with \$2,000 to \$3,000 from the Archives budget in wages for an assistant hired to do the project work.

With these projects, we are gradually getting closer to our goal to have the entire collection preserved, stabilized and arranged before it is time to move to a temporary location and back again to a new archives space. The moving itself must be done carefully and could take six months to a year to orchestrate.

This preparation is essential for two reasons: to prevent damage, loss and disarrangement of the records by the movement, and to prevent interruption of retrieval services during the moves.

Preservation is ongoing regular work in any archives and as new records come in continually, it is never completely "finished". These grant projects have targeted the oldest and most fragile records first, and will move up each year in record age and conservation needs, leaving the strongest to the last.

Preservation in the Parishes:

Although time ran short at Synod 2006 for us, in December we presented to Diocesan Council our PowerPoint show about the Archives and its work, encouraging preservation at the "point of creation" in the parishes, which has met with an enthusiastic response. This simple but informative show can answer many of your questions. It is available in

MSPowerPoint and in Text/PDF formats on the Diocesan Website: www.nspeidiocese.ca under "**Archives**" and is entitled:



The Diocesan Archives; Everything you always wanted to know, but were afraid to ask!

Latest Developments:

As a short-term solution to the space problem, we have moved groups of records, mostly recent Synod Office records, to the off-site storage facility. **All parish records are still kept on site at the Diocesan Centre space.**

We have rearranged the furniture for the grant work and training. In 2007 the Archivist's time in the Archives has been increased by 8 hours per week, enabled by an anonymous donation to the salary budget.

At the same time, more parishes have found it necessary to deposit their records to us for safekeeping, which, for many reasons, they can no longer provide. *All original parish records have intrinsic historical value and must still be preserved, whether they have been microfilmed or not.*

Disaster recovery: Recently, we have recovered three deposits of records that were either in a mildewed or actively mouldy condition, all caused by dampness or water seepage onto records stored below ground level and left over a period of time inside their vaults undetected. These deposits required both immediate and long-term conservation treatment; some were sent to a disaster recovery facility, which has been costly to the parish and to the Archives, but this case is a graphic illustration of why **it costs more to recover a disaster than to prevent it.**

For this reason we have added to the Archives Acquisition policy a procedural guideline, **Revision 5.4**, for the temporary deposit of damaged records that may require immediate restorative conservation treatment offsite before adding to our collection.



Also on the Diocesan Website:

Parish Records -- Storage, Care and Handling
Disaster Prevention and Preparedness
The Dangers of Water (Synod 2005)
Managing Parish Records
Preservation at the "Point of Creation"
Archives Policies, Rev. 5.4, June 14, 2007

These have been distributed to all parishes but we can mail printed copies to anyone upon request.

~ Diocesan Archives Committee ~
