

turf of economics. More objectionable was a paper read by Henry Zentner of Calgary's Educational Administration Department, which wandered off its own topic. As revealed by its title, the paper promised a critique of the "from the bottom up" approach to writing history; in fact, it offered an involved presentation of Indian conceptions of reality. The choice of lead speaker for the Conference was also unfortunate. Heather Robertson, in a paper titled "Prairie Feudalism—Homesteaders in the 1970's", gave a repeat performance of the shallow, patronizing "analysis" of rural communities which first appeared in her book, *Grass Roots*.

The duet by Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles of York University, entitled "Competition vs. Convenience: Federal Administration of the Bow River Waterpowers, 1906-1913", was one of the more economics-oriented papers but also one of the most interesting, both in content and in presentation. Also of note was a paper by Michael Bliss, "The Ideology of Domination", which dissected the impressions of the west of Sir Joseph Flavelle, one of those "Eastern big-shots" the West so loves to hate. Sheilagh Jameson, Archivist for the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, was the guest speaker at the banquet, at which she described "The Changing Role of Women in the Alberta Ranching Community".

Next year's Conference theme has already been set: a retrospective look at the Plains Indians over the century since Treaties Six and Seven were signed.

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## **FOCUS: Archives of the Canadian Rockies<sup>1</sup>**

The Archives of the Canadian Rockies had its genesis in the early 1950s with the decision of Mr and Mrs Peter Whyte, well known local artists and members of a pioneer Banff family, to attempt to preserve some of the cultural heritage of the Canadian Rockies. Their activities eventually resulted in the financing of a private organization, first known as the Wa-Che-Yo-Cha-Pa Foundation and later becoming the Peter Whyte Foundation. The initial objective of the foundation was the construction and maintenance of a building to further the Whytes' ideal.

1 E.J. Hart's submission on the Archives of the Canadian Rockies is the first of a series of articles on Canadian archival repositories. Because of the number of archives in Canada and the enormous distances separating these repositories, the editors of *Archivaria* believe that a part of the journal should be devoted to publicizing and describing some of the lesser known institutions, hence "Focus: ?". Submissions not exceeding 2,500 words are welcomed and should be addressed to the General Editor, *Archivaria*, c/o Public Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N3.

The facility was designed by Philippe Delasalle, an architect known for his ability to express his great feeling for the mountains through his work. He relied heavily on the use of wood and native stone for finishing materials with the idea of incorporating the building as much as possible into its natural environs. Situated on the bank of the Bow River in Banff, the building seems a part of the surrounding forests and mountains. The widely acclaimed completed structure with its three constituent parts, the Archives of the Canadian Rockies, the Peter Whyte Gallery and the Banff Library, was officially opened on 16 June 1968 and since that time has been open to the general public 364 days a year. Located in the heart of a world-famous tourist area, it has always been an extremely busy place, welcoming about 67,000 visitors in 1975 alone.

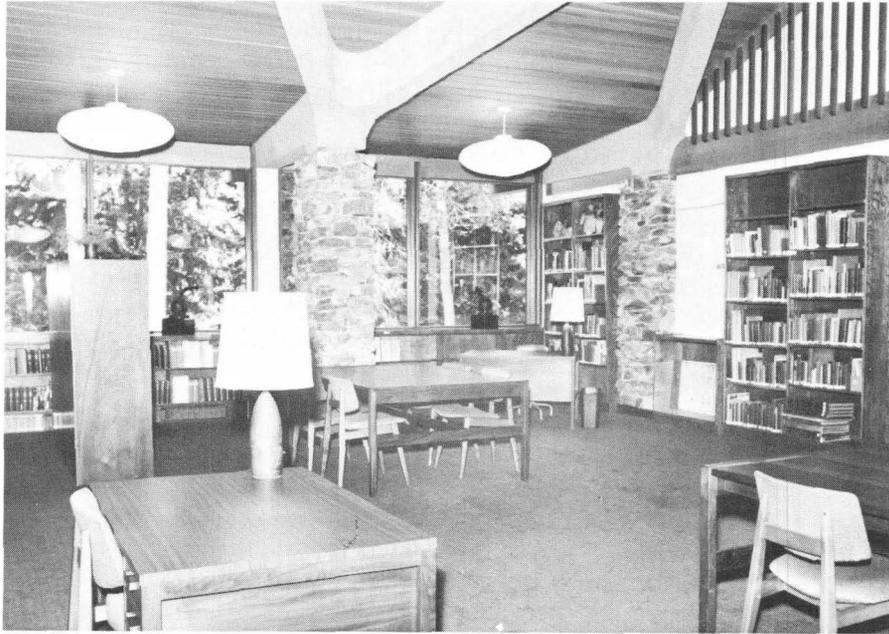
The Archives of the Canadian Rockies occupies approximately one-third of the building's total area of 15,000 square feet. The main floor consists of a pleasant reference area which also serves to house the libraries of both the Archives and the Alpine Club of Canada. Temperature and humidity controlled storage areas for the archival collection adjoin the reference room on one side and the work and office space on the other. There is also additional office and work space as well as storage for the art collection on the lower floor.

The reason for the establishment of the Archives arose from a feeling that the mountains of Western Canada form a geographical, historical and



*Archives of the Canadian Rockies*

Photograph by Heather Maddick. Archives of the Canadian Rockies PA 243-1



*Research Area*

Photograph by Ron Duke. Archives of the Canadian Rockies NA 33

natural area within this country with a unique character and therefore worthy of intensive preservation. The collecting policy of the institution tends to reflect this feeling rather well.

With a few exceptions the geographic limits on the material collected extend from the foothills in the east to the Selkirk Ranges in the west, and from the International Boundary in the south to the Peace River in the north. Exceptions to this occur basically in two fields of interest which the Archives feels deserve special attention because no other institutions appear to be collecting specifically or adequately in them. They are mountaineering and mountain exploration, and parks policy and planning. In both cases the Archives collects as far afield as is necessary.

While the content of the collection is restricted essentially to the aforementioned geographic limits, the actual physical job of collecting often extends beyond this boundary. One of the most fascinating features of the mountains is the great diversity of people who have played a role in their story and the fact that these participants have come from a wide range of locales. For example, information on the work of early tourist-explorers and scientists has been found in various parts of the United States and Great Britain. The Archives has always made a special effort to trace and keep in

touch with those holding relevant collections and has been successful in "repatriating" some of them. At the same time, the closest possible relationship is maintained with the local population and organizations who remain the primary sources of material. One extremely successful innovation, which combines collecting with public relations, has been the annual celebration of a "Back to Banff Day" wherein both former and present-day residents of the mountain region are invited to come to the Archives to meet and visit old friends, and to bring photographs, books, papers, and other items for the collection at the same time.

Given the relative youth of the Archives and the geographic limits of its collecting jurisdiction, it is not surprising that the collection itself is rather small in comparison with that of major archival institutions. However, this has some obvious advantages, the foremost being that the material in hand has been well arranged, inventoried and indexed and is readily accessible to the interested researcher. To simplify access the staff has, over a two-year period, painstakingly developed a subject authority listing of particular relevance to the type of information in the collection and which will serve as the basis for a completely integrated catalogue system.

The collection is made up of the following components:

- Library, which contains 2,450 volumes and 700 pamphlets relative to the history, geography, and physical and natural sciences of the region. An intensive effort is made to keep track of all research being done on relevant subject matter in order to obtain any publications, theses, reports, etc. that may be of interest.
- Manuscripts, which includes some 90 linear feet of material in 367 individual collections and consists of personal and business papers, literary manuscripts and the records of various clubs, organizations and official bodies. It is completely indexed.
- Photographs, which consists of more than 15,000 photographs, 250 albums and numerous oversize photos, tintypes, slides and films as well as an extensive negative collection. The photographs are now almost completely indexed.
- Maps, which total 1,364 items including a complete collection of the National Topographic Series for mountain areas, thematic maps, manuscript maps and others.
- Oral history, which includes 235 hours of taped interviews with more than 100 informants.
- Art and Artifacts, which houses approximately 600 mountain-related paintings, drawings, etchings, sculptures, and bronzes. The artifact collection includes numerous individual items of historic importance.

In addition to its own collection, the Archives acts as the custodian of the library and archives of the Alpine Club of Canada. This collection is

oriented toward mountaineering and related topics throughout the world and is one of the most extensive of its type on the North American continent. The library consists of 1,823 volumes and 250 pamphlets, as well as virtually complete editions of the journals of mountaineering clubs from around the world. Its archives contains 65 linear feet of material, mostly official club records.

A wide variety of researchers use both the Archives' and Alpine Club's collections. They include tourists seeking some historical and physical background on the area they are visiting, university students doing term papers, reports or thesis work on some aspect of the mountains, professional writers, historians and scientists, and mountaineers planning expeditions in the world's great ranges. Increasingly over the past few years the Archives has been handling local school classes, attempting to make students of all ages aware of the materials which exist to inform them about the area they inhabit. Likewise, the Archives has recently been cooperating closely with Parks Canada personnel in their research on land use and planning and with various television and film companies in providing information and visual material for their productions. During 1975 the Archives handled over 500 research queries with approximately three-quarters coming from visitors to the facility and the remainder by way of telephone or letter.

The Archives is fortunate to have a very capable and fairly large staff in relation to the size of the collection. It includes: Maryalice H. Stewart, Director of the Archives as well as the Foundation as a whole; E.J. Hart, Archivist with particular responsibility for the manuscript and map collections; Mary Andrews, Archives Librarian; Betty Beattie, Archives Assistant responsible for the reference room, accessioning and conservation; Carol Warnock, Archives Assistant responsible for the photographic collection; Karin MacAulay, Secretary to the Director with additional responsibility for the tape recordings; and Helen Dickson, Library Secretary and responsible for copying. In order to encourage more familiarity with the collection the task of handling researchers and queries is rotated among various members of the Archives staff.

Like most institutions, while the Archives is satisfied with what has been accomplished to date it looks to further developments. Among these are the completion of its cataloguing system, a guide to collections, a newsletter reporting on its activities, better conservation activities and facilities and, of course, a continuing increase in research use.

E. J. Hart  
Archives of the Canadian Rockies