

Friends of the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan 2020 Annual Report

NOTE: all e-mail and web addresses are active hyperlinks
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Archives Week 2020

The Regina event highlighted the topic of film and video archival preservation.

Discussion related to the technological difficulties resulting from the rapid technical advancement of video formats and the need to have a way to provide access to those now obsolete technologies.

Film also deteriorates with age and the equipment for film projection is rapidly becoming difficult to service.

These obstacles will create many difficulties for archival preservation of photographic media.

A selection of archival film clips, from Archives and the University of Regina included clips from the Provincial Health Department, Sask. Arts Board, the Premier's Office and the noted artists known as "The Regina 5".

Minds Eye Entertainment discussed their donation of film production and video equipment to Archives. An extended video clip from "The Englishman's Boy" was also presented illustrating the quality of production in Saskatchewan.



Archival Film and Video, and its Preservation

Regina Public Library Film Theatre, Central Branch, 2311 - 12th Ave.
Tuesday Feb. 4th, 6:30 pm – 8:00pm

Film from the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan and University of Regina Archives including:
"The Englishman's Boy" from Minds Eye Entertainment Inc., "Chasing the Cure" from Donna Caruso and
"A World Away: Stories from the Regina 5" from Mark Whak.

FREE ADMISSION.

Presented by members of the Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists.



Photos from the Archival Film & Video Presentation Regina Public Library

Feb.4, 2020



Jeremy Mohr



Tim Novak



Donald Johnson



Mark Wihak



Kevin DeWalt



Provincial Health Department



"The Englishman's Boy" Minds Eye Ent.



"Prairie Giant" Minds Eye Ent.



"The Regina 5"- U of R

Did You know?

Do you recognize the Saskatchewan based film-maker on the “Saskatchewan on Screen” poster?

Answer

Dick Bird was the Saskatchewan based cameraman/filmmaker who made pioneering documentaries beginning in the 1920s and continuing filming until the 1970s.



PAS Photo R-A5102)
“Dick Bird (center) and Ted Nix (?)”

Dick Bird, officially named William Henry Bird, was born in 1892 in Warwickshire, England. Settling in Saskatchewan in 1921 he acquired the nickname Dick from the common phrase “look at the Dickie Bird” used by some photographers. Fascinated by still photography and cinematography from an early age, Bird would go on to shoot newsreels for a variety of companies, traveling to many exotic locales.

Later, as an official filmmaker for the Saskatchewan Government he shot footage of local events such as the opening of Regina’s Albert Street Memorial Bridge and the 1935 Regina Riot.

In 1928 he opened Bird Films in Regina which is still in operation today. Shortly after in the 1930s he became interested in nature photography, parlaying this interest into ventures such as a local radio program and a self-published magazine and eventually working as a photographer for Walt Disney Productions in the 1950s.

Dick and his wife Ada spent many days camping out in remote areas of Saskatchewan and other localities waiting to document on film animals and birds and various aspects of nature. Often they would return to the same spot year after year to complete the story. During their lifetime of film making their journeys took them to 66 countries worldwide.

He became an expert in his field and was involved in the academic world by lecturing at institutions like Harvard University, the Smithsonian Institute, and the National Geographic Society as well as holding prestigious memberships in organizations such as The Canadian Press Photographer’s Association, the Photographic Society of America, and the Zoological Society of London.



1892-1986

2020

Membership

The 2020 membership hovers around 400 (plus).
Saskatchewan 206
Outside Saskatchewan. 209

Some of the new members initially contacted the Friends in order to find out how they can donate records to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. We have one additional member in Saskatchewan who wants to receive posts about heritage buildings.

Administration

Structure

The informal organizational structure for the Friends appears to be working well and will continue as such for the foreseeable future. Bill Armstrong, corresponding under the pseudonym of “Interim Gopher”, remained the de-facto Chair of the Friends of the PAS.

Friends Meetings

Starting in 2020 meetings were to be held at the new Provincial Archives location at 2440 Broad Street in Regina. However, the covid 19 virus put a stop to in person meetings. Archives staff took on the challenge to arrange for virtual audio (phone) meetings. The two meetings via the phone worked smoothly and the agenda items were covered. The April 2021 meeting maybe either in person or by phone, time will tell.

Friends Website

Information relating to Friends’ activities can be found on the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan website. On the Home page, click on:”About the Archives”, then select: “Friends of the Provincial Archives”, or click directly on the following link:
<https://www.saskarchives.com/about-archives/friends-archives>

Achievements

Correspondence

The Interim Gopher, Bill Armstrong, had a very busy year corresponding with members and responding to public inquiries. Over 90 e-mails found their way into members e-mail boxes.

Bill offers up this list that the gopher conjured up from his faulty mind, augmented by a quick burrow through email exchanges during 2020.

- family histories, particularly examples of marvelous photos, maps and stories from Friend Murray Galbraith
- individual histories, including several people who served in WWI, who either had settled in Saskatchewan a few years before the war began, or looked for opportunities here after the war
- immigrant stories from many points of the compass
- members sharing bits about their ancestral roots
- Home Children and War Guests
- chasing down place names, such as the search for Richter, ultimately resolved by Friend Ralph Watzke who tracked down Richlea
- the origins of the Old Age Pension in Canada
- the successful conclusion of friend Frank Korve-maker’s search for an unidentified armoury building
- mention of Smithfield, a home restoration project undertaken by Friend Rick Krehbiel
- a review of a book about the history of the Caron Air Base during World War II, as an example of the value of one person’s diary, augmented by other archival materials
- the Chief Archivist’s explanation of the Archive’s new, improved background operating system, as translated by the gopher

- some historical material about the Spanish Flu, with some photos

- Archives Week 2020, which was a lower-key affair than usual, not because of Covid, but due to the Archives folks preparing for the Big Move

Bill, on behalf of all the FOPAS members, thank you for your outstanding effort in communicating topics of interest.

Volunteer Work

The Regina Photo Project that started in 2012, has helped the Provincial Archives to upgrade the textual information documented in the photographic collection. Friends systematically review the photos to identify discrepancies in the data entered into the PAS's database, and subsequently made available to researchers on the Archives' website.

In 2020 the volunteers were restricted due to virus regulations and as a result did not get as many hours reviewing the files. However they did manage to review 3600 envelopes between January and March..

Archives has announced that two new volunteers have been trained and that two more people have offered to take training. We possibly could have a total of six persons working on the photo project once the virus restriction are reduced.

The 2020 FOPASK Annual Report has been compiled and typeset by Allan Tidball.

Archives News

Late 2020 - early 2021

Public health restrictions have changed the way we access the Archives. Chief Archivist Linda McIntyre has some suggestions noted below.

- Activities at the Provincial Archives are summarized on the News and Events page of our website <https://www.saskarchives.com/news-and-events> .

- If you haven't been to the new location and wish to have a preview, check out the PAS virtual tour on our YouTube channel.

- Of particular interest, is the "Winter Sports in Saskatchewan" virtual exhibit

<https://saskarchives.com/collections/exhibits/winter-sports>, which is also on display in the Archives Gallery if you happen to be at the Public Reading Room.

- Events throughout the province are described on the Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists website

<https://www.scaa.sk.ca/public-awareness/archives-week/>

During 2020 the Archives launched a new online catalogue. This archival catalogue uses Access to Memory (AtoM) open-source software, allowing the Archives to easily share information with the public and with many other provincial and national archival catalogues.

Researchers can search over 900,000 descriptions of records from the Permanent Collection of the Provincial Archives. The catalogue also provides online access to more than 300,000 digitized original archival records, primarily photographs and textual records. New content is added as records are processed and digital projects are completed.

To search the new AtoM catalogue, visit <https://search.saskarchives.com/>

To learn more about the historical records in the Archives' Permanent Collection, visit www.saskarchives.com. People interested in doing in-person research in the Reference Room will also find directions on that page on how to book a time.

The Archives also issued a Strategic Plan for 2020 through 2023. View it here : <https://www.saskarchives.com/about-archives/strategic-plan>

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