

Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta Library & Archives

Policies & Procedures

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I. Mandate/Governance

The Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta's (MHSA) mandate is to *collect, preserve, provide access to* and *advance* interest in the history of Mennonites in Alberta. Many of the MHSA Library & Archives (L & A) policies are focused on the preservation and provision of access to aspects of this mandate.

The MHSA Constitution, approved by the MHSA Board on 19 August 2000 stated that:

"The purpose of Mennonite Historical Society (MHSA) is to:

- **collect, preserve, catalogue, store**, and exhibit articles and documents of historical value relating to the Mennonites in the Province of Alberta.
- **foster research, analysis, and publication** of essays, dissertations, books, family histories, and more on various aspects of the Mennonite experience.
- **assist, and encourage** Mennonite churches to collect and preserve their own records as they pertain to minutes of meetings, and chronicle special events.
- **encourage the expression of the Mennonite experience** in various areas such as literature, drama, history, fine arts, music, sociology, religion, and to foster interdisciplinary discussions.
- **foster and promote public understanding of Mennonite history** through lectures and provision of resources for schools and other organizations.
- **foster** inter-Mennonite unity and understanding.
- **provide access to archival materials** through personal contact, or through the MHSA web site." (emphasis mine)

In addition, the MHSA Bylaws, also approved by the MHSA Board on 19 August 2000 provides a succinct summary of the purpose of the L & A:

"A function of the Society shall be to search for and collect materials in this jurisdiction. It will further provide for the preservation of such materials and, as far as feasible, for accessibility to them for all who are interested. The Society will encourage and assist Mennonites in Alberta, where possible, to preserve, explore, research, write, and enjoy history."

All materials donated to the MHSA, the right to copy from the materials, and the right to publish them, become the property of the MHSA Library and Archives unless an accession document states otherwise and is signed by a representative of the donor and a member of the MHSA. By motion at the Annual General Meeting in May 2002, an Archives Advisory Committee (AAC)¹ was struck to provide guidance in policy-setting and important operational decisions.

The staffing of the L & A will be by MHSA member volunteers for one day per week, and under the supervision of an MHSA volunteer Resource Coordinator. Other roles to be played by volunteers are outlined in IX, Volunteers & Staff Policies.

To ensure accuracy and compliance of practices with policy, this document should be reviewed on an annual basis.

¹ At inception, comprised of Ted Regehr, PhD History (Chair), Judith Rempel (Resource Coordinator & Genealogist), Henry D. Goerzen (Acquisitions Coordinator & Historian) and Peter Penner, PhD History (L & A Volunteer).

II. Principles

All funds received by MHSa will be used solely to carry out its purposes. No member or director will benefit from any donations made. Members will only be compensated for any reasonable expenses incurred in the execution of their volunteer roles.

The MHSa L & A will execute its mandate under the leadership of MHSa volunteers with local guidance provided by an Archives Advisory Committee (AAC) through the Resource Coordinator. In addition, technical consultation will be made with an official body such as the Alberta Society of Archivists.

The *Manual for Small Archives* and *Keeping Archives* will be the operational guide to best practices.

Volunteers will be supported in expanding their skills in Archival and/or Library Science by encouraging them to take courses that build and strengthen their ability to achieve high quality preservation, dissemination and access practices of the L & A.

Regular communication, consultation and collaboration with the other Mennonite Historical Archives and the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada is to be encouraged to develop a continuity of historical resources in Canada.

The MHSa Archives will treat archival records in its custody according to core archival science principles, which are a) preservation of provenance and b) preservation of order. The following points are an elaboration.

1. **Fonds:** A *fonds* is "all of the records created, used and accumulated by a single organization, individual or juridical person during the transaction of daily business" (Basic RAD: A Short Introduction, 1997).
2. **Provenance:** "The organisation or individual that created or received, maintained and used records while they were still current" (International Records Management Trust (1999). *The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context*, p. 15)
3. **Original Order:** "The order in which documents were created, arranged and maintained by the office of origin" (International Records Management Trust (1999). *The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context*, p. 15)
4. **Arrangement & Description:** Arrangement and description of records will reflect the functions and structure of the creating organizations or persons (in the case of personal *fonds*) (e.g., Mennonite Church Alberta arranged according to Missions & Service, Ministers & Deacons, Finance, etc.) rather than by subject matter. *Fonds* will be arranged and described to reflect the creator's original order.
5. **Additional Accessions:**
 - o If a personal *fonds* is held by the Archives and an additional accession² of records **by the same creator** are donated, the *fonds* description will expand to include those additional accessions.
 - o If a *fonds* of an organization is held by the Archives and an official (or former official) of the organization donates records created by the organization or the official while acting in his/her official capacity, the records will be considered part of the organization's *fonds*. In this way the original order of the *fonds* is restored and the entirety of the *fonds* preserved.
6. **Summaries, Analyses, Finding Aids, etc.:** Summaries, analyses or other research conducted on an accession or *fonds* will be stored in the specified Accessions case file³.

² An accession is a grouping of records brought into the archives on a single occasion. An accession may constitute the whole of records created by one creator (i.e., a *fonds*), or it may be part of a *fonds* already held by the Archives (i.e., the *fonds* may be donated in installments over time)."

The MHSR Resources Coordinator shall also adhere to The Association of Canadian Archivists' *Code of Ethics* (see Appendix I).

³ The Accessions Case File also contains all processing records pertinent to a particular accession, including a comprehensive inventory of the accessioned material.

III. Archives Acquisition Policy

Generally, records produced by or for Mennonites⁴ of Alberta, or used extensively by Mennonites of Alberta will be sought. In addition such materials as produced by or for ancestors of the Mennonites of Alberta, or used extensively by those ancestors will be acquired. Records of a national Mennonite interest will be referred to the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

To keep the MHS Archives growing at recommended 5-10% rate annually and to acquire materials that represent the geographic and conference diversity of Mennonites in Alberta, Regional & Conference Representatives will be encouraged to seek out acquisition opportunities and consult with the Acquisitions Coordinator in obtaining those records.

Regional Representatives are to be identified from the MHS board roster, but the AAC will also identify volunteers from the following primary conferences to take on this role as well: Conference of Mennonites in Alberta, Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Northwest Conference, and other similar bodies.

An appraisal of a potential archival accession by the Accessions Coordinator is recommended where there is a large volume of records or there is an expectation that not all records may be useful to the archival collection (see X. *Processing of Archival Materials*). When records are received, clarity should be obtained as to whether records that are not of archival value should be returned to the donor (or their representative) or destroyed

The Archives has the authority to obtain copies of related material from other archives in Alberta (e.g. Provincial Archives of Alberta or the Glenbow Museum and Archives), other provinces (e.g., Mennonite Heritage Centre or Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario), or further abroad.

All materials donated to the MHS become the property of the MHS, and as such the MHS has the right to copy from the materials, and publish them - unless a Deed of Gift Record (see *Appendix II*) states otherwise and is signed by a representative of the donor and the MHS.

To include records created by:

- Individual Mennonites
- Mennonite leaders
- Mennonite congregations
- Mennonite Organizations (e.g. Bible schools, service organizations)
- Mennonite-led businesses and cooperatives

To include records of the form:

- Congregational Sunday Bulletins
- Correspondence
- Diaries
- Record books (of births and deaths)
- Church registers (of baptisms and marriages)
- Congregational Records (see detailed list in *Appendix III: Congregational Records*)
- Family Histories (see detailed list in *Appendix IV: Family History Records*)
- Financial records (summaries of the record such as are prepared monthly, quarterly or annually, but not individual records or ledgers recording those records except for providing samples of transactions and their costs at a given period of time)

⁴ Mennonites may be defined both as a cultural/ethnic and a religious group.

- Reports of work, services, plans, or studies
- Publications of work, services, studies, or educational materials
- Photographs (see information capture ideals in *Appendix V: Photographic Records*)
- Drawings
- Electronic media
- **But, excluding:** 3-dimensional art or material culture items which can be better housed/displayed in a historical museum

Records of the age:

- Records not presently in use due to death of individual, disbanding of organization, or generally referred to as non-active records. Donating organizations, which can be expected to make additional accruals, are encouraged to develop record retention, discard and transfer schedules that will clarify and standardize the donation cycle. An outline of a possible records schedule is found as *Appendix VI*.
- **But, excluding:** materials that need access by the creator or steward as part of their work, life or operation

Wherever possible, the L & A takes ownership of all the records accessioned. Record deposits (as opposed to gifts) will be considered subject to a review every five years by both donor and the MHSA, but strong preference is given to outright gifts. If the donor and their descendants cannot be located through all reasonable means at the time of a review, the deposit will be reclassified as a donation.

No original archival records will normally be purchased unless the records are of great potential or actual demand.

IV. Library Acquisitions/Discard Policy

Generally, books produced by, for, or about Mennonites of Alberta, or used extensively by Mennonites of Alberta will be acquired. In addition such materials as produced by or for ancestors of the Mennonites of Alberta, or used extensively by those ancestors will be acquired.

All library books and periodicals are non-circulating, but available for self-service.⁵ All books are catalogued according to the Library of Congress classification system⁶ and documented in a computerized database and copy which is maintained on the MHSA website.

Key library documents may be purchased, but budgets will be limited so that this will be rare. The usual means of acquisition of library items will be through donation.

As budget and/or volunteer skills permit, back issues of periodicals will be bound.

Where there are multiple copies of books or periodicals, the following guidelines identify what should be kept, where they should be kept and provide guidance on a sale price.

The primary copy of any book, series, or periodical is kept in storage, with second copy in the library in case a copy is damaged, lost, or stolen.

Where copies of any publication are in excess of the L & A needs (i.e., triplicates or greater), they will be offered in exchange with other Mennonite libraries at cost of shipping/handling (e.g. by e-mail announcement). After a reasonable period of time, unexchanged publications may be sold to the volunteers and the public for nominal but reasonable amounts (e.g. through announcement in the MHSA newsletter or e-mail, or by posting in the MHSA newsletter).

⁵ MHSA Executive meeting minutes, 13 Aug 2002.

⁶ See attachment VII for a sample catalogue entry.

V. Preservation Policies

The integrity of the archival fonds depends on controlling the elements that could damage the fonds. Generally these are considered to be environment elements such as temperature and humidity, biological elements such as insects, and impact of direct contact with risky materials/substances.

Environment

The first step in controlling damaging humidity and temperature fluctuations and extremes is to measure the levels of both of these elements. The L & A has documented these values on a daily basis during the opening months. During establishment, greater fluctuation may be expected because of frequent movement in and out of the archival vault, and the door being left ajar during those periods.

Once established, the vault will remain closed at all times, except when actually passing in or out of it and values are recorded on a weekly basis. It is keyed separately from the L & A. A sign will be posted indicating that access to the Archives is restricted to volunteers and individuals that they designate may have access.

As soon as budgets or funding permit, temperature & humidity control systems will be established.

Existing painted wood shelving will be replaced with steel shelving as soon as possible, so that the fewest emissions from wood and paint are exposed on the archival fonds. Floor and wall paint will be tested for possible emission of degrading chemicals as budget permits.

Biological/Contact

Those handling archival items will be expected to work with clean hands, not lick their fingers when turning pages, and have no food or drink on the same table as archival records. Except where absolutely necessary, only pencils will be used by staff and researchers who are handling archival materials.

See Appendix VIII for detailed rules of use.

VI. Security Policies

Archives

Only the Resource Coordinator, members of the AAC (or their designates) may access the locked archives or provide access to others. No records or containers may be removed from the L & A.

Two keys are available for the archival vault, to be held by a volunteer off-site & the Thrift Store Cashier for use by the AAC. The Volunteer Coordinator will generally be able to provide information as to access to the L & A, in addition to the posted hours of service.

Library

The Library is housed in the open space along with the MHSO Office and Reading/Research Room of the MHSO. In addition, the Reading/Research Room is used by the staff of the MCC Thrift Store for occasional meetings and by the Mennonite Special Interest Group of the Alberta Family Histories Society for their monthly meetings. Since so many persons will need legitimate access, policies are less confining than those for the Archives.

Six keys are available for the Library, to be held by the Records Coordinator, four regular Saturday volunteers, and the Thrift Store Cashier (for use by additional persons who may be listed on the Access List provided to the MCC Thrift Store).

VII. Access

Who May Use L & A

No restrictions exist on adults who may use the Library as long as they behave in a respectful manner to volunteers and materials.

Researchers who wish to use the Archives must register information about their identity, their research affiliation (if any) and the focus of their research (*see Appendix VIII Rules for Archival Use and Appendix X Research Registration Form*). This will assure that the researcher agrees to abide by the Rules of Use, and aid the volunteer in guiding them to the most useful finding aids, fonds, and series.

When may L & A be Used

During open hours:

- Saturdays 10:00 - 4:00 pm
- By special arrangement of Resource Coordinator and via notification to Thrift store cashier staff.

Archives may only be used when Resource Coordinator or a member of the AAC (or their designate) is in attendance, or the researcher has been specifically authorized for the independent use of the archives.

What L & A records May be Used

Access is generally only for library books and periodicals. Rare books⁷ will be housed in the Archives vault rather than the library stacks, but are still listed in the library catalogue and available for use by all library patrons. As a further aid to knowing of the existence of rare items, a proxy document will be placed in the library stacks indicating the location where the rare item has been reshelved.

The computer may be used to search the library catalogue and archival descriptions, and printer/copier as needed. A small fee will be charged for photocopies made for personal or research use.

Archival records may only be accessed with the assistance of the trained volunteer on duty and by Registered Researchers.

Certain archival records may be restricted from research use due to their sensitive nature (e.g., disciplinary matters), the intention to protect personal information (e.g. personal addresses or salaries). The intent is to maintain a balance between making information available for historical research and persons' privacy.

Records may be flagged as sensitive and will then also specify under which (if any) conditions the records may be viewed, upon consultation with the Records Coordinator or his/her designate. Normally, sensitive materials will be deemed as flagged during the normal life span of identified individuals (i.e., for a period of 90 years after the person's birth or 5 years after their death - whichever is known and more restrictive). When those time-points pass, the material will be declared accessible.

⁷ A rare book might be one in fragile condition, one of 50 or more years in age, or published in limited numbers.

General principles of flagged files are taken from a statement made in Guidelines for the Disclosure of Personal Information for Historical Research at the National Archives of Canada (1995, National Archives of Canada):

- **Expectations of the Individual.** The conditions which governed the collection of the personal information and the expectations of the individual to whom it relates are important criteria in any test. Was the information compiled or obtained under guarantees which preclude some or all types of disclosures? Can the information be considered to have been unsolicited or given freely with little expectation of being maintained in total confidence? Has the individual made a version of the information public and thus waived the right to privacy?
- **Sensitivity of the Information.** The degree of sensitivity of the information must be determined. Is it of a highly sensitive personal nature or is it fairly innocuous? Is the information current and for that reason more sensitive, or has the passage of time reduced that sensitivity?
- **Probability of Injury.** If the information is considered sensitive, can it be surmised that the disclosure carries with it the probability of causing measurable injury? Injury is to be interpreted as any harm or embarrassment which will have direct negative effects on an individual's career reputation, financial position, health, or well-being.
- **Context of the File.** The personal information must be assessed in relation to the entire file and not in isolation in order to determine that disclosure of the information does not form a part of a crucial segment of a larger picture that could reasonably be expected to be injurious to the individual

In addition, it is likely that legislation will be enacted soon, which has controls on what organizations like the MHSA can make available or restrict, in which case the legislation takes precedence over any policies described in this document.

Where May L & A Records, Books and Periodicals be Used

Normally, items may be used in the Reading/Research Room only. The Archives Advisory Committee may approve loan of specified items for exhibit purposes. The conditions for loan will include specification of the duration of the loan and acceptable security precautions.

How May be L & A Records, Books and Periodicals be Used

Library & Archival items are to be used in such a way that they remain in the same condition as found.

When using archival items, only pencils may be used to make notes, no drinks/food may be on the table. Copies may be taken only with specific permission for specified items.

Written approval must be granted before a researcher may publish a record held in the Archives. If copyright restrictions have been placed on a record, the researcher must abide by that restriction.

Fees

No fees are associated with on-site use of Library or Archival materials, although donations are always welcome and paying for an MHSA membership offers an element of moral support to the MHSA for its work.

Photocopying of fragile archival materials must only be done at the discretion of the L & A volunteers (fee of .25 per page is suggested), and must abide by Canadian Copyright law and any conditions that the Creator/Donor has placed onto the specified records.

VIII. Archival Description Policy

The following elements will be represented on every *fonds* description. The description will be on file as the first item in the *fonds* containers, be published on the MHSa website, and later submitted to the ASA for inclusion in the Archives Network of Alberta (ANA) database. Care will be taken to comply with the carefully designated archival terminology (e.g. record, series, fonds and terms shown below in dark red) sequence of elements, and punctuation used, as shown in *Manual for Small Archives* or as required by ANA.

Title and Physical Description

e.g., Alberta Women in Mission fonds. -- 19xx-19xx, predominant 19xx-19xx. -- xx cm of textual records. -- xxx photographs. -- xx slides⁸

Administrative or Biographical History⁹

An administrative history will include:

- concise history of the corporate body predominantly responsible for the creation of the material being described
- official name of the corporate body
- information on its period of existence
- enabling legislation
- its functions and/or purpose
- its place in the administrative hierarchy or its own administrative hierarchy
- its predecessor and successor bodies
- any additional useful information that will place the material being described in context, and make it better

e.g., Xxx was established in 19xx to do xxx in xxx place. The organization was responsible for xxx.

A Biographical History will include:

- a biographical sketch of the person or family "predominantly responsible for the creation of the material being described
- significant information about the person's... or family's... life and activities that will place the material being described in context, and
- make it better understood

e.g., Herbert Johann Schmidt emigrated from Molotschna settlement in South Russia with his parents to Acme, Alberta in 1926. He served with Mennonite Central Committee from 1962-68. From 1946 to 1961, he established a dairy farm/business at Mayton, Alberta, a Mennonite Brethren mission church in the Calgary area, and was trustee in the Calgary School Board from 1955-1958.

Custodial History¹⁰

The history of the custody of the material being described includes:

⁸ If more than three formats, cite the first here and use subsequent "Physical Description" below to hold information about all formats starting with the second.

⁹ "Biographical History" is used when the *fonds* is that of an individual while "Administrative History" is used when the *fonds* is that of an organization.

¹⁰ Only used if there was more than one custodian before the records came to the MHSa. Use this to identify the trail (of persons, organizations) who helped the material UP TO the last custodian of the records.

- the successive transfers of ownership and custody of the material, along with the dates thereof
- if the custodial history is unknown, record that information
- when the material being described is acquired directly from the creator, record this information as the immediate source of acquisition

e.g., Janice (Pauls) Schmidt, daughter of Henry Pauls, gave the records to the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta, Didsbury, Alberta. The records were subsequently transferred to the MHSA.

Scope & Contents

includes:

- information relating to the general contents, nature, and scope of the material being described
- a list of the series
- a description of the arrangement
- the general subject matter of the records.

e.g. The fonds consists of reports, bulletins, minutes and operating records of committees of the Bergthal Mennonite Church.

Or, if the material is of substantive volume (e.g. more than 20 folders), the material should be arranged in series and this is the place to describe the series. If so, the detailed kind of description suggested above is prepared for each of the series.

e.g., The fonds consists of three series: A) Minutes and Reports, B) Operating Records of Committees, and C) Bulletins.

Source of Supplied Title

Title based on the contents of the fonds

Physical Description

Used if more than three record formats are in the fonds, in which case this would be used for description of all but the first format.

e.g., Includes 37 photographics. -- 5 microfilm reels, 35 mm -- 2 maps

Source of Acquisition

For the most recent custodian of the records.

e.g. Conference of Mennonites of Alberta via Henry Goerzen

Arrangement

Use only if no Series used to describe the arrangement of the records. If there are series, arrangement is the last element of the paragraph of description.

e.g. According to subject and date

Originals and Reproduction

Use only if original records are found elsewhere.

e.g., Originals can be found at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, MB.

Access Restrictions¹¹

None known

Or "None"

Or Specify,

e.g. Folders marked with asterisks in this description and with red dots on the folders are restricted from view until 19xx.

e.g. Folders marked with asterisks in this description and with red dots on the folders are restricted from view except by permission of the Records Coordinator or the Historian.

Finding Aids

See Series/File Inventory¹²

Associated Material

If records for the same creator are located in different archives (they are essentially the same *fonds* but distributed in more than one archives), list the locations here.

e.g., For records associated with this *fonds*, see Philip Funk *fonds*, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, MB

Related Material

If records strongly associated with the *fonds* being described are in the archives, cross-reference those *fonds* here. Also, if books held by the MHSa are written by or about this organization/person reference them here.

e.g., For records related to this *fonds*, see RG3, Conference of Mennonites in Alberta *fonds*

Online Resources

Use for webaddress of finding aids or indexes.

e.g., MHSa website (www.mennonites.ca/mhsa) and as records are transcribed, those transcriptions also appear online linked from the MHSa websites

Accruals

None expected

Or

Expected

General Note

Accession No. 2002.XX

Language - German and English¹³

Title variation (e.g. Also known as xxx collection)

Last updated dd Mmm yyyy Judith Rempel

Or

¹¹ If there are specific copying or publishing restrictions, specify them here as well.

¹² Normally, this description will be found online and the words "File Inventory" will be hyperlinked to the section of the description where the inventory begins.

¹³ Use only if some of the materials are not in English. Can also read "German", or "Records mostly in German until 19xx".

Expected

Series Inventory¹⁴

Each series is numbered, named, shown with a year range and linear volume. Location in the Archives is identified.

A. Governance. -- 19xx-19xx. - xx cm of textual records

Series consists of correspondence between Falk and other writers and publishers, including members of the New Caledonia Times, the literary journal Araxis, the Allan and James Publishing Company, and the journalists' Association of Canada. The correspondence is arranged by date/alphabetically by name/alphabetically by subject.

Box 1

1-1 General Council Minutes - 19xx-19xx

1-2 Executive Committee correspondence - 19xx-19xx

Files Inventory¹⁵

1 General Council Minutes - 19xx-19xx

2 Executive Committee correspondence - 19xx-19xx

¹⁴ Not used if there are few files (e.g. less than 20)

¹⁵ Used if there are few files.

IX. Volunteer/Staff Policies

After the L & A are established, the staffing of the L & A will be by MHSa member volunteers for a minimum of one day per week, and under the supervision of an MHSa volunteer Resource Coordinator. Other roles to be executed by volunteers are: Acquisitions Coordinator, Facilities Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Historian and Genealogist. These roles will be filled by recommendation of the AAC and appointment of the Executive.¹⁶

Recognition

Names identified on website & poster in the MHSa L & A.

Benefits of volunteering

- Recognition/credit
- Opportunity to work on own research
- Opportunity to learn library/archival skills
- First opportunity to purchase publications surplus to Library needs
- Opportunity to be on hand when there are "finds"

Training/Screening

All potential volunteers will accompany the Resource Coordinator for at least one full day, one of which is substantively orientation/training in the scope of the materials, how to answer most common questions, and how to assist in cataloguing, archiving or other projects of the MHSa. If mutually agreeable, the volunteer would be identified on the key-access list for the L & A and shifts are assigned by the Volunteer Coordinator. In some cases, the individual may be more suited to volunteer duties that don't involve working a shift independently.

Security

Volunteers will not have access to Archives without presence of Archivist (or Archives Committee Member) unless so granted, and after a successful orientation to proper procedures. Volunteers will have access to the L & A without presence only after a successful orientation to proper procedures.

The two Archives keys are held by a designated volunteer offsite and in a designated online location known to the Records Coordinator and the Saturday volunteers. The six library keys are held by: Archivist, four scheduled volunteers, and the MCC Thrift Store Cashier. Archivist and Thrift Shop Cashier hold keys. The latter is provided with the names of persons who can be given access.

¹⁶ At time of writing, the positions are filled as follows: Records Coordinator & Genealogist (Judith Rempel), Acquisitions Coordinator & Historian (Henry Goerzen), Facilities Coordinator (Harold Friesen), and Volunteer Coordinator (Irene Klassen).

X. Processing of Archival Materials

Prior to Accepting records

Appraisal (conducted prior to acceptance of records)

The Acquisitions Coordinator (or his/her designate) will appraise the collection offered to the MHSAA Archives (MHSAA) in terms of:

- Value to knowledge about Alberta Mennonite History
- Age
- Volume of material (does L & A have space to house the material)
- Type of material (suitable for storage in archival containers as opposed to museum conditions)
- Uniqueness of collection
- Condition of materials
- Time period covered
- Conditions of use
- Fit with MHSAA acquisitions policy generally

This appraisal is generally done BEFORE the records collection is deposited at the Archives. It is less difficult to indicate that materials are less suitable prior to accepting them than having to return them to the donor/creator after they have been received. However, at times, there will be records that will not be accepted for retention, with screened items being returned to the donor or destroyed.

Where it is important to the donor to have a financial value assigned to the accession, an external appraiser should be engaged by and any costs borne by the donor.

At Time of Acquiring Records

Deed of Gift (prepared at time of acceptance of records)

Prepare a Deed of Gift Form (see *Appendix II* - variations may be needed for transfers or loans) for the collection of items being accepted by the L & A.

This should be done on the occasion when the materials are being received by the L & A. Delay can mean that there is difficulty in mutually agreeing on the collection's scope and any conditions to be placed on it. Time of receipt is the appropriate time to clarify ownership, access restrictions, or copyright limitations. Generally, the MHSAA prefers to have full ownership and few/uncomplicated restrictions on access/copyright. This is not required for donations of books.

At this time, donors can be encouraged to make an additional gift of money to cover the likely cost of housing the materials in archival safe containers¹⁷. Organizations that establish a records schedule/accrual plan may be encouraged to make a gift of money towards sustained storage costs.

¹⁷ In 2002, about \$17 per archival box, including folders

Very Soon after Acquiring Records

Acknowledge the gift with a letter that specifies a general description of the materials, a full inventory of the file names, and the understanding that the materials are treated as a donation/gift.

Processing Checklist

Prepare a Processing Checklist (see *Appendix X*) for the collection being accepted and follow it. Use this occasion to begin a Control File on the Accession (with all necessary forms already completed or to be completed).

Accession Record

Prepare an Accession Record (see *Appendix XI*) for the collection of items being accepted. This involves capturing the full text of all file labels, in the sequence that they are received. Dates, if not on the labels, can be added at a later time).

Store the Records

- Ensure that the Records are stored in the Vault, with Accession Number identification visible on the outside of the containers. Store them in a cluster, separate part of the vault from processed materials, and in the order that they were received.

Begin the Formal Archival Processing

Preliminary Review of Accession

Conduct a preliminary “sort” to identify the major series (and/or subseries) in the collection.

Clean the File contents

Remove items that would cause damage (e.g., paper clips, staples, post-it notes), or are unnecessary to the collection (e.g., redundant envelopes, duplicate copies, blank forms)

Flatten any folded or dog-eared items

Straighten and tamp the pages so they are flush with the top and left sides and store the records in archival safe folders with filename printed in pencil on left side of tab [e.g., filename - 19xx-19xx (1 of 2)]. Accession Number, Box number and File numbers will be applied later to the upper right corner of the folder (e.g., 2002.002 would refer to the second accession in 2002, and 4.17 would refer to the 4th box in the accession and the 17th folder in that accession).

Remove and cross-reference any items that need to be/can be removed for storage separately such as photographs, negatives, bound books, or electronic media. Use two Separation Sheets (see *Appendix XII*) to document the location where the item is removed and to stay associated with the new location of the item. At time of writing, provision is made for Photo Albums and Vertical Files. Larger or unusually-shaped items still require a plan.

Arrange the materials

That is, re-sequence the files (not their contents) into the Series identified in the *Preliminary Review of Accession*.

Label the boxes uniformly (e.g. MHS / 2002.003 / Mennonite Church Canada / Box 4 of 10)

Shelve the materials sequentially

Prepare the Archival Description

Prepare an inventory of the series / boxes / folders for inclusion in the Archival Description (see *Appendix XII* for collection format)

Capture the inventory in an electronically (database to be developed)

Identify possible Finding Aids¹⁸ for the most-likely-to-be-accessed portions of the fonds and place this into the volunteer projects queue.

¹⁸ An Archival finding aid may be a physical or intellectual “map of the archives that tells users what sort of information is available and how to find it”. (Basic RAD: A Short Introduction, 1997). The intellectual map is generally a multi-level inventory of the materials in a fonds. The physical map assists in locating the materials in a particular room, shelf, box & file.

Appendix I - Code of Ethics for Archivists in Canada¹⁹

Editor's Note 1999-07-21. Principle 2 of this code has been revised as a result of the Annual General Meeting of the ACA on 4 June 1999.

This Code consists of two parts: Principles," and "Application of Principles."

Principles

1. Archivists appraise, select, acquire, preserve, and make available for use archival records, ensuring their intellectual integrity and promoting responsible physical custodianship of these records, for the benefit of present users and future generations.
2. Archivists have a responsibility to ensure that they and their colleagues are able to perform these and other professional activities in an environment free of discrimination and sexual or personal harassment.
3. Archivists encourage and promote the greatest possible use of the records in their care, giving due attention to personal privacy and confidentiality, and the preservation of records.
4. Archivists carry out their duties according to accepted archival principles and practices, to the best of their abilities, making every effort to promote and maintain the highest possible standards of conduct.
5. Archivists contribute to the advancement of archival studies by developing personal knowledge and skills, and by sharing this information and experience with members of archival and related professions.
6. Archivists use their specialized knowledge and experience for the benefit of society as a whole.

Applications of Principles

A. Appraisal, Selection, and Acquisition

- A1. Archivists appraise, select, and acquire records in accordance with their institutions' mandates and resources. These activities should be guided by consideration for the integrity of the fonds. Archivists document the criteria which governed the appraisal, selection, and acquisition of records.
- A2. Archivists do not compete for acquisitions when competition would endanger the safety of the records; they cooperate to ensure the preservation of records in repositories where they can be effectively managed and used.
- A3. Archivists, in determining acquisition, take into full consideration such factors as authority to transfer, donate or sell; financial arrangements, implications, and benefits; plans for processing; copyright, and conditions of access. Archivists discourage unreasonable restrictions

¹⁹ The Association of Canadian Archivists

on access or use, but may accept as a condition of acquisition clearly stated restrictions of limited duration and should suggest such restrictions to protect personal privacy. Archivists observe all agreements made at the time of transfer or acquisition.²⁰

A4. Archivists appraise the monetary value of records for purchase or tax benefit for donation based on fair market value of the records at the time of purchase or deposit and in keeping with the principles, guidelines, and regulations established by relevant appraisal bodies and the government.

B. Preservation

B1. Archivists endeavour to protect the intellectual and physical integrity of the records in their care. Archivists document all actions which may alter the record.

B2. Archivists who find it necessary to deaccession archival records should make every effort to contact the donors or their representatives, and inform them of the decision. Archivists endeavour to offer the records to other repositories in preference to destruction. Archivists document all decisions and actions taken with regard to deaccessioning.

C. Availability and Use

C1. Archivists arrange and describe all records in their custody in order to facilitate the fullest possible access to and use of their records.

C2. Archivists make every attempt possible to respect the privacy of the individuals who created or are the subjects of records, especially those who had no voice in the disposition of the records. Archivists should not reveal or profit from information gained through work with restricted records.

C3. Archivists inform users of any restrictions on access and use placed on records. Archivists should apply all restrictions equitably.

C4. Archivists should endeavour to inform users of copyright restrictions on records, and inform users that it is their own responsibility to obtain copyright clearance from the copyright owners.

C5. Archivists protect each users' right to privacy with respect to information sought or received, and records consulted. Archivists may inform users of parallel research by others only with the prior agreement of the individuals concerned.

D. Professional Conduct

D1. Archivists who use their institutions' records for personal research and/or publication must make these activities known to both their employers and to others using the same records. Archivists, when undertaking personal research, must not use their knowledge of other researchers' findings without first notifying those researchers about the use intended by the Archivist.

D2. Archivists who acquire records personally, should inform their employers of their acquisition activities, should not compete for acquisitions with their own repositories, should

²⁰ Subject to subsequent agreements that the MHSA may undertake.

not use privileged information obtained as a consequence of their employment to further these personal acquisition interests, and should maintain appropriate records of their acquisitions.

E. Advancement of Knowledge

E1. Archivists share their knowledge and experience with other archivists for their mutual professional development.

E2. Archivists share their specialized knowledge and experience with legislators and other policy-makers to assist them in formulating policies and making decisions in matters affecting the record-keeping environment.

Appendix II - Deed of Gift Record

Accession No. _____

MHSA Archives gratefully acknowledges the gift of the archival material described below, and wishes to thank _____ (name of donor) for this valued addition to the historical collections of the MHSA Library & Archives.

Description:

Conditions of deposit (copying, publishing, management of screened items):

It is understood and agreed that the materials donated shall become the exclusive and absolute property of the MHSA Archives and includes the right to copy and publish from the records. This property will be handled according to the procedures established in the MHSA policy.

(Date)

(Signature of Donor)

(Date)

(Signature of Archivist)

Appendix III - Congregational Records

The following items are especially welcomed as permanent gifts/donations to the MHS A L & A. Locally held records could so easily be lost with transitioning committee members and staff. The time of transition (election, appointment), is a perfect time for the records to be centralized to the conference office or the MHS A.

- Items that are no longer in active use as records (e.g. supporting documents for audits of financial affairs by auditors or federal government or documents required to conduct membership transfers)
- Church membership records
- Church and committee minutes and reports (with supporting documents)
- Bulletins
- Samples of Financial records
- One copy of an old hymn book when a new hymn book is put into use
- Publications produced by the church or committees of the congregation (e.g. published centennial scrapbook, church member yearbooks, history of the congregation)
- Photographs of ministers, deacons, missionaries, Sunday school classes, church buildings (provided that they are identified as to date, event, location & names of persons portrayed)
- Curriculum materials supplied by church's central office or a supply house
- Records regarding adoption and discontinuation of hymn books, catechism, Sunday School Curriculum, sermon books or other liturgical devices (e.g., dates, motions, minutes).
- Other items that are at least 10 years old

Appendix IV - Family Histories

Family histories are in great demand in libraries and archives. Gratefully received are the raw materials, finished products & electronic copies of documents. Specifically desired items are listed below.

- Printed family registers (or .rtf formatted electronic files)
- Family newsletters
- GEDCOM files
- Printed family histories
- Source documents

Appendix V - Photographic Records

MHSA welcomes permanent donation or loans of photographs. Where they are part of a donated/deposited collection, they will be managed according to the documentation in *IX. Processing of Archival Materials*

Loaned photographs will be computer-scanned in two formats (tif for long-term multiple uses & jpg for fast-immediate access uses). Suitable ones will be selected for an MHSA pictorial book of Alberta Mennonites

To be most useful, each photograph should have as many of the following aspects documented as possible. Each photograph should only have a cross-reference number written on the upper right corner of the back of image, printed with a soft (B) pencil. The cross reference number then should be written on an inventory sheet along with as many of the known details as suggested below.

Do NOT:

- Write on the front of the photo
- Write on the back of the photo with any form of ink or hard pencil
- Apply a label or post-it note to the back of the photo

Complete Photographic Information

- Date of photograph (or good estimate prefaced with "circa")
- Occasion on which the photograph was taken
- Location where photograph was taken (at least city/town/village)
- Full (birth & married) names of all persons shown in photograph
- Full name of photographer
- Steward (holder) of the photograph
- Comments about the photograph's importance/value

Appendix VI - Records Schedule Template

Whenever records are of a personal/confidential nature, they should be flagged for restricted access - and the conditions of access should be specified

Records	Retention by Organization	Transfer to MHSA
Constitution/bylaws	Copies - forever	When superceded
Minutes & Agendas		
* executive	10 yrs	yes
* membership	10 yrs	yes
* Annual General Meeting	10 yrs	yes
* committees	5 yrs	yes
* non-trivial correspondence	10 yrs	yes
Human Resources		
* job postings	5 yrs	yes
* job descriptions	until superceded	yes
* job applications/references - applicants	5 yrs	no
* job applications/references - successful candidates	10 yrs	yes
* non-trivial correspondence	10 yrs	yes
Issues (e.g. mergers, policy matters)	10 yrs	Yes
Meetings/Events		
* Congregational Bulletins	1 yr	Yes
* Participation lists	3 yrs	Yes
* Planning	3 yrs	Yes
* Scheduling	3 yrs	No
* Reports	5 yrs	Yes
* Presentations/speeches/lectures	5 yrs	Yes
* Budgets	10 yrs	Selected
* Financial statements	10 yrs	Yes - annual
* non-trivial correspondence	10 yrs	Yes
Correspondence		
* Re finances (budget, donations, receivables, payables)	10 yrs	Yes
* Re congregations (general, conflicts, staffing)	10 yrs	Yes
* Committee	5 yrs	Yes
* Administrative - with daughter/parent/other bodies	5 yrs	Yes
* Administrative - with all levels of government	5 yrs	Yes

Committees / Daughter Bodies e.g. Missions & Service (Peace Witness, Native Ministries, Church planting broadcasting, Home Missions), Education (MBI, SCBI, Sunday School, RJC, Church Issues, Educational Conferences), Home for the Aged, Camp Valaqua, Finance, Ministers and Deacons	5 yrs	Yes
Related Organizations e.g., Alberta Mennonite Youth Organization, Conference of Mennonites in Canada, Mennonite Central Committee, Alberta Women in Mission, Northwest Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Foundation	5 yrs	Yes
Resources * Catalogues * Curricula * Literature	3 yrs 3 yrs 5 yrs	No Yes No

Appendix VII - Sample Library Catalogue Entry

Book Data Entry							
Call#1	Title	<input type="text" value="Finsternis und Licht"/>					
<input type="text" value="PT"/>	Subtitle	<input type="text" value="Drama von Is. P Klassen"/>					
Call#2	Author/Editor	Year	Edition	Pp			
<input type="text" value="2600"/>	<input type="text" value="Klassen, Is. P."/>	<input type="text" value="1982"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>	<input type="text" value="49"/>			
Call#3	Publisher	Publ. City	Vol	#			
<input type="text" value="KLA"/>	<input type="text" value="Author"/>	<input type="text" value="Steinbach,"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>	<input type="text" value=""/>			
Format	Subject						
<input type="text" value="soft"/>	<input type="text" value="Mennonites - Russia - Drama"/>						
Language	Donor	Accession Date	Created				
<input type="text" value="Ger"/>	<input type="text" value="Friesen, Helen Pauls and Henry Goerzen"/>	<input type="text" value="9/8/01"/>	<input type="text" value="04 Feb, 2001"/>				
Script	Notes						
<input type="text" value="Latin"/>	<input type="text" value="Play about life in Russia in a Mennonite village - 2 copies"/>						

Appendix VIII - Rules for Archives Use

To ensure the ongoing preservation of the archival materials and so that least damage is done through use of them, please read and obey the following rules of courtesy. Upon reading these statements you will be asked to complete and sign a *Research Registration Form* (see *Appendix IX*).

Help us ensure the SECURITY of the records is preserved

- No personal containers (e.g., brief case, knapsack, large purse) may be in use while doing archival research. Please store them away from the research area.
- You will need to sign the archives research log each time you come to do that research.
- Have the MHSAs volunteer retrieve and return archival boxes from/to the vault
- These materials are provided for reference use only. They may not be removed from the MHSAs Library & Archives.

Help us ensure that the CONDITION of the records is preserved

- Archival boxes are requested by the researcher (based on use of the finding aids). Only the volunteer may enter the vault and retrieve the archival boxes. Researchers generally are not permitted in the Archives.
- No food or drinks may be on the same table as the archival materials.
- When working with archival records, put away your pens - only pencils may be used
- When handling the archival records do not mark, lean on, or mar them in any way that would contribute to their deterioration (this includes not using post-it notes, licking your finger to assist in picking up or turning a page, or folding over the corner of a page).

Help us ensure that the ORDER of the records is preserved

- You may only use one archival at a time to minimize the likelihood of incorrect refiling and should follow these steps to ensuring that the records do not become re-arranged
- Only remove one folder at a time from the box - and return it to the same sequence as found (the folders will be numbered in their appropriate order).
- When handling an individual record, be sure to replace it into the folder in the exact same sequence as you found it. If you want to have a photocopy of a record, place a bookmark immediately before the item for copying & specify how many subsequent pages are to be copied. You may use multiple bookmarks in a folder.
- When finished with a folder, be sure to carefully tamp the records so that they are flush on the top and left edges - and stored roughly ½" from the left side of the folder. This helps ensure that the records will not become folded or crushed when the box is returned to the shelf.

Help us ensure the Intellectual Ownership of the records is preserved

- Do not publish any portion of the records without the written permission of the copyright holder (MHSAs unless otherwise known). The researcher assumes the sole responsibility for any infringement of the literary rights, copyrights, or other rights which pertain to these materials.
- Provide us with a copy of any publication that relies heavily upon these records.
- Cite your sources. We suggest the following format for archival records citation:

- Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta Archives, [*fonds name*], [Accession Number, Box Number, File Number].

For example: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta, *Mennonite Church Alberta fonds* - Accession 2002.003, Box 4, File 52.

Appendix IX - Appendix XIV - Research Registration Form

In order to use the MHSAs Archives, researchers must register information about themselves and the research they are conducting, and agree to the specific terms of use.

Name _____

Research Institution Affiliation (if any) _____

Postal Address _____

e-mail address _____ Phone number _____

Membership of MHSAs Yes No

Focus of the Research at the MHSAs

Use of the Research conducted at the MHSAs

family history thesis/dissertation academic publication

other publication _____

If other researchers are pursuing a similar focus, would you like your name/contact information to be shared with them? Yes No

Terms of Use

I agree to treat the archival records with the care they deserve by not having food or drinks on the same table with archival records, by only using pencils (not pens or markers) while the records are on the table, and by not licking my finger when I turn the pages of the records. I will not rearrange the materials in the folder or rearrange the folders. I will not remove or mark items in the folders.

If I need a photocopy of an item, I will consult with the volunteer as to how best not to disturb or damage the item in question. This may mean allowing the volunteer to do the photocopying. I understand there is a 25cents/page photocopying fee.

I agree to the terms of use as specified.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix X - Processing Checklist

Accession No. _____

Title: _____

Location: _____

Date received: _____

Received by: _____

Task	Date Completed	Initials
Appraise the collection		
Deed of Gift Completed (App. IV)		
Gift Acknowledged in writing		
Accession Record Completed (App. V)		
Preliminary review (to identify series, time and content scope)		
Clean the materials (Clips/staples removed, items flattened)		
3D, or damaging items removed & separation sheet prepared to show what & where removed to (removed items to be marked with accession number)		
Material filed/boxed, container labeled & shelved		
Description completed (App. VII)		
Enter description into database		
Finding Aid Created		
Collection description entered onto website		

Appendix XI - Accession Record

Date Received _____ Accession Number _____

Title of Item(s) _____

Date of Item(s) _____

Provenance (Creator of Item) _____

Name of Donor _____

Address of Donor _____

Archives Location Reference _____

Type of Item:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Original Papers | <input type="checkbox"/> Maps/Charts | <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures | <input type="checkbox"/> Microfilms | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio/Video Tapes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> electronic media (3 1/4" disk/CD/_____ ; PC/DOS/MAC; | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GEDCOM/.doc/.wpd/.txt/_____) | | |

Other (describe) _____

Terms of Transfer

- Gift Purchase Deposit Loan

Description:

Restrictions:

Instructions regarding records not of archival importance:

- Return to Donor/representative Destroy

None _____

Letter of Thanks/Receipt sent Archivist _____

Appendix XII - Separation Sheet

(To be filed in place of item in original container)

Accession No. _____ Separation Date _____

Accession Title: _____

Type of item (document, photograph, map, artifact, etc.) _____

Description of item _____

Item originally filed in (name/code of collection, series, file) _____

Item now filed with (photograph storage, map case, special display, etc.)

Archivist _____

Appendix XII - Archival Description

Title: _____

Dates: _____

Archival Description:

a. Administrative History/Biographical Sketch: _____

b. Custodial History:

Scope & Content:

Notes:

Source of Supplied Title: _____

Physical Description: _____

Source of Acquisition: _____

Arrangement: _____

Originals and Reproductions: _____

Access Restrictions: _____

Finding Aids: _____

Associated Materials (books): _____

Related Materials: _____

Online Resources: _____

Accruals: _____

Acquisition Number: _____

RG Number: _____

Language: _____

Title Variation: _____

Date: _____

Suggest Series that are apparent during accession²¹:

Series ____.	Title	19____ - 19____	cm
Description		Arranged _____	

Files Listing:

No.	File Label	Timespan
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		

²¹ duplicate as many series sheets as necessary for a particular accession.

Appendix XIV - Related Websites

Archives and Library of Canada www.archives.ca/
Archives Association of British Columbia <http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/index.html>
Archives Association of Ontario <http://aao.fis.utoronto.ca/index.html>
Archives Network of Alberta <http://asalive.archivesalberta.org:8080/access/asa/archaa/>
Archives Society of Alberta www.archivesalberta.org/
Bethel College Mennonite Library & Archives www.bethelks.edu/services/mla/
(A) Manual for Small Archives http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/msa/0_table_of_contents.htm
Canadian Archival Information Network (CAIN) www.cain-rcia.ca/
Canadian Northwest Archival Network <http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/icaul.html>
Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (Winnipeg)
www.mbconf.ca/mbstudies/guide/index.html
Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center www.rootsweb.com/~ilmhgs/
Menno Simons Historical Library www.emu.edu/library/histlib.html
Mennonite Archives of Ontario <http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/mao/>
Mennonite Church (USA) Historic Committee & Archives www.goshen.edu/mcarchives/
Mennonite Heritage Centre www.mennonitechurch.ca/programs/archives/
Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta fonds www.mennonites.ca/mhsa/archives/fonds.html
Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia www.rapidnet.bc.ca/~mennohis/
Mennonite Historical Library www.goshen.edu/mhl/
United Church of Canada Archives Network <http://www.uccan.org/archives/>