

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA
ACQUISITION POLICY

APPROVED BY:

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Director and Provincial Archivist

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Purpose:

This document is designed to articulate the acquisition policy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta in the context of both its legislated and traditional mandates.

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The Provincial Archives of Alberta operates according to the *Historical Resources Act* which provides for “the operation, maintenance, and development of the Provincial Archives of Alberta,” as well as for “the acquisition, preservation, publication and public exhibition of documents, parchments, manuscripts, records, books, maps, plans, photographs, magnetic tapes, or other materials regardless of physical form, the preservation of which is in the public’s interest.” The Provincial Archives of Alberta, also has responsibilities under the jurisdiction of the *Government Organization Act* which provides for archival appraisals as part of the records management process within the Government of Alberta.

Role and Mission:

The Provincial Archives of Alberta was formally established in 1963, however, it’s function in a formal sense dates back to 1908 with the establishment of the Bureau of Archives. Historian Katherine Hughes was, at that time, appointed Alberta’s first Provincial Archivist. Dating back to 1925, with the introduction of the *Preservation of Public Documents Act*, the Provincial Archives has always had a role in the preservation of government records. From 1925 through 1963, all archival materials were maintained by the Legislative Library. In 1965, a Provincial Archivist was appointed and in 1967, as part of Canada’s centennial celebrations, a new Provincial Archives building was constructed. The mission of the Provincial Archives of Alberta today is to preserve the collective memory of Alberta, and to contribute to the protection of Albertans’ rights and the sense of the Alberta identity. The Provincial Archives of Alberta acquires, preserves and makes available for research private and public records of provincial significance. The Provincial Archives also serves as the permanent repository of records of enduring value of the Government of Alberta.

Policy:

The Provincial Archives of Alberta is responsible for the safekeeping of the records of enduring value of the Government of Alberta as well as those records considered to be of historical and cultural significance to the people of Alberta.

Scope and Mandate:

According to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, a “records” means “ a record of information in any form and includes books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers, and papers, and other information that is written, photographed, recorded, or stored in any manner, but does not include software or any mechanism that produces records.”

Government Records:

The Provincial Archives of Alberta is the official repository for those records of the Government of Alberta, its corporations, agencies, boards and commissions, and courts, which are considered to be of enduring value to the institutions and citizens of the Province. The Provincial Archives is a part of the government-wide records management program. Records are transferred for final retention to the Provincial Archives after undergoing an appraisal by one of the government section archivists and final approval by the Alberta Records Management Committee.

Private Records:

The Provincial Archives of Alberta may acquire by gift, gift to tax credit, bequest, loan, trade, or purchase any record, regardless of physical form or characteristic, which has any bearing on the history of Alberta through negotiation with the persons giving, bequeathing, lending, or selling the records. Acquisitions from these sources are approved by the Provincial Archivist on recommendation of the Private Records Section.

Limitation of Scope:

Notwithstanding intrinsic, informational, or historic values of records, the Provincial Archives of Alberta will acquire records, taking into consideration the following.

- the authorized mandates of other archival institutions;
- the ability of a locale to keep its records in a suitable repository open for the public access, i.e. if records are to be acquired from a certain locale, efforts will be made to the extent possible to leave either a copy in the locale or for the Provincial Archives to accept copies while leaving the original in the locale;
- the resources required to make the material available for research purposes in a reasonable period of time;
- the extent and terms of any restrictions, the legal rights and/or requests of the donor to place the records of the Archives;
- the records' relationship to the strengths and weaknesses in the existing holdings;
- the availability of appropriate storage facilities and the physical condition of the records in relation to the probability of being able to conserve them for a reasonable period of time;

Broad year-by-year acquisition priorities will be articulated in the Provincial Archives Strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities:Provincial Archivist

The Provincial Archivist approves acquisition policies, priorities, and practices, and, at the request of the Minister, Government Services, sits on the Alberta Records Management Committee.

Management Committee

The Provincial Archivist, the Manager, Government Records, and Preservation Services, and the Manager, Private Records, and Access Services, and the Office Administrator comprise the Management Committee. The Committee may invite outside members at any time, but these members do not form part of the common decision-by-consensus process.

All de-accessioning proposals will also be brought forward to the Committee, and decisions will reflect the Departmental Deaccessioning Policy as signed by the Minister of Community Development on March 19, 1996.

The Committee may also review and approve strategic acquisition plans or proposals for significant deviations from existing plans.

Conflict of Interest:

Staff members and all others associated with the work of the Provincial Archives of Alberta will not formally, through trade or purchase for their own personal use, enjoyment, or profit, collect for their personal benefit archival materials which fall within the broad acquisition mandate of the Provincial Archives. Staff and others wishing to collect such archival materials will require the written permission of the Provincial Archivist **before** proceeding with any personal collecting.

For more information, first see *The Government of Alberta, Personnel Policies and Procedures, Code of Conduct and Ethics*, and then the *Code of Ethics of the Association of Canadian Archivists*.

Availability of Acquisition Policy:

Copies of this acquisition policy will be made routinely available to staff, Provincial Archives volunteers, the Archives Society of Alberta, and, on request, to other interested organizations and individuals.